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& Education since 2007

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New Hampshire
**LAWYERS
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

February 2020 Newsletter

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Volume III | Issue II | New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program

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NHLAP PEER SUPPORT

We have TWO separate peer support meetings for NH Judges,
Lawyers and Law Students now up and running!

NH LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS

February 6

NHLAP DEPRESSION & ANXIETY PEER SUPPORT

February 12

SEE INSIDE FLYERS FOR DETAILS!

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NHLAP DEPRESSION & ANXIETY PEER SUPPORT:

Questions Answered

Lawyers, judges and law students suffer some of the highest rates of clinical depression and anxiety. In 2016, the ABA CoLAP study found that 26% of lawyers suffer from depression, 22% suffer from debilitating stress and 18% suffer from anxiety. In 2018, 6% of law students reported suicidal ideation while 63% of law students reported they would not seek help with mental health issues because they feared it's impact on the admission process. In 2019, the CoLAP Judicial Survey revealed 80% of responding judges found that stress impacts 80% of their decisions. 17% of judges cannot wait for the workday to end because of stress. Even worse, 2% of responding judges reported suicidal ideation.

These statistics match the work at NH Lawyers Assistance. So far this year, 31% of calls are solely about issues relating to depression or anxiety (separate from any other issue such as alcohol misuse, grief, gambling or licensing issues). Last year, 38% of those seeking help identified depression or anxiety as the reason they were prompted to seek assistance.

Depression and anxiety are real medical issues that are easily identified and treated by a licensed medical professional. Yet, most people with these issues do not seek professional help because of the stigma. The need for peer support is clear and urgent.

The first NHLAP Depression and Anxiety Support Group met on January 15, 2020 as both a planning meeting and a peer support meeting. There were many questions asked at that first meeting. Here are the questions posed with the answers provided by NHLAP.

**1 IN 5 ADULTS IN THE U.S.
EXPERIENCE MENTAL
ILLNESS IN THEIR LIFETIME.**
NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI), 2019

Q: Is the Depression & Anxiety Support Group truly confidential?

A: Yes. NH Supreme Court Rule 58 provides that all NHLAP staff and volunteers are bound by confidentiality. By participating in this peer support group, a participant is a NHLAP volunteer both providing and receiving peer support. Thus, not only does NHLAP have an obligation to guard absolute confidentiality, so do all peer support participants. Rule 58.5 specifically contemplates confidentiality for NHLAP peer support groups attended by NH judges, lawyers and law students.

Q: Does NH Rules of Professional Conduct 8.3 apply to peer support meetings?

A: No. NH Supreme Court Rule 58 specially states that the requirement of 8.3 is suspended for NHLAP employees and volunteers. Thus, the rule requiring reporting fellow attorneys if an issue “raises substantial question of a lawyer’s fitness” is suspended for participation in NHLAP facilitated peer support.

Q: Do I have to have an actual diagnosis to participate in peer support?

A: No. If you feel that you are stressed or depressed, please come for support. All issues exist on a continuum. There is no requirement for formal diagnosis or treatment. Just feeling the need for peer support is more than enough reason to participate.

Q: Is there a mental health professional involved in the peer support meeting?

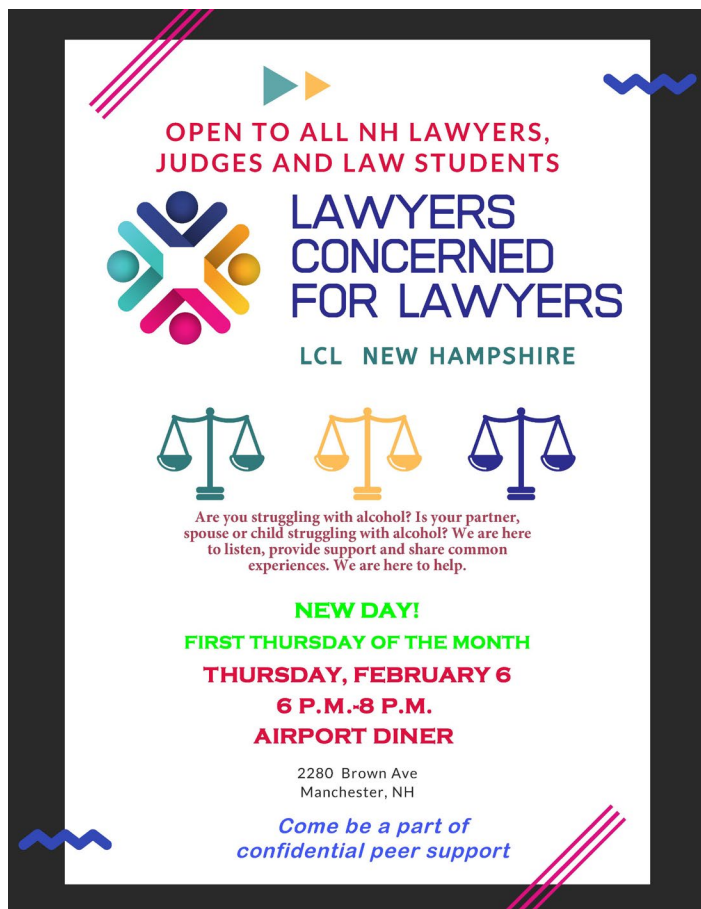


Q: What are some signs I may be suffering from depression?

