

Hiding In Plain Sight Eating Disorders

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LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR **LAWYERS**

Confidential Support for Legal Professionals



Overview

- Signs and Symptoms of Eating Disorders
- Intervention & Treatment of Eating Disorders
- How Lawyers & Families are Affected – A Personal Story
- Lawyer Chemical & Mental Health – The Data
- Lawyer Professional Responsibilities – Our Duty
- How to Help Someone with an Eating Disorder
- How LCL Can Help



Prevalence of Eating Disorders in the Legal Profession/Law Schools

- 2014 & 2021 Survey on Law Student Well-Being
 - Surveyed students at 15 law schools from around the country in 2014 and 39 law schools in 2021
 - Included questions regarding history of symptoms and diagnosis of mental disorders, including eating disorders
 - Both included an embedded screening instrument (SCOFF) for disordered eating
 - Screened positive for further evaluation for disordered eating:
 - 2014-27% (34% female/18% male)
 - 2021-29% (35% female/19% male)
 - Prior diagnosis:
 - 2014-3% reported a prior diagnosis (3% during law school)
 - 2021-6.3% reported a prior diagnosis (12% during law school)



What the Numbers Show about Lawyers and Mental Health in General

ABA/Hazelden Study (2016):

- 21% of lawyers meet criteria for substance use disorder (6.4% of the general population)
 - 32% of lawyers under 30 &/or practicing 10 yrs of less
- 28% of lawyers suffer from depression
- 19% of lawyers suffer from anxiety
- 23% of lawyers suffer from elevated stress
- 11.5% of lawyers have suicidal thoughts during their career



Other Substances and Addictive/Compulsive Behaviors

- Drugs
- Gambling
- Internet Addiction
- Sexual Compulsivity
- Eating Disorders
- Shoplifting Addiction
- Compulsive Shopping



Depression

- A loss of interest in normally pleasurable activities
- Impaired ability to concentrate, remember and decide
- It occurs in stages:
 1. Emptiness
 2. Hopelessness/helplessness
 3. Suicide
- It's not just a blue mood that can be wished away
- Time element

In a colleague, look for *changes* in behavior.



Other Mental Health Issues

- Anxiety Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- ADHD
- Eating Disorders
- Unresolved Grief
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Cognitive Impairment



Ethics: Professional Responsibility

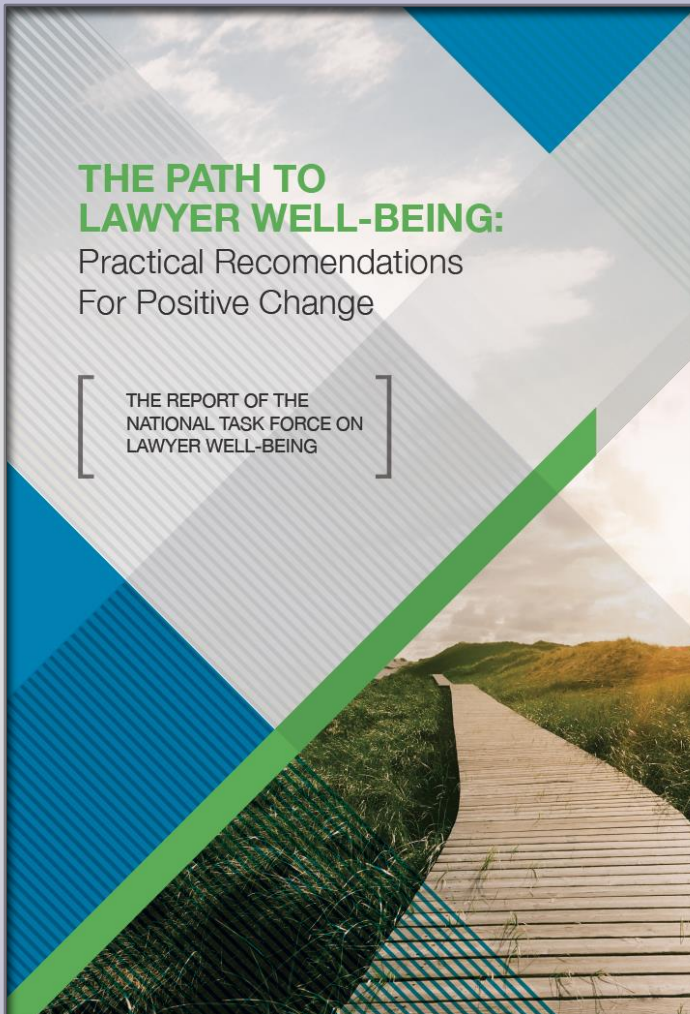
- Rule 1.1 – Competence – requires legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation necessary for the representation
- Rule 1.3 – Diligence – requires reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client
- Rule 1.16 – Representation – prevents lawyer from representing a client if the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client
- Rule 8.3 – Reporting Misconduct – doesn't require disclosure of information gained by lawyers in a lawyers assistance program or other program providing assistance, support, or counseling to lawyers who are chemically dependent or suffer from mental illnesses.



