



# The **BURNED OUT** Lawyer-

## An Occupational Hazard ?

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Presented by:

Brian S. Quinn, Esq., Education Coordinator

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of PA



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**Brian S. Quinn, Esq. – Education and Outreach Coordinator, LCL of PA**

Brian S. Quinn, Esquire is a licensed attorney in Pennsylvania who currently serves as the Education and Outreach Coordinator for Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania, Inc., a Lawyers Assistance Program established in 1988 for the purpose of helping lawyers, judges and law students recover from alcoholism, drug addiction and mental health disorders.

Mr. Quinn obtained his undergraduate degree in 1970, his law degree in 1973 and a certificate in Drug and Alcohol counselling in 2012, from Villanova University. Prior to his work with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, he was a private practitioner for over 40 years and has also worked in the field of alcohol and drug counseling in suburban Philadelphia.

Mr. Quinn is a past member of the Board of Directors of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania and served as a peer volunteer prior to accepting his current role as the organization's Educator in 2017. He has written and presented on lawyer wellness topics to law firms, Bar Associations and legal education providers for state, national and international groups as well.

- Free information and literature
- Free evaluation by a healthcare professional
- Free assistance with interventions
- Peer support
- Lawyer/Judge/Law Student-only support group meetings
- LCL staff support
- **FULLY OPERATIONAL during COVID-19**

Our services are **free, confidential, non-judgmental and non-obligatory**

## Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania

**CONFIDENTIAL Helpline**

**1-888-999-1941**

**24 hrs./day, 7 days/week,**

**365 days/year**

**[www.lclpa.org](http://www.lclpa.org)**

# What Is LCL ?

Our mission:

To provide a caring peer assistance program to save the lives and restore the health and professional competence of lawyers, members of their families, judges and law students who are at risk as a result of alcohol and drug use, gambling, depression or other serious mental illness. We carry out this mission through a combination of confidential helpline services, volunteer support and education.

## We Protect Your Identity and Information

LCL does **not** report or disclose any identifying information to the Supreme Court, the Judicial Conduct Board, the Disciplinary Board, the Board of Law Examiners or any other agency of the Supreme Court; nor do we report or disclose any identifying information to a State Bar Association, local Bar Associations or any judicial or law related organization. We do not report any identifying information to anyone without your prior consent.

**You may remain anonymous and still receive our services.**

# GUIDANCE FROM THE COURT

PA Rules of Professional Conduct address that concern by providing an exception to the duty to report: Rule 8.3(c) does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected or information gained by a lawyer or judge while participating in an approved lawyers assistance program.

**Comment 7 “... providing for an exception ... encourages lawyers and judges to seek treatment through such a program. Conversely, without such an exception, lawyers and judges may hesitate to seek assistance from these programs, which may then result in additional harm to their professional careers and additional injury to the welfare of clients and to the public.” (emphasis added)**



THE PROBLEMS



Lawyers were at an increased risk to develop alcohol, substance use and mental health disorders prior to COVID-19 related issues.



# Major Problems for Attorneys:

Stress / Anxiety

Depression

Burnout / Secondary Trauma

Alcohol / Substance Use

Cognitive Impairment

Suicide

Gambling and other process addictions



# ABA / Hazelden- Betty Ford Study

(Published February, 2016 *Journal of Addiction Medicine*)

## Problematic Drinking\*

- 6.4% of entire U.S. population
- **21%** of *all licensed attorneys*
- **32%** of *all attorneys under 30 yrs. old*

\* Problematic drinking defined as hazardous, possible dependence



# ABA / Hazelden- Betty Ford Study

(Published February, 2016 *Journal of Addiction Medicine*)

## Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale

- Depression – **28%** of all attorneys
- Stress – **23%** of all attorneys
- Anxiety – **19%** of all attorneys
- Higher rates among younger lawyers



# Mental Health By The Numbers

A recent survey conducted by ALM Intelligence and Law.Com revealed:

\***74%** feel the profession has had *a negative impact* on their mental health.

