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NEW HAMPSHIRE



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DECEMBER 2019

Newsletter

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NH LCL Monthly Meeting

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL) is a monthly meeting on the
SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
of NH lawyers, judges and law students who come together for free,
confidential peer support for any issue that interferes with
professional competence. Absolutely confidential.

December 10 at 6:00 p.m.

Airport Diner, 2280 Brown Ave, Manchester

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The NH Bar Association has made it possible for the bar-wide distribution of the monthly NHLAP Newsletter as of May, 2019. NHLAP is sincerely grateful for the leadership and assistance of NHBA in this endeavor.

WHY RELAPSE IS *NOT* FAILURE.

One of the most enduring myths related to addiction is that the addicted person simply just needs to stop. If an addict cannot stop, then as the myth states, that person is weak, lacking in strong moral character and self-control. This attitude has endured for decades, despite the clear scientific evidence that this is simply **not** true.

ADDICTION IS A BRAIN DISEASE

“Scientists have developed a detailed picture of how addiction disrupts pathways and processes that underlie desire, habit formation, pleasure, learning, emotional regulation, and cognition. Addiction causes hundreds of changes in the brain’s anatomy, chemistry and cell-to-cell signaling. By taking advantage of the brain’s marvelous plasticity, addiction remolds neurocircuits to assign supreme value to cocaine or heroin or gin, at the expense of other interests such as health, work, family, or life itself.” Fran Smith, “How Science is Unlocking the Secrets of Addiction,” *National Geographic*, September 2007.

70%-90% of substance abusers who attempt sobriety experience at least one relapse.

It then comes as no surprise that those who suffer from addictions cannot simply “flip a switch” and stop. The addicted brain is rewired to seek what feeds the addiction. Everyday triggers: sounds, sights, smells, routines, dates on a calendar, even therapy itself can start a cascade of brain chemicals that seek out the source of the addiction. This isn’t a matter of willpower; it is a matter of allowing the brain to heal and rewire itself until it is again healthy. Neuroscientists reviewing MRI brain scans have discovered this process of brain rewiring can take up to 4 years of sustained sobriety.

Common Relapse Triggers:

HALT Avoid becoming too hungry, angry, lonely or tired. Occupying your mind to meet basic human needs and then routine self-care are the first steps in retraining your brain to beat an addiction.

Social Pressure New people and places are crucial to kick destructive habits. Building sober social connections and support is a must.

Untreated Mental Illness Diagnosing and effectively treating depression, anxiety or any other mental health condition will help curb the urge to self-medicate with addictive substances.

Sleep Deprivation Exhaustion impairs the ability to control impulses and make healthy decisions. Treating insomnia decreases the risk of relapse.

“Addiction is very much like any chronic physical illness or disease. As with chemical addiction, patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, and hypertension frequently fail to comply with their ongoing treatments-relapsing, often with dire consequences.” David Sack, M.D., “Why Relapse Isn’t a Sign of Failure,” *Psychology Today*, October 19, 2012.

Who among us hasn’t stuck to that low salt diet or to the recommended exercise regimen the doctor prescribed? Who doesn’t know of the cardiac patient who refuses to stop eating french fries and cheeseburgers even though the next heart attack may be eminent? Relapse in substance misuse no different, but we often add a heavy dose of stigmatization to go along with the already difficult path to sobriety.

Relapse doesn’t absolve the abuser from taking responsibility for managing his or her own care. The responsibility lies in both understanding the disease and making the necessary lifestyle changes to change behaviors that compel an addiction. It’s never a matter of sheer will. It takes a multifaceted approach often consisting of medication, therapy, peer support,

It simply makes medical sense that relapse is common.

PUBLIC FACES OF RELAPSE AND RECOVERY



JAMIE LEE CURTIS Golden Globe Winning Actress, New York Times Bestselling Children’s Book Author, Comedienne, Activist. Prescribed pain killers in 1989 after cosmetic surgery triggering an opioid addiction and alcohol misuse. Sober since 1999.

