

# Mental Health Awareness

*Practical  
Information  
for Lawyer Well-Being*

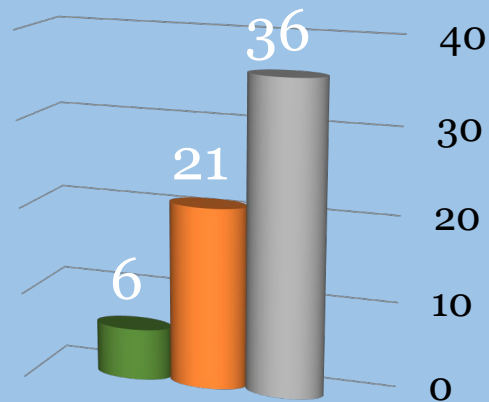
# Recent Studies

- *The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys (the “Study”)*
  - P.R. Krill, R. Johnson, & L. Albert
  - 10 J. Addiction Med. 46 (2016)
- *Stress, Drink, Leave: An Examination of Gender-Specific Risk Factors for Mental Health Problems and Attrition Among Licensed Attorneys*
  - J. Anker & P.R. Krill
  - PLOS One, 16(5) e025063 (2021)

Study of the Prevalence of Substance  
Use and Other Mental Health  
Concerns Among American Attorneys

# 2015 ABA Lawyer Study Rates of Problematic Drinking

- General U.S. Population
- All Attorneys
- Attorneys under 30 years old



"Problematic  
Drinking" = hazardous,  
possible dependence

Problematic drinking = dangerous, risky, possible dependence

# Lawyer Study: Mental Health

- 28% depression
- 19% severe anxiety
- 11.5% suicidal thoughts during career

# Young Lawyers at Risk

The younger the lawyer, the greater the likelihood of

- substance use disorder.
- depression.

## Barriers to Help Seeking

- Not wanting others to find out they needed help
- Concerns regarding privacy or confidentiality

# Begin a Dialogue About Suicide Prevention

- Lawyers have high rates of suicide.
- Stakeholders need to provide education and take action.
- Suicide is a highly stigmatized topic.
- Make a concerted effort towards suicide prevention to demonstrate to the legal community that we are not afraid of addressing this issue.



# Effect of the Pandemic on Lawyer Well-Being???

# According to the Krill study conducted during the pandemic...

- 55.9% of the female respondents screened positive for risky drinking, and 34% for hazardous drinking.
- 34.6% of the women and 29.2% of the men, reported their drinking increased during the pandemic. The study found that women who reported an increase were 7 times more likely to engage in risky drinking, and the men were nearly 4 times more likely.
- 25% of women and 17% of men said, during the pandemic, they have thought about leaving the profession due to mental health concerns.

Alcohol

# U.S. Guidelines for Drinking...

- 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans describe drinking in moderation as limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less in a day for women.

# What is a “standard” drink according to the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism?

- 12 fluid ounces of regular beer (about 5% alcohol)
- 8-9 fluid ounces of malt liquor (about 7% alcohol)
- 5 fluid ounces of table wine (about 12% alcohol)
- 1.5 fluid ounces of distilled spirits (about 40% alcohol)

# Low-Risk Drinking

- For males: No more than four drinks in one 24-hour period and no more than 14 in any seven-day period.
- For females: No more than three drinks in one 24-hour period and no more than seven in any seven-day period.

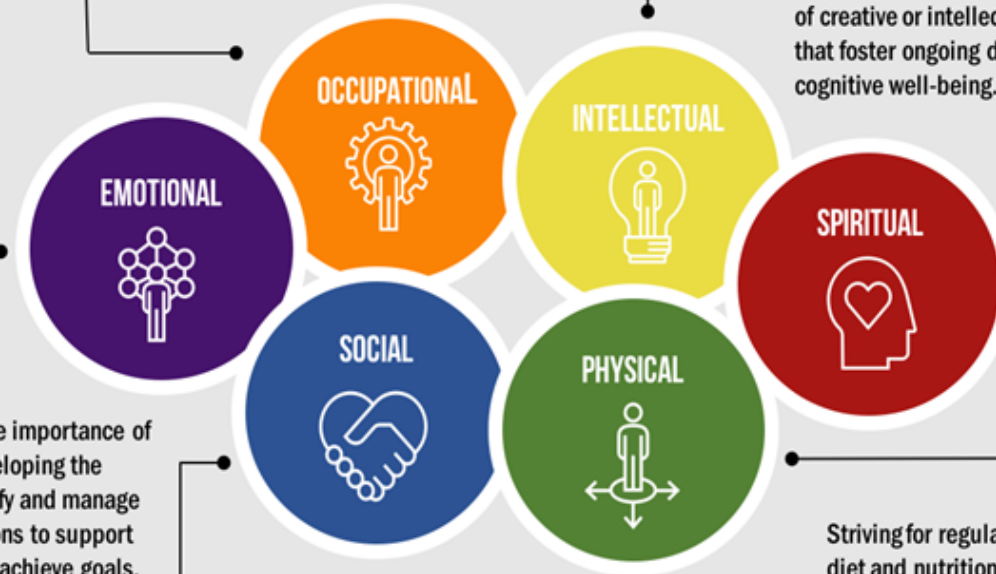
# What is lawyer “well-being”?



A continuous process in which lawyers strive for thriving in each dimension of their lives:

Cultivating personal satisfaction, growth, and enrichment in work. Financial stability.

Engaging in continuous learning and the pursuit of creative or intellectually challenging activities that foster ongoing development. Monitoring cognitive well-being.



Recognizing the importance of emotions. Developing the ability to identify and manage our own emotions to support mental health, achieve goals, and inform decision-making. Seeking help for mental health when needed.

Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support network while also contributing to our groups and communities.

Developing a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in all aspects of life.

Striving for regular physical activity, proper diet and nutrition, sufficient sleep, and rejuvenation. Minimizing the use of addictive substances. Seeking help for physical health when needed.

# Three Reasons to Take Action

(1) Organizational success—in law firms, corporations, and government entities.

(2) Well-being influences ethics and professionalism.

- Rule 1.1 – competence
- Rule 1.3 – diligence
- Rules 4.1 through 4.4 – transactions with persons other than clients

(3) Humanitarian reasons—untreated mental health and substance use disorders ruin lives and careers.



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