

Depression, Anxiety and Substance Use Disorders: What Every Lawyer and Judge Should Know



TEXAS LAWYERS'
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
1-800-343-TLAP

Presented by

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ROADMAP AND TAKE-AWAYS

Lawyer Well-being Statistics

Mental Health Disorders and
Treatment Recommendations

Evidence-based Tips for Well-
being

TLAP Resources



LAWYER WELL- BEING

- Lawyer well-being is part of a lawyer's ethical duty of competence.
- It includes a lawyer's ability to make healthy, positive work/life choices to assure not only a quality of life within their families and communities, but also to help them make responsible decisions for and with their clients.
- It includes maintaining their own long-term well-being.

MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR ATTORNEYS:



Stress / Anxiety



Depression



Burnout /
Secondary Trauma



Alcohol / Substance
Abuse



Cognitive
Impairment

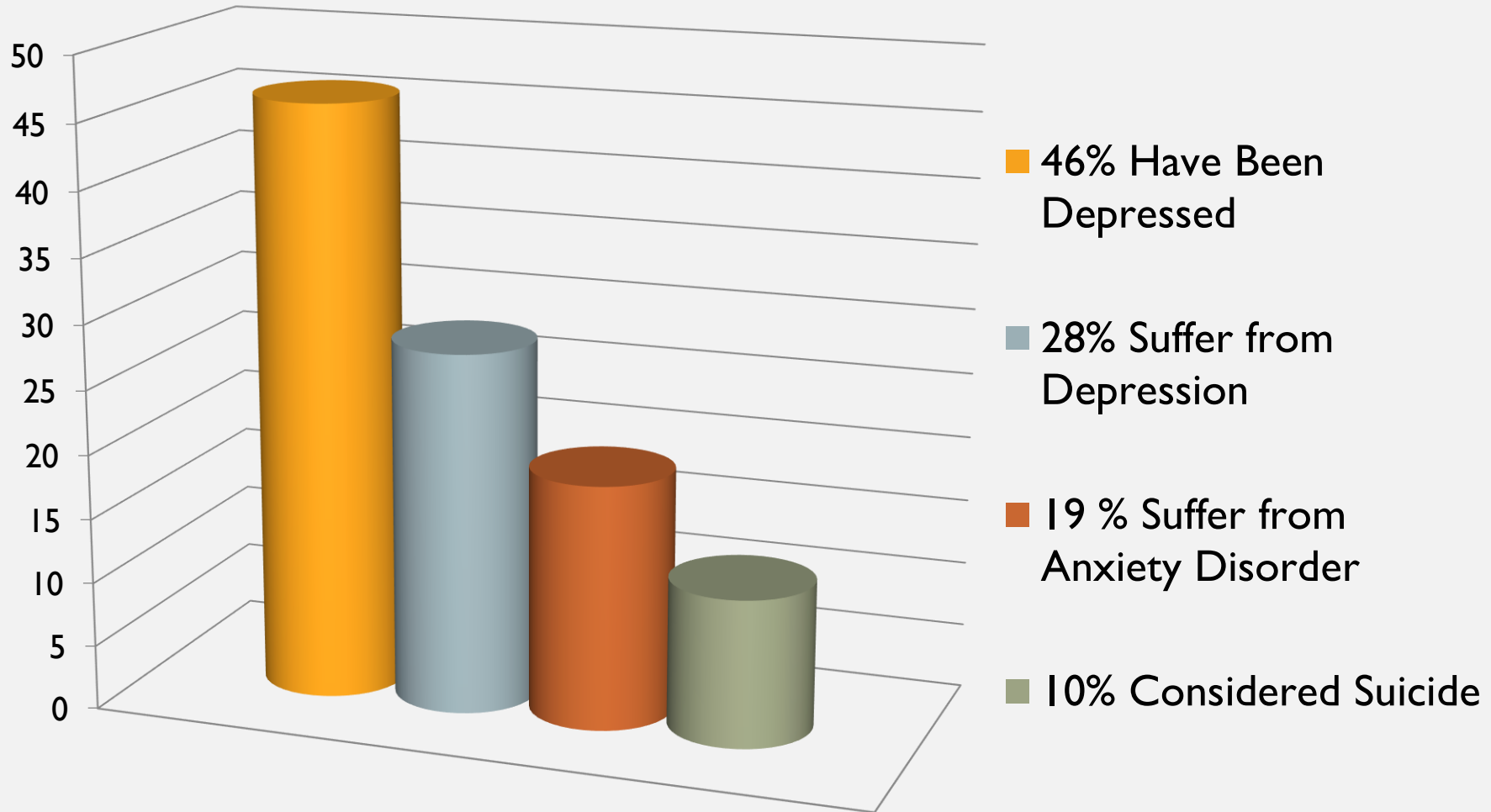


Suicide



Gambling and other
process addictions

2015 ABA Study of Almost 13,000 Attorneys: Attorney Mental Health Issues





LAWYER WELL- BEING

- 21% qualify as problem drinkers.
 - That's more than triple the rate for the general population (6%) and nearly double the rate for other highly educated professionals (12%).
- 32% of attorneys under 30 years of age qualify as problem drinkers.

“Problematic drinking” = hazardous, possible dependence



LAWYER MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- 2022 study of 4,450 lawyers by The University of Chicago:
 - 77% reported feeling burned out;
 - 26% reported high rates of anxiety;
 - 21% reported depression;
 - 42% reported unhealthy or hazardous substance use; and
 - 7% reported suicidal thoughts.