“I was ahead of the curve on the opioid epidemic. I had a one- year run, stealing, conniving. No one knew. No one. I’m breaking the cycle that has basically destroyed the lives of generations in my family. Getting sober remains by single greatest accomplishment...bigger than my husband, bigger than both of my children and bigger than any work, success or failure. Anything.” -*People*, November 2018.



EMINEM (Michael Mathers). Academy Award and Grammy Winning Rapper, Record Producer, Actor. Prescription Pill/Opioid Addiction, Methadone Overdose 2007. Sober since 2009.

“I knew that I had to change my life. Bucking addiction is a f*ing tricky thing. I think I relapsed

family support and a complete change in coping strategies.

Relapse doesn’t mean failure. It means that there is more healing to do. Don’t give up.



MATTHEW PERRY Emmy Winning Actor, Comedian, Producer, Playwright. A skiing accident in 2013 led to a Vicodin prescription and a subsequent addiction to opioids. He credits helping others with addiction as a key part of his maintaining sobriety.

“I had a big problem with pills and alcohol, and I couldn’t stop. Eventually things got so bad that I couldn’t hide it, and then everybody knew.” -*People*, August 2013.

*Public relapse February 2019. Hospitalized for gastrointestinal perforation. Tweeted “I got kicked out of therapy today,” 2/6/19. Twitter erupted with celebrities and fans alike with resounding alarm looking answers to his current state of health. He responded with a Tweet, “Easy guys, it was just one session. I’m back in therapy where I belong.” -*USA Today*, February 7, 2019.



KEITH URBAN Grammy Winning Country Music Artist, Music Producer, TV Music Coach. Cocaine addiction. First rehab, 1998. Last rehab to date, 2006.

Upon his entrance to the Betty Ford Center for cocaine addiction in October 2006, he issued the following

within...three weeks? And within a month it had ramped right back up to where I was before. That's what really freaked me out. That's when I knew: I either get help or I'm going to die." – *Rolling Stone* 2011.



ROBERT DOWNEY JR. Multi Award-Winning Actor, Producer, Director, Activist and Forbes list of Hollywood's highest paid actors. (Net worth approximately \$260 million). Very public battle with substance misuse, (Heroin, Crack Cocaine, Alcohol) relapse and resulting legal problems between 1986 and 2003 including court ordered rehabilitation and incarceration. First arrest in 2001. Sober since 2003. Pardoned by Governor Jerry Brown of California in 2015 of several drug offenses, DUI & carrying a concealed weapon.

“Job ONE is to get out of that cave. A lot of people do get out but don't change. So, the thing is to get out and recognize the significance of that aggressive denial of your fate, come through the crucible forged into stronger metal.”- *Vanity Fair*, September 2014.

“I believe the most difficult situations will resolve themselves if you are persistent and don't give up entirely. And that's what I never did. I never gave up.” - *Rolling Stone*, August 2008.



statement: “I deeply regret the hurt this has caused Nicole (his wife Nicole Kidman) and the ones who love and support me. One can never let one's guard down on recovery, and I'm afraid that I have.” - Personal Statement to the Press, 2006.



SIR ELTON JOHN Academy Award and Grammy Winning Musician and Songwriter, Producer, Activist, Philanthropist. Knighthood & Coat of Arms conferred by Queen Elizabeth II (1998). Icon. Cocaine addiction, Alcohol addiction, Eating Disorder from 1974-1990.

“I lost my own humanity in an excess of drugs, alcoholism and eating disorders. During my addictions in the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic surfaced, and the government took no notice of it. I lost so many friends to AIDS and I didn't put myself on the line because of the addictions I was going through. The drugs turned me into a monster. I had the luck to meet Ryan White and his family. I wanted to help them, but they ended up helping me much more. Ryan was the spark that helped me recover from my addictions and start the AIDS foundation. Within 6 months I became sober, and clean, and have been for the last 27 years... Through my career and humanitarian work, I've seen how people can be pulled together. The human spirit is the most powerful thing in the world, and when it embraces kindness and does good things, wonderful things happen.”- Speech to Harvard University November 2017, upon accepting the Peter J. Gomes Humanitarian Award for his work fighting HIV and AIDS through the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

“I still dream, twice a week at least, that I've taken cocaine and I have it up my nose. And it's very vivid and it's very upsetting, but at least it is a wake-up call [to stay vigilant].”-NPR, 2012

LET'S START A DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY PEER SUPPORT GROUP!