\***44%** use alcohol to deal with *stress*

\***67%** feel they suffer from *anxiety*

\***37%** feel they are *depressed*

\***74%** feel their *work environment* contributes negatively

\***44%** reported isolation issues

\***19%** have contemplated *suicide* at some point in their careers



# Mental Health By The Numbers

A recent survey conducted by ALM Intelligence and Law.Com revealed:

- 36% use all of their vacation time.
- 35% do not feel safe discussing their mental health at work.
- 36% feel the billable hour has a *major* effect on stress level.
- **62%** know a colleague who is *depressed*.
- **50%** know a colleague with an alcohol problem.
- **75%** know a colleague suffering with stress.



# Mental Health By The Numbers

A recent survey conducted by ALM Intelligence and Law,Com revealed:

- 65% feel they could NOT take an extended leave from employment to tend to mental health issues.
- 78% felt an extended leave would hurt career trajectory.
- 77% were *fearful* of what the firm would think.
- 56% felt they had too much work to take a extended leave.





# Aloneness

## Solitude vs. Loneliness

### **Solitude**

- The *physical* state of being alone
- Need not be a permanent experience
- Balance between solitude & togetherness
- Develop an “I’m not alone” mentality



# Aloneness

## Solitude vs. Loneliness

### Loneliness

- The *emotional* state of being alone
- Response to perceived isolation
- Belief that no one understands our circumstances, thoughts or emotions
- More importantly, a belief that no one cares



# Social Isolation

**Social isolation** is the combination of solitude and loneliness, experienced by an individual for an extended period. Both the emotional and physical state feed off of one another and can create an inability to reengage with society in a meaningful way.



# Are You Technolonly ?





While smartphones and other devices provide great benefits to lawyers, including during the isolation caused by the pandemic, those benefits also come at a great cost to our mental health

# WHAT IS STRESS ?

Psychological stress is composed of the following sequence of elements:

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**STIMULUS**

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**THOUGHT**

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**EMOTION**

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**BEHAVIOR**



The thoughts and emotions are internal and subjective – part of the way we habitually respond to things – and are *changeable*, otherwise everyone would react in the same manner to a situation.

If we cannot interrupt or change the stimulus which produces the stress, then we must interrupt or change our appraisal of it.

# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU ?

- My work requires me to do too much in too little time.
- I don't have enough time to spend with my family and friends or to pursue recreational and social activities.
- Competition is making it difficult to make a living.
- The people at my law firm or department lack collegiality – e.g., are cold, unfriendly or rude.
- My firm or department is mismanaged – e.g., not enough good clerical help, compensation or procedures are unfair.

# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU ?

- My firm or department is too focused on profit.
- The physical environment is unpleasant.
- My work bores me.
- I'm not good at what I do.
- I'm not making a positive contribution to society/ lives of others.
- What I am doing doesn't deserve respect /get enough respect.
- I deal with too many unreasonable and difficult people.



# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU ?

- I feel overly responsible for everything and everyone.
- I overanalyze things and am too cautious.
- I often feel depressed, defeated or hopeless.
- I often rely on alcohol or drugs to help me feel good.
- I think about quitting at least once a month.
- Occasionally, I think about suicide.





# STRESS or DISTRESS ?

- Some stress is healthy. Positive stressors can energize and motivate lawyers to be productive and creative problem solvers.
- A totally stress free life is not only unrealistic, it can actually be a harmful form of denial.
- We need to eliminate distress. Distress is harmful both physically and psychologically.





# STRESS or DISTRESS ?

- Gradual, incremental increases in responsibilities, duties, pressures and demands at home and work combined with long workdays and weeks is risky.
- We stay busy and “stuff” our feelings.
- Even relaxing can cause us to feel distress.
- We become unaware that we have lost balance in our lives.
  
- REMEMBER, DISTRESSED LAWYERS EVENTUALLY LOSE THEIR EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS !!

# Distress Assessment Quiz

Do any of the following attributes apply to you? Check the ones that apply:

- Do you sleep less than 7-8 hours per night?
- Is your sleep restless or do you wake up a lot?
- Is it difficult to get out of bed in the morning?
- Do you exercise less than 5 hours a week (including walks)?
- Do you eat a lot of fast foods or junk foods?
- Do you skip breakfast or lunch?
- Do you drink more than 2-3 cups of coffee a day?

