



NHLAP

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JUNE 2020

Newsletter

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**A Confidential, Independent
Resource for New Hampshire
Judges, Lawyers and Law
Students Since 2007**

603-491-0282

COVID-19 JUNE UPDATE

FORWARD momentum is underway with Covid-19 testing here in NH. As of May 29, any NH resident can obtain a Covid-19 test regardless of whether they are exhibiting symptoms or not. These tests are available at any of the NH State fixed testing sites. [More on Testing Site Locations Here](#) NH Health Commissioner Lori Shibinette is encouraging anyone who wants to be tested to get tested. The tests may be scheduled through the state's portal website. [Click Here for Testing Registration](#) Additionally, five CVS pharmacies in Concord, Hampton, Hooksett and Nashua are offering driver-through testing options. [Click Here for CVS Clinic Options](#)

SMALL STEPS are underway in the easing of pandemic restrictions. As of June 1, small group fitness classes can resume with social distance restrictions. A ban remains in effect on the use of gym equipment in these settings. Likewise, Governor Sununu has green lit the reopening of personal care industries such as acupuncture, massage therapists, tattooing, tanning and nail salons. There are social distance restrictions, increased requirements for disinfection procedures and capacity restrictions.

The State of NH Stay at Home Order 2.0 remains in effect by order of Governor Sununu until June 15. This means that all NH residents are still asked to stay at home when at all possible. The updated restrictions now allow the following:

Hospitals resumed scheduling of elective procedures.

Some retail stores are now open to the public with capacity and social distancing restrictions. Many have opted not to reopen yet to use curbside pick-up until after June 15.

Many restaurants can re-open if outside seating with social distancing, capacity restrictions and maintenance of strict disinfection guidelines are in place. Use of facial masks are required by restaurant employees.

Beaches are open as of June 1 for transitory activities only-walking, swimming or surfing most generally. Sunbathing, picnicking and sand building are still prohibited. Parking is generally restricted to half capacity in designated lots and on-street parking is still prohibited.

Most state parks are now open for NH residents with social distancing restrictions. No facilities are open at any state parks and all remain carry-in/carry-out locations.

On June 5, lodging in NH may resume. Out of state residents must sign a form stating they have quarantined at home for at least 14 days before entering NH. Hotels larger than 20 rooms are restricted to half capacity. All hotels require reservations.

THE JUDICIARY issued its Third Renewed Emergency Order on May 21 extending restrictions to all courthouses until June 15. The Supreme Court building is closed to the public. Limited courthouse access to Superior and Circuit Court remains in effect. Only those who are seeking emergency relief, are scheduled to attend a court hearing or are members of the press are allowed access inside these buildings. Face masks and social distancing must always be maintained while inside. Drop boxes are available at Superior and Circuit Court buildings for those seeking emergency relief through written petition. [Full NH Judicial Branch Information and Links Here](#)

WITH THE EASE of many restrictions, some may feel the urge to give in to restriction fatigue. This is NOT that time. With the ease of restrictions, there is a universal certainty from disease experts that exposure rates will increase. Maintaining social distancing, working from home, utilizing technology to stay in touch with everyone from clients to loved ones is still the best way to ensure the health and safety of yourself and those around you.

If you have any questions, concerns or issues surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, please do not hesitate to contact NHLAP. We are here to help.

[NH Governor Chris Sununu's Emergency Orders Related to Covid-19](#). All orders to date, chronological, with links to full written text. [Read More](#)



FOCUS ON ADDICTION

ADDICTION, no matter what its form, thrives in isolation. Right now, many of us are experiencing the longest period of isolation we have even endured. It is no surprise that most addiction experts are ringing alarm bells. An epidemic of addiction is brewing. In fact, many Covid-19 experts are naming the second wave not of renewed virus infection, but of addiction. We must be ready to address the inevitable fallout.

It is now old news that lawyers have the highest rates of alcohol addiction and some of the highest rates of drug addiction. At the start of the restrictions imposed by the government's response to control the spread of the pandemic, there is no doubt that these high rates have climbed even higher.

