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# January 2019 Newsletter

Volume II | Issue I | New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program

[WWW.NHLAP.COM](http://WWW.NHLAP.COM)

## *NH LCL Monthly Meeting*

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers 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.

February 13, 2019 6:00 p.m.

The Airport Diner, 2280 Brown Ave, Manchester

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Monthly Resource Spotlight

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Lawyers are prone to constant self-doubt as the nature of practicing law places lawyers in the seat of “trusted expert.” Lawyers are supposed to have all the answers. Impostor Syndrome plays upon a normal feeling of self-doubt and exacerbates it to a state of anxiety. Impostor Syndrome is a state of chronic self-doubt that causes lawyers to fear they will be exposed as incompetent even though there is no empirical evidence to support this fear. The anxiety that results from this chronic self-doubt causes even the most successful lawyer to second guess themselves no matter how well they perform.

## Poser Feelings Typify High Achievers

Being “found out” is the hallmark of Impostor Syndrome. Impostor Syndrome can affect anyone in any field because it is the inability to internalize and own earned success.

## 70% of Professionals Experience Imposter Syndrome at Some Point in their Career

Overcoming Impostor Syndrome is not easy, but it is necessary. Why? Because fearing “being found out” is both exhausting and it makes one miserable. Feeling anxious and insecure uses tremendous mental energy and damages overall well-being.

Overcoming Impostor Syndrome is not a matter of will. It often takes the help of a professional to silence the inner voice that constantly fears inadequacy. A conscious effort is needed to replace the negative self-talk with positive thoughts based upon neutral evidence of successes. With time, practice and perseverance, positive self-talk will become automatic. Because thoughts define feelings, positive self-talk will replace negative feelings of inadequacy and anxiety.

## Types of Imposter Syndrome:

The Perfectionist Setting excessively high goal and if goals not met, experiencing major self-doubt and anxiety.

Micromanager  
Inability to Delegate  
100% Perfection Expected 100% of Time

Superman/Superwoman Belief that working harder than anyone else will mask the fact that they are not as good as their colleagues.

Always the Last One Out of the Office  
Finds Downtime Wasteful  
Inability to Relax  
Personal Life Sacrificed for Work

Natural Genius Must get everything right the first time without the need to take time to master their craft.

Excelling without Much Effort  
Straight A Standard  
Dislike of Mentoring  
Not Performing Well Provokes Shame

The Soloist Asking for help is not an option because refusing assistance validates worth.

Never Wanting Anyone’s Help  
Must Accomplish Things on Own  
Asking for Help Reveals Weakness

The Expert Competence is based on what and how much is known and believing that one can never know enough so constant fearing being exposed as unknowledgeable.



## FACES OF IMPOSTOR SYNDROME



**SONIA SOTOMAYOR** “I have spent my years since Princeton, while at law school and in my various professional jobs, not feeling completely a part of the worlds I inhabit. I am always looking over my shoulder wondering if I measure up.”



**DAVID BOWIE** “I had enormous self-image problems and very low self-esteem, which I hid behind obsessive writing and performing. I really felt so utterly inadequate. I thought that work was the only thing of value.”



**MAYA ANGELOU** “I have written 11 books, but each time I think, ‘uh oh, they’re going to find out now. I’ve run a game and they’re going to find me out.’ ”



**TOM HANKS** “No matter what we’ve done, there comes a point where you think, ‘How did I get here? When are they going to discover that I am, in fact, a fraud and take everything away from me?’ ”

## Fear Anything Outside Comfort Zone

Constantly seeking Certifications and Trainings to Prove Worth  
Feeling Like Never Knows Enough

Learning to value constructive criticism is a must in moving past Imposter Syndrome. One must reframe thoughts about self-improvement and mentoring as a positive way to enhance both professional competence and professional satisfaction.

Factors outside a person can greatly affect Imposter Syndrome. A sense of belonging fosters confidence. Institutional discrimination can spur on negative feelings. This is especially true when there are stereotypes about competence such as women in scientific fields or international students vs. American students. These outside factors require institutional self-reflection and positive, meaningful change. A professional environment of inclusiveness, support and group acknowledgement of successes goes a long way in countering Imposter Syndrome.