# Distress Assessment Quiz

Do any of the following attributes apply to you? Check the ones that apply:

- Do you drink more than 2-3 alcoholic beverages a day?
- Do you take sedatives or sleep aids with/without a drink to relax or sleep?
- Are you more impatient and irritable than you would like to be?
- Do you feel that you are not in control of your life?
- Are you feeling worn out at the end of most days?
- Do you wish for more time to spend with family or yourself?
- Are you worried about your marriage, children or parents?

# Distress Assessment Quiz

Do any of the following attributes apply to you? Check the ones that apply:

- Are you struggling to make (financial) ends meet?
- Do you work a lot of nights, weekends or holidays?
- Do you skip vacations?
- Do you feel that you don't have anybody to confide in?
- Are you feeling stressed over how many "yes" answers you just gave?

The more  marks, the greater the likelihood that you are in distress. Change is possible !!!

# BURNOUT



# WHAT IS BURNOUT ?

- **Fatigue**, no matter how much someone rests or sleeps. An **exhaustion that runs deeper than sleep deprivation.**
- **Cynicism** about life or a feeling that **nothing a person does really matters.** Burned out people are generally **disengaged**
- A sense of **inefficacy**. Burned out people feel like they are **exerting significant effort, but are not making any progress** or gaining any recognition.
- Burnout syndrome is **not a medically recognized condition**, thus there is no clear diagnosis or treatment.

# WHAT IS BURNOUT ?

- Constant anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Changes in personality
- Irritability
- Pessimism
- Obsessive thoughts
- Feelings of inadequacy and dread





# WHAT IS BURNOUT ?



- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue
- Disengagement
- Depression
- Sense of helplessness
- Lost or diminished motivation
- Heart palpitations.

# Depression vs. Burnout- Differences

- Burnout is just induced by severe stress.
- Depression is a behavioral disorder affecting one's mood.
- Depressed person is extremely sad.
- Burned out person is exhausted to the point of inability to carry out activities of daily life.

# EFFECTS OF BURNOUT

- Less efficient
- Waste more time
- Self destructive tendencies
- Doing the bare minimum becomes a challenge
- Work quantity and quality declines
- Negative attitude towards those around you
- The feeling no one cares
- Unrelieved, may harden into a fixed element of your outlook
- Left unattended, can contribute to challenges to ethical duties, particularly communication and diligence

# Common Warning Signs (You're Close)

1. You're exhausted
2. You feel detached
3. You can't focus or concentrate
4. You're self medicating
5. You lack work-life balance
6. Your relationships are strained
7. You feel "stuck"
8. You always feel stressed



# Why are Lawyers Burning Out ?

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While most people experience stress in their lives, lawyers and people in the legal profession face a unique conundrum : For many, the drive and dedication that make them successful as a lawyer is also what's causing stress and burning them out !



# In other words.....

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Our personalities and  
Our Profession put us  
at High Risk



# Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue (CF) is **stress resulting from exposure to a traumatized individual**. CF has been described as the convergence of secondary traumatic stress (STS) and cumulative burnout (BO), a state of physical and mental exhaustion caused by a depleted ability to cope with one's everyday environment.



So.....what are we going to do ?







Strategies  
(that work)



impossible

Set *REALISTIC*  
Goals for Yourself

# Set Realistic Goals

## Focus on things you CAN control

Lawyers already have control issues. As long as we're focusing on questions with unknowable answers and circumstances outside of our personal control, this strategy will get us nowhere other than **drained, anxious and overwhelmed !**





**WOOP it up in 2024!!**

- **Wish** – identifying a wish or goal you want to achieve
- **Outcome** – mentally imagine one positive outcome and one
- **Obstacle** that stands in the way
- **Plan** for how you can get around that obstacle

Remember.....

'A goal without a plan is just a wish.'