A: Suicidal thoughts or planning; Little interest or pleasure in doing things you used to enjoy; Feeling hopeless; Insomnia; Sleeping too much; Feeling tired or lethargic; Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.

Q: What are some signs I may be suffering from anxiety?

A: Long term fixation/worry in the outcome of events; Stress that is out of proportion to the impact of an event; Lack of concentration; Unwanted, intrusive thoughts of worry; Insomnia, Nausea, Heart palpitations, Sweating; Worry that disrupts daily functioning.



Come be part of confidential peer support for those struggling with, recovering from or thriving after issues with alcohol.

A: No. This is truly peer support. We are here to share experiences and provide “lay person” support and insights. No one offers a diagnosis or a definitive answer. We help each other feel less alone in our collective struggles.

Q: Do I have to share if I come to a meeting?

A: No. Feel free to just sit and listen. Share as little or as much as you are comfortable.

Sources: “The Prevalence of Substance Use & Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys.” Krill, Johnson & Albert. *American Society of Addiction Medicine*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Jan/Feb 2016.

“Suffering in Silence: The Survey of Law Student Wellbeing and the Reluctance of Law Students to seek Help for Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns.” Organ, Jaffe & Bender. *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 66, No. 1, Autumn 2018.

“CoLAP 2019 National Judicial Stress & Resilience Survey” ABA CoLAP working group including The National Judicial College, ABA Judicial Division and ABA Coalition of Lawyers Assistance Programs. <https://abacolap.wordpress.com/2019/11/07/national-survey-of-judges-released-at-the-2019-aba-colap-national-conference-for-lawyer-assistance-programs/>

In an effort to create a more vibrant and relevant LCL Peer Support Group, the regular meeting date has changed. It is now the **FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH.**

Lawyers Caring for Lawyers predates all Lawyers Assistance Programs. Approximately 40 years ago, a group of lawyers and judges with alcohol issues decided to come together for peer support. Because it was not desirable to share open AA meetings, these judges and lawyers supported one another in a private, confidential setting following the AA tradition. In 2020, there are LCL peer assistance groups in all 50 states. There is also the International Lawyers in AA (ILAA) which provides world-wide peer support for lawyers with alcohol issues.



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. Just 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.

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QUICK TIP

Derail Catastrophic Thinking

Consider your options when catastrophic thinking threatens to take over your perspective and mood.



Find a quiet, uninterrupted space. Fill in the blanks: I am afraid of _____. The worst-case scenario would be _____. On a scale of 1-10, the likelihood of this happening is _____. If this does happen, I can do _____ and _____ instead of worry, feel helpless or overwhelmed.

Then breathe, slow and deeply for a series of 3 counts, in and out.

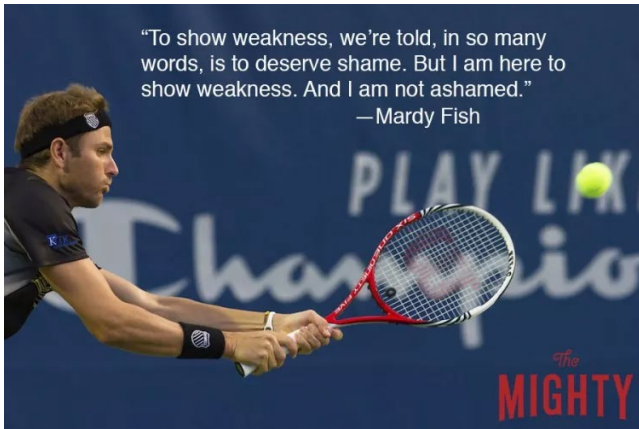
Quick life hack for stress and anxiety.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

TERRI M. HARRINGTON, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NHLAP

For Inspiration

On coping with depression:

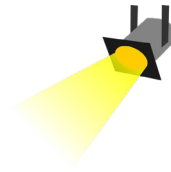


On mental health advocacy:

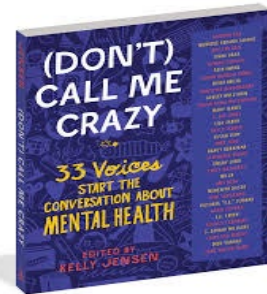


MONTHLY RESOURCE

SPOTLIGHT



(Don't) Call Me Crazy: 33 Voices Start the Conversation About Mental Health Edited by Kelly Jensen. Workman Publishing. 2016 "A lively, compelling anthology about mental health by over 30 contributors from a variety of backgrounds." -Kirkus Reviews. **A Washington Post Best Children's Book of 2018.** Essential help in starting open and honest conversations about mental health. It was written with young adults in mind, but don't let that deter you from diving in.



MOVIE: "It's Kind of a Funny Story" 2010

Focus Features. Starring Kier Gilchrist, Emma Roberts, Viola Davis & Zach Galifianakis. Directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck. **The National Alliance on Mental Illness ranks this as one the best films about mental health.** "[P]atients are not portrayed as mad or insane- [the hospital] is a safe place where people struggling are getting help and using humor as a relief from the serious conditions that brought them there."