NHLAP would like to start a monthly, open and confidential peer support group specific to depression and anxiety. If you are interested in building this valuable, free resource, please come to a planning meeting on

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

at 5:00 P.M.

AT THE NHLAP OFFICE

**2 ½ BEACON STREET, SUITE 163
CONCORD**

All judges, lawyers and law students welcome. RSVP confidentially at t.harrington@lapnh.org



NHLAP Wishes You and Yours a Very Happy, Healthy and Restorative Holiday Season.



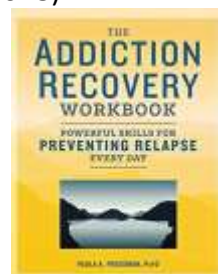
MONTHLY RESOURCE



SPOTLIGHT

BOOK PICK:

The Addiction Recovery Workbook: Powerful Skills for Preventing Relapse Everyday by Paula A. Freedman, PsyD., Althea Press (2018).



Paula Freedman, PsyD is a clinical psychologist who specializes in addiction, anxiety disorders and eating disorders. "Preventing relapse with practical coping skills for everyday life is where the work of a successful recovery starts."

PODCAST PICK:

That Sober Guy Podcast: Symptoms Leading to Relapse (Ep. 51). Shane Ramer battled a 17-year alcohol and drug addiction until he sought treatment in 2013. Less than a year later he started That Sober Guy Podcast as a way to share in his own recovery and allow others to share theirs.



NY Times/Getty Images

WHAT IS NHLAP?

We are a confidential, independent 501(c)(3) non-profit to assist NH lawyers, judges and law students with any issue that may impact or impair the ability to practice law. Many lawyers think we only help with substance misuse. Although that is a very important part of NHLAP, it is not the sole focus of our work. We help with anything that has become problematic. Some examples are depression, anxiety and other mental health issues; grief; cognitive limitations resulting from aging; eating disorders; professional dissatisfaction and burn-out; work-life imbalance and time management strategies.

We are here to help before consequences of these issues become problematic, public or both. We are not part of the NH court system nor the NH Bar. Because we are solely funded by a per attorney mandatory assessment, we are akin to an additional lawyer insurance policy- we can help individuals or legal employers understand the risks in ignoring these very real issues and point to concrete solutions.

We are your resource. We are here to help make your legal practice something you enjoy, not something you endure.

603-491-0282

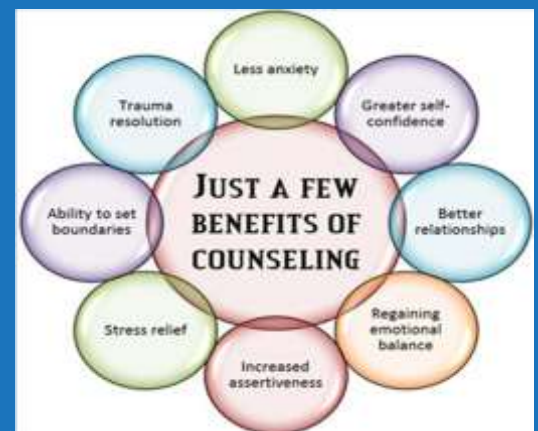
Add NHLAP to your social media accounts to receive wellness updates and links to wellness articles as they relate to the law. We are on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. Just click on the links on the first page to see how we are harnessing the power of social media to keep you better informed.

QUICK TIP

Invest in Good Counseling

Therapy is 32x more effective than cash.

Research by psychologist Chris Boyce compared data sets from thousands of reports on wellbeing. They looked at how wellbeing changed either due to therapy or a sudden increase in income (like a pay raise or winning the lottery).



He found that we get more happiness for our buck by paying for therapy. It would take a \$40,000 raise/ windfall to equal the wellbeing benefit from \$1,300 worth of therapy.