--Antoine de Saint-Exupery--



“The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, **but to schedule your priorities.**”

- Stephen Covey



# Prioritize your day

- Step back and look at your “to-do” list.
- How many are critical and **MUST** be done that day.
- What are you working to achieve ?
- Create a plan that will work toward your objective.
- THEN schedule your priorities
- DON'T have 10 things on your list – focus on 3 or 4 !



# USE QUICK STRESS-BUSTERS

- Pause – lean back- give your eyes a rest for a couple minutes.
- Take three deep breaths and imagine your muscles relaxing from head to toe.
- Be mindful. Focus on the immediate present. Enjoy the moment.
- Stretch. Walk around your office or go outside.
- Maintain a sense of humor about yourself.
- Vary your routine. Don't get trapped in a rut.
- Prioritize at work and home and manage your time effectively.
- **ASK FOR HELP.** Talk it out with someone you trust.

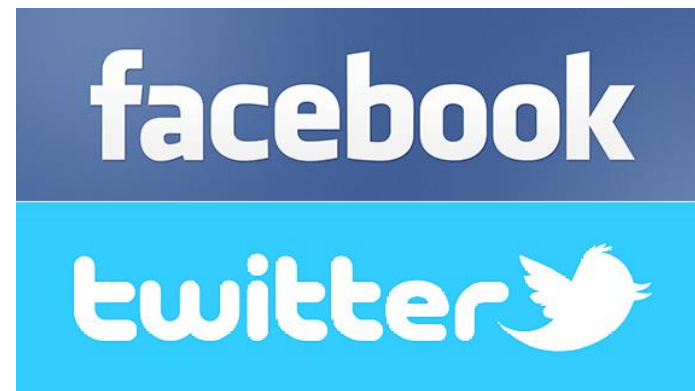




**SET BOUNDARIES**



Disconnect



# THE VIRTUAL WORLD

*“Workers today are ‘never turned off.’ Like our mobile phones, we only go on standby at the end of the day as we crawl into bed, exhausted. Technology was supposed to liberate us from much daily slog...in 2002 fewer than 10% checked work email outside of work, today it is 50% often before we get out of bed...”*

[www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle2018/jan/15](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle2018/jan/15)



# Boundaries: Disconnect

- Turn off notifications.
- Do not charge your phone beside bed.
- Do not keep phone with you during meals, exercise, or social activities.
- Read a book or magazine rather than your phone or tablet.
- Get away from your PC to do some work, take healthy breaks from the screen, and don't take the laptop with you on weekends or vacations.



# Boundaries: Set Limits

- Check email x times per day at designated times (and let clients and colleagues know/expect that).
- Limit Social Media to 10 minutes per platform per day, Use a timer (Hunt et. al, 2018).
- Monitor your use (use monitoring apps, check Screen Time on iPhone, etc.).
- Use Do Not Disturb.



# MORE QUICK STRESS-BUSTERS

- Meditate and/or pray. CONSISTENT stress reduction occurs with only 10 minutes of daily meditation
- Unplug from social media when acutely stressed.
- Exercise.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Cultivate a positive attitude.
- Sleep 8 hours/ night when possible.
- Avoid overuse of alcohol or prescription drugs. These short term “fixes” just mask the problem and can lead to negative health and social consequences.

# Meditation/Mindfulness

- Key to being truly present/not projecting
- Key to identifying our TRUE feelings
- Acknowledge feelings but don't attach (mountain/clouds)
- Breathing meditation
- Reduces "mental chatter"
- Helps eliminate the "what if's"
- Normal for us all to feel WAVES of emotion now



# Nine Steps for Beating Burnout

1. Do not isolate
2. Declutter!
3. Take a *real* vacation.
4. Connect to a greater life purpose.
5. Gratitude.
6. Understand perfectionism vs. excellence
7. Create new experiences and cultivate new skills.
8. Treat yourself like a good friend who needs a break.
9. **REMEMBER – DON'T OVERDO IT !! BE REALISTIC !!**





# Why Are Legal Professionals at High Risk of Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders?

- Conflict driven and adversarial profession
- Emotional detachment
- Win-lose, often rigid thinking (black and white thinking)
- Perfectionism
- Excessive self-reliance