The only difference between a person who experiences Imposter Syndrome and one who does not is in the way they respond to challenges. Most people experience moments of self-doubt. The goal is having the insight and the tools to talk one’s self down from negative self-talk to avoid moving into a state of anxiety. Its okay to have an impostor moment, but it isn’t okay to have an impostor life.



**LADY GAGA** “I still sometimes feel like a loser kid in high school and I just have to pick myself up and tell myself that I’m a superstar every morning so that I can get through this day and be for my fans what they need me to be.”

## 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.

**1-877-224-6060**



## QUICK TIP

### Organize Your Work Space

A relatively neat and organized office clears creates the space to be more productive and less stressed.

You have time to organize your office because the disorganization costs you time every single day.



### Purge Your Office

### Establish Work Zones

- Main Work Area
- Reference Area
- Supply Area

### Get a Good Labeler

Take the time to label shelves, bins, baskets and drawers.

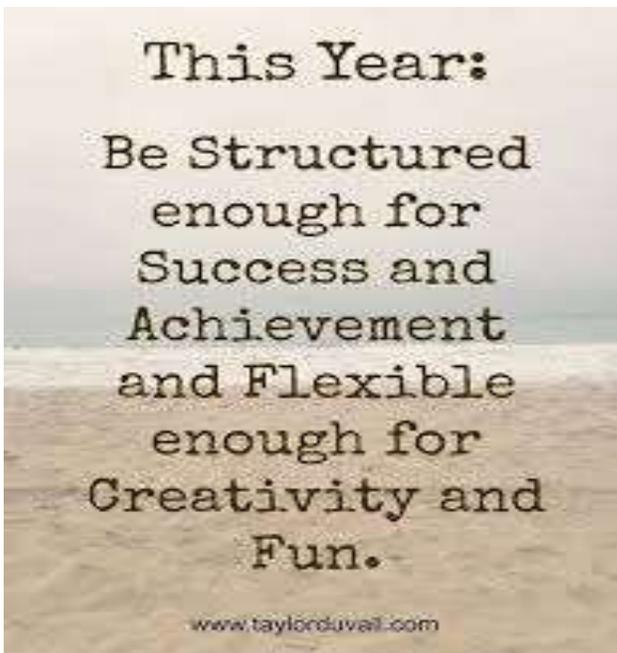
### Use More Digital Storage

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

TERRI M. HARRINGTON, ESQ.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NHLAP

# Happy New Year

Another new year. Another chance at getting it right. Well, at least making things a bit better. A time to reflect on the trajectory of your life. Ask yourself, "Am I where I want to be?" If so, do you honor the reasons you made it to this space? If not, do you understand the choices that placed you where you are? Taking stock doesn't simply mean checking the bottom line or the number of billable hours. Taking stock means thinking honestly about your connection to family, friends and community and most importantly, to yourself. If you feel that you need more balance or more meaningful connection, make a plan. Create small, doable steps to set you on the right path. You only have this one life. Make it the one you want. You deserve it.



## MONTHLY RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

**The Lawyers Depression Project (LDP)**, a group of attorneys who themselves suffer from depression, have launched a grassroots project aimed at addressing depression and other mental health issues in the legal profession. The group hosts a confidential forum at [www.knowtime.com](http://www.knowtime.com) and weekly online peer-to-peer support group meetings, offering members the option of anonymity. To participate, members need only share emergency contact information with the group's founders (Joseph Milowic III & Aaron Kaufman, both attorneys who suffer from depression) to receive an anonymous knowtime email address for use with group meetings and to participate in the group's web forum. For more information, please contact [Joe@knowtime.com](mailto:Joe@knowtime.com)

**Pod Cast: *Law Technology Now* by Legal Talk Network**  
Available free through Apple iTunes

NHLAP recommends you give a listen to:

**Brian Cuban and Overcoming Addiction** (July 20, 2017). Brian is an attorney, author, activist and brother of Mark Cuban. In this episode of *Law Technology Now*, host Monica Bay talks with Brian about his own experience as an addict and how he now works to help those with similar struggles.

**Lady Lawyer Diaries: Support for Women in Law** (Nov. 6, 2018). Kendal Hanks and Kristen Vander-Plas, two cofounders of #LadyLawyerDiaries, discuss how their Twitter account has become a forum for women in the legal industry.