Addiction is called a disease of isolation. The American Psychiatric Association publishes a text on names, symptoms and diagnostic criteria for recognized mental illnesses including addiction in the DSM-V. This text recognizes substance related disorders from the use of 10 separate classes of drugs: alcohol; caffeine, cannabis; hallucinogens; inhalants; opioids; sedatives; hypnotics; stimulants; tobacco and other unknown substances. The common thread throughout all addiction is that the activation of the reward system (or pleasure center) is the same for all substance disorders. This is the "high." In simplistic terms, chasing the high is the addiction.

The easiest way to chase a high is to seek out the source of it without interference, impediments, or judgment. Social isolation creates the space for feeding an addiction. When there is no outside accountability or outside consequence often the cycle of addiction grows fast and furious. Research demonstrates that the most effective path to sobriety is to engage in support groups which provide support, understanding and accountability. Without support groups, studies show that a path to long term sustained sobriety is exponentially more difficult.

Humans are social creatures. We require attachment to other humans to grow and develop. Early attachment issues can interfere with the maturation of the neurological system and the regulation of emotional attachment. Addiction develops when a person forms an attachment to a substance rather than a person. It is thought that if someone develops anxiety around rejection at a young age, they can form automatic responses to seek isolation rather than to risk rejection. Anxious attachment is directly related to substance abuse. Socially avoidant people can use alcohol and drugs as a means of avoiding painful emotions. This type of person chooses a chemical shortcut to avoid pain and frustration. The chemistry of the brain rewards this behavior with euphoria or a high. When the chemical shortcut becomes a coping mechanism, this becomes a habit and then the trap is set. Without the substance, there are no internal resources to sustain healthy relationships with people or substances.

In this time of mandated isolation, it is easy to understand how complex and widespread this problem is likely to become. First and foremost, a designated pandemic is cause for anxiety. During this pandemic, many hospitals, treatment centers and therapist offices temporarily closed. Those that remain open are limited in physical space and often use tele-health instead of face-to-face treatment. Many people have turned to alcohol as a means of escape. The State of NH made it easy for residents to obtain alcohol as the state liquor stores remained open for business while other businesses were shuttered as non-essential.

Further complicating this issue is the lack of social restraints. People are not driving to bars and restaurants to drink alcohol right now. They are home, often without outside visitors. Extended family, colleagues or friends are absent to observe the extent of a potential problem. For some, the fear of stigma

surrounding overuse of alcohol by peers is enough to keep a potential problem in check. Yet, even in the best of circumstances, others are not inhibited at all. Isolation is the reality for tens of millions of Americans right now. Isolation also enables a perfect storm of circumstances for millions of Americans to develop a substance addiction issue.

The good news is that lawyers are not alone. There is a place where help is available free of charge in complete confidence. New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance was created specifically to combat substance addiction in the legal community. NHLAP stands ready to help with confidential, compassionate expert referrals and resources. Don't let this current health crisis spiral into something that jeopardizes both your health and your license to practice law. We are a phone call, text message or email away.

603-491-0282

Resources for this article:

Addiction Is a 'Disease of Isolation'- So Pandemic Puts Recovery at Risk, by Martha Babnger, WBUR, NPR and Kaiser Health News, May 2, 2020 at www.khn.org

DSM 5 Criteria for Substance Use Disorders by Elizabeth Hartney, BSc, MSc PhD. Medically reviewed by Steven Gans, MD. The Very Well Mind. Updated March 21, 2020 at www.verywellmind.com

What Is Addiction? Psychology Today, Sussex Publishers at www.psychologytoday.com



SOMETIMES YOU CAN ONLY
FIND HEAVEN BY SLOWLY
BACKING AWAY FROM HELL

CARRIE FISHER



§



Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers Virtual Peer Support Meeting

Now on Zoom.us

Thursday, Jun 4, 2020 06:00 PM
Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:
[Zoom Registration Link](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting, including a password. This is to ensure confidentiality as mandated by NH Supreme Court Rule 58.