*These traits are great for a successful career but not so great for mental health.*

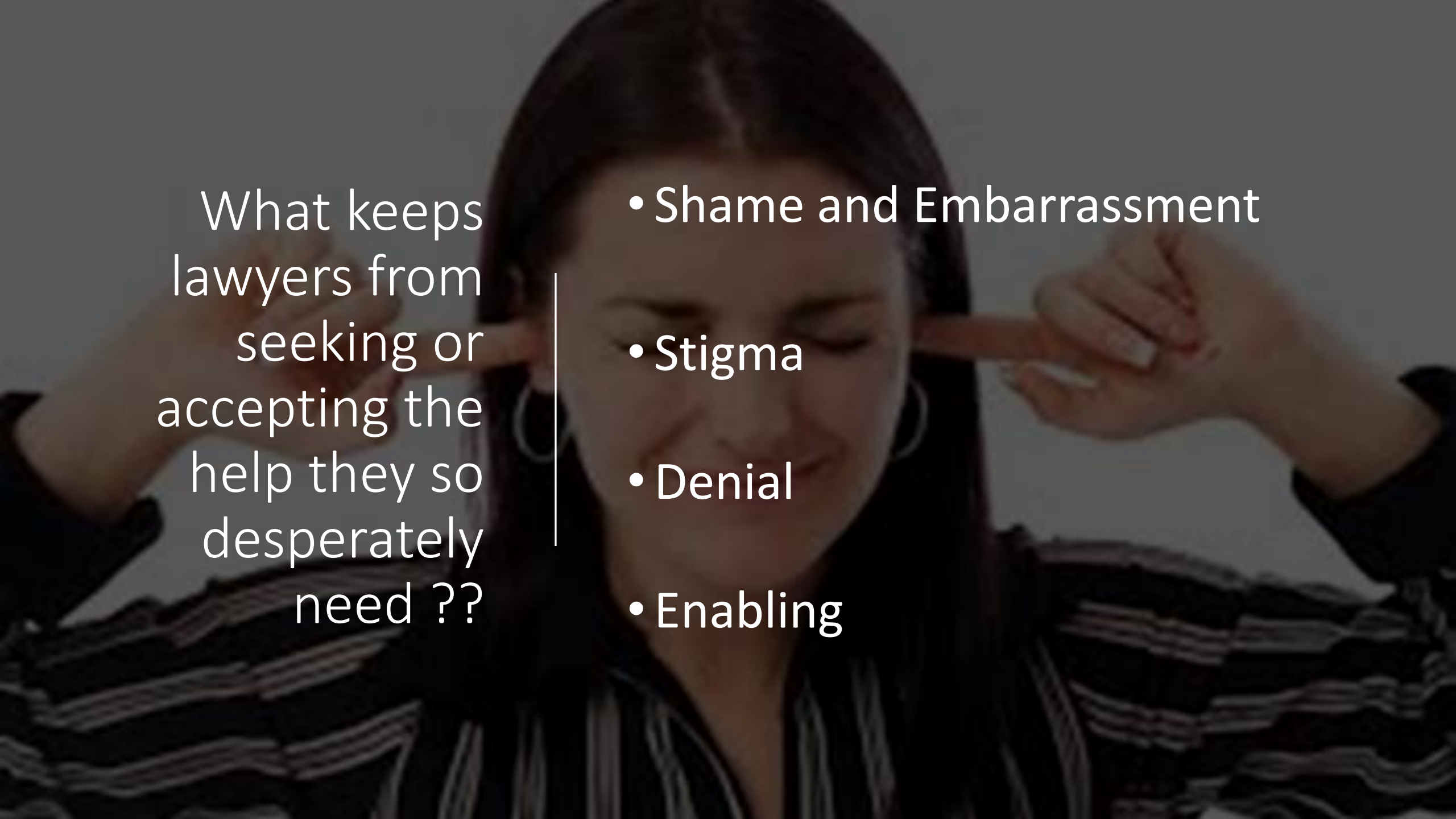
# Why Are Legal Professionals at High Risk of Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders?