Ethics: Alcohol, Malpractice & Attorney Discipline

- Between 10 and 15% of all disciplinary probations include substance use as a factor. *Years in Review: Annual Updates from the Director*
- OLPR generally expects substance use to be a factor in one-third to one half of the discipline cases investigated.
- Underreported/Unreported—over 75% of all OLPR open probationary files involve competence, diligence, or non-communication complaints. OLPR Annual Reports (n.d.).





A crisis of competence

“To be a good lawyer, one has to be a healthy lawyer. Sadly, our profession is falling short when it comes to well-being.” ... “[T]he current state of lawyers’ health cannot support a profession dedicated to client service and dependent on the public trust.”

Stigma's Chilling Effect

- ABA Hazelden Study - Barriers to seeking help included
 - “not wanting others to find out they needed help”
 - “concerns regarding privacy or confidentiality”



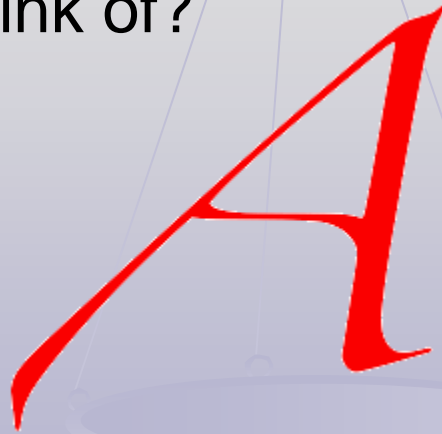
Stigma

- How we visualize people
- How we talk about mental illnesses
- How we think about mental illnesses
- How we treat people with mental illnesses



Erasing the stigma

- Stigma refers to a feeling of disgrace or fear
- Experiencing a mental health issue *or is it “just stress”*
- The bearer has feelings of shame and isolation
- “I’ll do it myself!”
- Education can help with public stigma; personal stigma is tougher – especially for us
- What do you think of?



Changing Our Language

Addict → Person with Substance Use Disorder

Substance Abuse → Substance Use Disorder

Clean → Abstinent

Dirty Screen → Testing Positive

Relapse → Recurrence

Slow Learner → Person with a Learning Disability

Crazy → Person with a Mental Illness



Think About

- What is your sphere?
- Where can you be an ally?
- What can you do to lower or eliminate barriers to seeking help?
- How can you help reduce or eliminate stigma?

We need to make it OK to ask for help



Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers: Minnesota's Lawyer Assistance Program

- **Who We Are:**
 - Minnesota's Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP)
- **Who We Support:**
 - Lawyers, Judges, Law Students, other legal professionals, and their families
 - Free Service and 100% Confidential
 - On average, we help approximately 400 new individuals per year.



Partnership with the Sand Creek Group

- Up to 4 free counseling sessions per issue
- Resource website
 - www.sandcreekeap.com
 - Click on *Member Portal & App* to log in or create your new account. When creating your new account, use the Company Code “lawyers”
- Contact Sand Creek directly at **651-430-3383** or toll-free: **1-888-243-5744**



How LCL Can Help...

- Available Services:
 - Free Counseling Sessions through Sand Creek
 - Peer Volunteers (Maybe You?)
 - Treatment Center Visits
 - 24-hour hotline
 - Coaching
 - Referral to Community Services
 - CLEs, Outreach, Tabling & Education
 - Group Therapy & Support Group
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Someone to listen



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THERE IS
HELP *and*



THERE IS
HOPE