Please contact Terri Harrington with any questions or concerns regarding the LCL Peer Support Meeting group at t.harrington@lapnh.org



FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

IT IS NOW week 12 of the Covid-19 pandemic designation here in New Hampshire. A natural and inescapable consequence of living during a time of a world-wide pandemic is an increase in stress. Fear and anxiety about catching a new virus can be overwhelming. It is normal to feel a mix of strong emotions during this time of uncertainty. Many people have the additional stress of worrying about income insecurity as whole sectors of the economy have shut down in response to the current health crisis. Americans are reporting significant and sustained increases, as much as 50% in some studies, in symptoms of depression and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lawyers may have additional stressors placed upon them by challenges inherent in practicing law during a time of such uncertainty. People turn to judges and lawyers in times of crises to help navigate and mitigate the effects of a changing world. Urgent matters seem more pressing. How do I change my business model to stay solvent? How can I avoid incarceration when I might catch a deadly disease if I am not released? How do I escape a violent or abusive home when I am expected to remain there in isolation? What happens to me if I get sick but have lost my job and my health insurance? How does one practice law safely in this environment? There are no shortages of challenges for the practicing lawyer right now.

It is very important to pay attention to yourself and your state of being. The stressors of meeting the challenges to everyday life can have devastating consequences to your health. Ask yourself:

1. Am I spending a lot of time worrying about my health and the health of those I love?
2. Am I having difficulty sleeping?
3. Do I have significant changes to my appetite?

4. If I have a chronic health condition, does it feel as though it is worsening since the start of this pandemic?
5. Do I have difficulty getting motivated, getting out of bed or following through with routine, necessary tasks?
6. Am I relying on alcohol or drugs or other substances to escape anxiety, loneliness or other negative emotions?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, it is important to speak with a professional health care provider. Having a discussion with a trained medical professional regarding your current response to stress is just as appropriate and urgent as if you have an emergent physical injury or illness. Just as ignoring an injury to your body, ignoring the effects of stress can leave you debilitated and increase your risk of developing a chronic response. Find out from an expert if you need additional support to care for yourself during this extraordinary time. Think of it this way, just as others are relying on your legal expertise to help them through the uncharted waters we find ourselves in, you must rely on an honest assessment of yourself to remain functioning at your best professional self. The investment of time and resources to your own state of wellbeing during this time will more than pay for itself in productivity and overall competence.

Even without consulting a professional, there are concrete steps you can take to enhance your mental health right now.

Take meaningful breaks from news and social media.

Get outside and move everyday for at least 20 minutes.

Plan and follow through with healthy, well balanced meals.

Stick to a sleep/wake routine.

Avoid using alcohol or drugs to cope.

Acknowledge physical or emotional fatigue and take the time necessary to rest and recover without guilt.

Find time to do something you find meaningful each day. Check in with a neighbor. Read for pleasure. Walk the dog. Read to a child over the Skype. Work on that long-abandoned project. Engagement is the opposite of isolation.

NHLAP is ready to answer any questions related to the state of your mental and emotional health. We can make referrals to experts, provide educational materials, or pair you with a volunteer who can peer support you directly. There are many ways we are able to help you focus on your good mental health. Always, any inquiry is absolutely confidential and independent of any NH licensing or judicial authority. Yet, we can only help if you ask.

We are all in this together. Let us help.
t.harrington@lapnh.org

Resources for this article:

Coronavirus Disease 2019: Coping with Stress, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* at www.cdc.gov

Working Remotely During COVID-19: Your Mental Health and Well-being, *American Psychiatric Association Foundation, Center for Workplace Mental Health* at www.workplacementalhealth.org

What COVID-19 Is Doing to Our Mental Health by Kimberly Holland. Fact Checked by Jennifer Chesak, *Healthline*, May 8, 2020 at www.healthline.com



Check in with your loved ones often via phone, text, video chat, mail or email.



NHLAP Depression and Anxiety Virtual Peer Support

Now on Zoom.us

Jun 10, 2020 06:00 PM

Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

[Link for Preregistration Here](#)

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Please contact Terri Harrington at NHLAP with any questions or concerns regarding the NHLAP Depression and Anxiety Peer Support virtual meeting.

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