- High expectations and accountability
- Lack of work-life balance
- High stress level
- High stress levels & work-weeks >50 hrs. are consistent predictors of SUD's and their severity.
- 67% of attorneys/judges work more than 40 hours/week.
- Inherent pessimism





Lawyers who do not appropriately address their personal issues can harm their clients, destroy their own careers, damage the reputation and viability of their law firms, and sometimes even lose their lives.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, is covering her ears with both hands. Her eyes are closed, and she has a pained or distressed expression. The background is a plain, light color.

What keeps  
lawyers from  
seeking or  
accepting the  
help they so  
desperately  
need ??

- Shame and Embarrassment
- Stigma
- Denial
- Enabling

# Dealing with *Denial*



- The most potent barrier
- Psychological defense mechanism
- Rationalize and minimize behavior
- Honestly believe they are under control
- I'm not one of "them" mentality



# THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

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- Lawyers are trained to deal with and solve problems. Thus, it is most difficult for the attorney to seek help since by doing so he feels he is admitting failure.
- Complicating this problem further is the tendency of the attorney's or judge's peers to indulge in a conspiracy of silence (enabling) and lighten the normal stresses of our profession.

# ENABLING

- Removes motivation to change
- Provides evidence that fuels denial
- Allows cons of treatment to outweigh pros
- PREVENTS treatment of a progressive disease
- Greater harm to career, family and well being
- Not good for YOU either !!

