

Distressed? You're not alone.



Considered High Risk Profession:

Anybody know what the leading cause of premature death is among attorneys?



Considered High Risk Profession:

FROM A RECENT STUDY

- **21 % hazardous and potentially alcohol-dependent drinking**
- **28 % and 19% indicating symptoms of significant depression and anxiety, respectively**



Substance Use and Depression Disorders

But why would these problems be greater in the legal profession?





Depression

Certain personality traits appear to make us more susceptible to depression, while other traits seem to be protective. This may also be linked somehow to brain chemistry.



What Personality Traits are Attracted to the Field of Law?



Lawyers vs. General Population (Susan Daicoff, PhD, JD)

AS PRE-LAW STUDENTS

Characterized by:

- ❑ Need for dominance and leadership
- ❑ More authoritarian
- ❑ Low interest in emotions and other's feelings
- ❑ Normal levels of psychological distress



Lawyers vs. General Population (Susan Daicoff, PhD, JD)

EFFECTS OF LAW SCHOOL

- ❑ Increased aggression under stress
- ❑ Preference for competition
- ❑ Failure to rely on peers for social support
- ❑ Increased tension, insecurity, and substance abuse (confirmed by numerous studies)



From a Survey of Law Student Well-Being

- Approximately 3400 law students responded to the survey
- 18% screened positive for depression
- 17% screened positive for anxiety disorder
- 27% screened positive for eating disorder
- 6% thought seriously of suicide past 12 mos
- 9% hurt themselves past 12 months



Lawyers vs. General Population (Susan Daicoff, PhD, JD)

AS LAWYERS

- ❑ Competitive, argumentative, aggressive
- ❑ Low interest in emotional concerns (their's or other's); disproportionate preference for "Thinking" versus "Feeling"
- ❑ Higher incidence of distress and substance abuse
- ❑ *Pessimistic outlook on life*



Pessimists Do Better At Law (Martin Seligman, PhD)

- Tested the entire entering class of Virginia Law School (1990) with a measure of optimism versus pessimism and then followed these students for all three years.
- Pessimists outperformed the more optimistic students on traditional measures of success such as grades and law journal.
- Pessimism level was higher than the beliefs of clinically depressed individuals.



Form of Pessimism in Lawyers

- Pessimism was internal (its all my fault if things go wrong)
- Stable (bad things happen frequently)
- Global instead of situational attribution (the problem is pervasive—will ruin my career)
- While positive events are external, unstable and situational (when good things do occasionally happen, happen by chance—not because of me)
- **Does this pessimistic thinking SOUND FAMILIAR??**



Prof. Krieger: Thinking like a lawyer **“is a legal skill, not a life skill.”**

- Your skills as a lawyer are useful in certain professional contexts, but need not and should not dictate how you approach your personal life nor assume your entire identity.



STRESS !!!

(And how to Cope with the legal profession)

The advertisement is set against a background image of a person's hands clasped in prayer, with a bright, sunlit outdoor scene in the background. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Stressed? Depressed? Drinking too much?

The confidential Lawyer Assistance Program is here for you.

Call **877-LAP-4-HELP** (527-4435)
or email **LAP@calbar.ca.gov**

- ➔ Free Assessment & Counseling
- ➔ Lawyer Support Group meetings



Thinking Vs. Circumstances

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STRESS!!

“These things are neither good nor bad; is thinking that makes it so.”

Hamlet, William Shakespeare



The Stress Response

Stressor

Adrenal Glands (produce hormones)

Arousal of organs and tissues

Readiness for direct, decisive, physical action

Physical action

Physical inaction

Return to Equilibrium

Tension and Distress



WORRY



When it comes to managing
stress, your MIND is your own
WORST ENEMY

“I’ve known many troubles in my life—most of which didn’t happen.”

Mark Twain



We have a Negativity Bias

(Rick Hanson, PhD, Neuropsychologist)

- Historically, dangers were frequent and often life-threatening
- Those who did a better job of scanning the horizon for the next danger were more likely to survive
- Therefore, our brains are hardwired to go negative in order to ensure our survival



The special power of fear and negativity

- We routinely overestimate threats
- We underestimate opportunities
- Negative experiences sensitize the brain to the negative
- Hanson: “The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences but Teflon for positive experiences.”



THE POWER OF NOW



MINDFULNESS

A meditation practice:

The practice of paying absolute attention to where you are and what you are doing

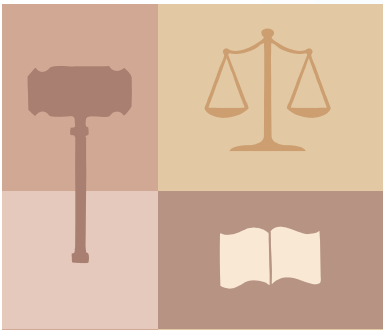


Viktor Frankl

- We cannot always control our circumstances
- We can control how we respond

ASSISTANCE

- **SUPPORTIVE RECOVERY**—
long-term assistance and monitoring
- **SHORT-TERM COUNSELING**—
2 no-cost sessions for any member
- **CAREER COUNSELING**—2 no
cost sessions for any member
- **THE OTHER BAR**





Confidentiality

All services are completely confidential.

Participation in the LAP is ***confidential as provided by statute.***





Managing Client Expectations



Pace



CELL PHONE NUMBER



What were futurists writing fifty years ago?



How Did We Get Here?

- The pace of life has changed tremendously in our lifetimes
- The practice of law has changed even more rapidly and significantly
- We weren't designed for this pace



Time Shifting

- Its not only about TIME MANAGEMENT
- Its also about deciding HOW HARD and for HOW LONG you are willing to drive on
- Its about creating some *balance* in your life
- Its about creating spaces and places in your life where you can “downshift” to a more normal pace