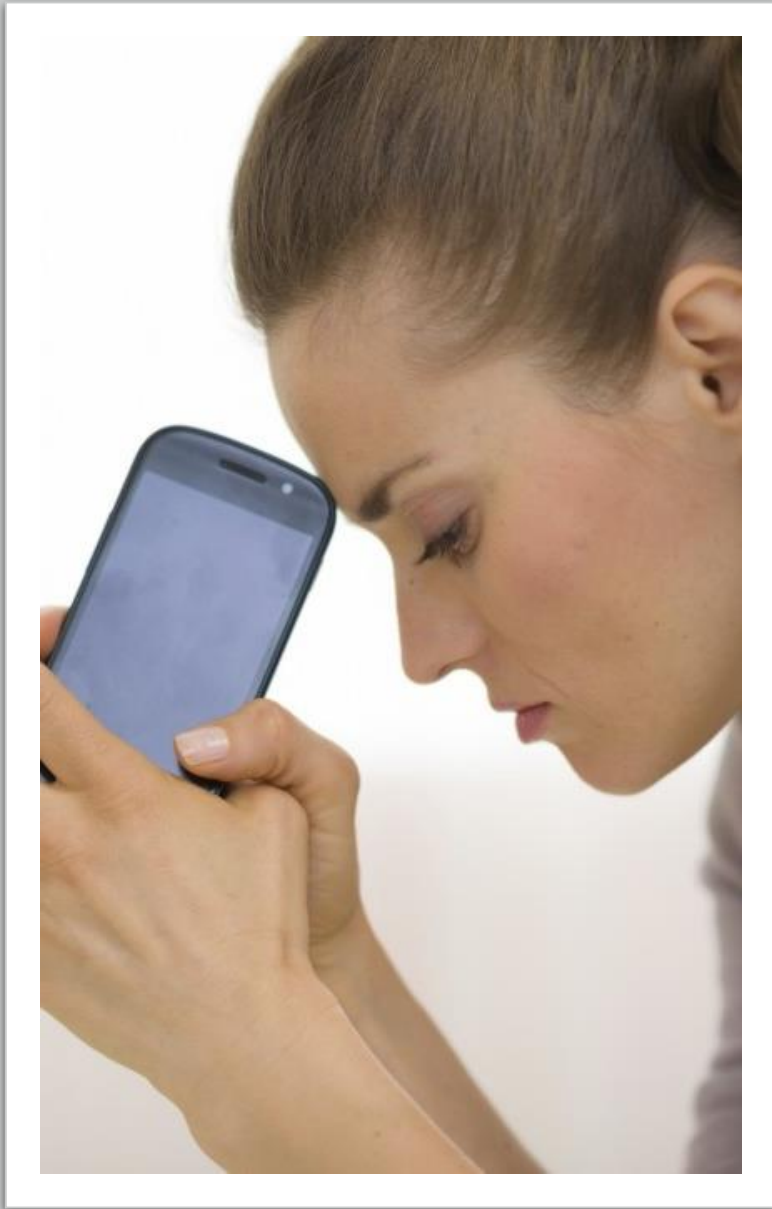


# What can YOU do ??



Although it is difficult, remember that your end goal is to help motivate the impaired lawyer or judge to seek professional help they so desperately need.



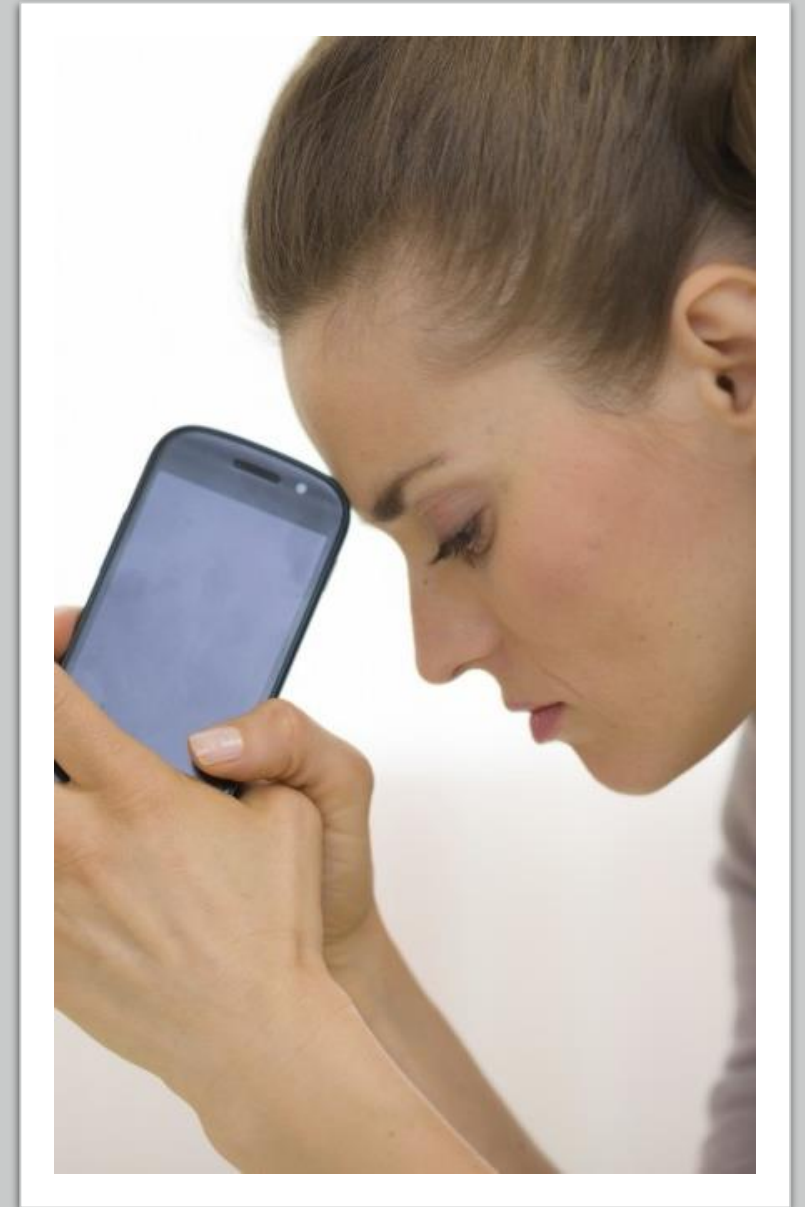


## To Call LCL...or Not to Call

- I'm ok. I can work this out for myself.
- I'm not like a "real" alcoholic anyway.
- I want help but I don't want anyone to know.
- Will I be reported to Discipline?
- I already tried to get help and it didn't work.
- I don't have the money to pay for treatment.
- What will people say about me if I ask for help ?
- It's no use – nobody will understand – I give up !

# To Call LCL...or Not to Call

- Is this really any of my business?
- I want to help but I don't want to get involved.
- Will I harm his/her or the firm's reputation?
- Must I report him or her to Discipline?
- I already tried to help and it didn't work.
- Let's wait and see. Maybe it will get better.
- I really don't have time for someone else's problems.



# *Brian's Big Five*

- Express Gratitude for what you have
- Create 1 hour a day to think and relax
- Do one thing you love to do every day
- Set clear and realistic goals
- Let go of Fear





**Remember, every month, every day, every *moment* is the opportunity to live a new cycle— we don't have to wait until a new year to start a cycle! Being a healthy lawyer is *part* of being a good lawyer.**

## The Burned Out Lawyer- An Occupational Hazard ?

Thank you all for attending today's Continuing Legal Education program.

If you have any questions that were not answered or would like to contact me for any reason, please call or email me **confidentially** at the following:

**Brian S. Quinn, Esq., Education and Outreach Coordinator**

**LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS of PA, INC.**

**(717) 460-3385**

**[brian@lclpa.org](mailto:brian@lclpa.org)**

# LCL will provide you with FREE LITERATURE

Education and understanding are the keys to both personal recovery and providing effective assistance to others. LCL maintains a library of books, pamphlets, and e-literature covering over 200 mental health and substance use related topics. We make these resources available to you at no charge. Available topics include:

- 12 Step Recovery Guides • Addiction Science • Alcohol Use Disorders • Anxiety • Bipolar Disorder • Chemical Dependency • Codependency • Co-Occurring Disorders • Depression • Eating Disorders • Family Recovery • Gambling • Grief & Loss • Interventions • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder • Pain Management • Prescription Drug Misuse • Process/Behavioral Addictions • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) • Sexual or Love Addiction • Stress • Substance Use Disorders

Didn't See What You Are Interested In? Send us an email at [admin@lclpa.org](mailto:admin@lclpa.org) We will do our best to locate literature on the mental health and/or substance use topics of your choosing.

# National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being Recommendations

**"The Path to Lawyer Well-Being:  
Practical Recommendations For Positive Change"**

**<http://lawyerwellbeing.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Lawyer-Wellbeing-Report.pdf>**

# Call the Lawyers Assistance Program in **YOUR** State

## **Directory of Lawyers Assistance Programs by State**

- [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer\\_assistance/resources/lap\\_programs\\_by\\_state.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/lap_programs_by_state.html)



# How to Join the National Well-Being MOVEMENT

## **“WELL-BEING TOOLKIT FOR LAWYERS AND LEGAL EMPLOYERS”**

Created By Anne M. Brafford For Use By The American Bar Association

[https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer\\_assistance/lis\\_colap\\_well-being\\_toolkit\\_for\\_lawyers\\_legal\\_employers.authcheckdam.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/lis_colap_well-being_toolkit_for_lawyers_legal_employers.authcheckdam.pdf)

## **“Well-Being Toolkit Nutshell: 80 Tips For Lawyer Thriving”**

[https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer\\_assistance/lis\\_colap\\_Well-Being\\_Toolkit\\_Flier\\_Nutshell.authcheckdam.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/lis_colap_Well-Being_Toolkit_Flier_Nutshell.authcheckdam.pdf)

# Additional Resources

“Need a helping hand? Here’s what a lawyers assistance program can do for you” [http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/podcast\\_monthly\\_episode\\_97](http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/podcast_monthly_episode_97)

“What Are Partners’ Duties When a Colleague is Impaired? Draft Opinion Calls for These Steps” [http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/what\\_are\\_partners\\_duties\\_when\\_a\\_colleague\\_is\\_impaired\\_draft\\_opinion\\_calls\\_for\\_these\\_steps](http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/what_are_partners_duties_when_a_colleague_is_impaired_draft_opinion_calls_for_these_steps)