SURVEY OF LAW STUDENT WELL-BEING

Survey Comparison	2021	2014
Needed help for emotional or mental health problems	68.7%	42%
Depression	33%	18%
Anxiety	40%	21%
Suicide	11%	6%
Self-harm	15.7%	9%
Trauma	80%	Not asked
Binge Drinking	44%	53%
Marijuana	38%	25%



DEPRESSION

Symptoms of Depression include:

- Feelings of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, pessimism, guilt
- Inability to make decisions or to concentrate
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Loss of energy and drive
- Headaches, chronic aches and pains, appetite problems
- Behavioral changes, irritability, restlessness, desire to be alone
- Missing work and work deadlines
- Talk about death or suicide, thoughts about suicide

DEPRESSION: TREATMENT AND REFERRALS

Most effective treatment is combination of:

- Talk therapy
- Medication
- Group of unconditional acceptance
- Wellness practices including:
 - Nutrition and exercise
 - Supplements
 - Meditation
 - Gratitude journaling



DEPRESSION: TREATMENT AND REFERRALS

- TLAP REFERRALS:
 - Individual therapy w/psychotherapist trained in various modalities:
 - Group support, including TLAP wellness groups (Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers)
 - Psychiatric
 - Inpatient treatment
 - Assessment/evaluation (medical, psychiatric, neurological)
 - Peer assistance
 - National Suicide Lifeline 988
 - NAMI Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI
 - TLAP Helpline 1-800-343-TLAP



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ANXIETY DISORDERS

01

Anxiety disorders range from panic attacks to generalized anxiety disorder.

02

Anxiety that is excessive can cause significant distress.

03

Symptoms include:

- Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge;
- Being easily fatigued;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Irritability;
- Muscle tension;
- Sleep disturbance.

ANXIETY: TREATMENT AND REFERRALS

Most effective treatment is combination of:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy, including skills training and exposure therapy
- Medication (anti-depressants and buspirone)
- Wellness practices including:
 - Exercise and nutrition
 - Stress management
 - Meditation
 - Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs
 - Reduce caffeine



ANXIETY

ANXIETY: TREATMENT AND REFERRALS

- TLAP REFERRALS:
 - Individual therapy w/psychotherapist
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WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Mental health and/or addictive disorders
- Loss of job
- Financial problems
- Relationship problems, disruptions
- Easy access to lethal means

Verbalizations:

- No reason for living
- Feeling trapped
- Hopelessness
- Dramatic mood changes (high or low)
- Anxiety or agitation

Behavior:

- Increased substance abuse
- Withdrawal from friends, family, society
- Rage, anger, revenge
- Reckless or risky activities
- Unable to sleep or sleep all the time

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Ask

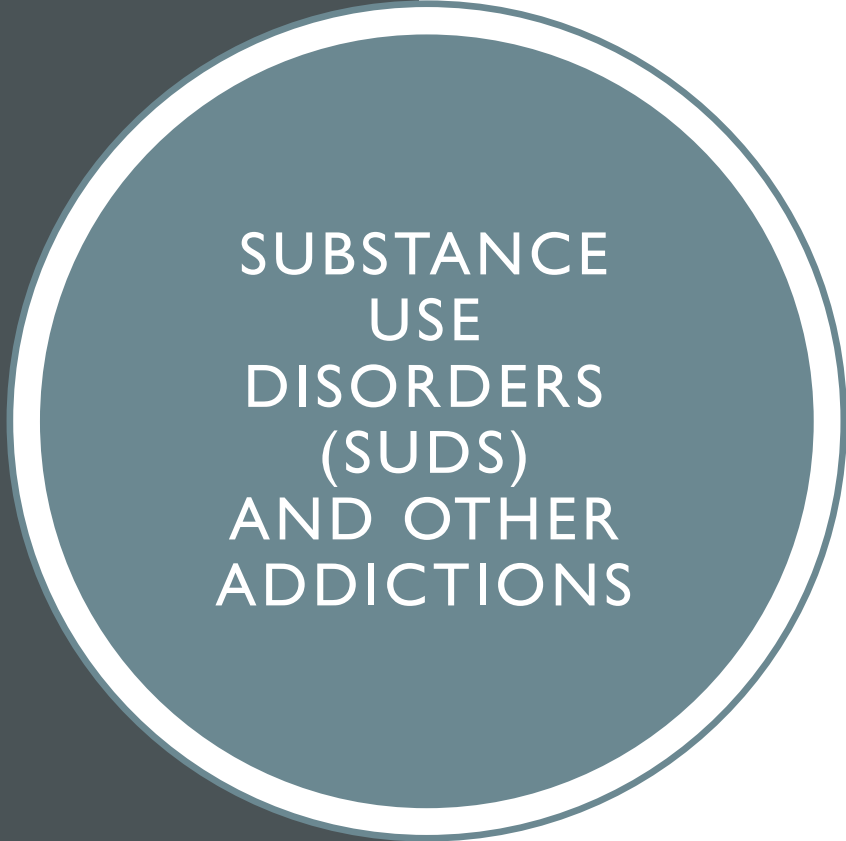
- Ask about suicide
 - Sometimes when people are sad, as you are, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?
 - Do you ever want to go to bed and never wake up?

Seek

- Seek information
 - Do you have a plan? A readily available means?
 - Who can help you? What has worked for you before?

Know

- Know resources
 - 911
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or 988
 - Local crisis line- 211 (Texas)



SUBSTANCE
USE
DISORDERS
(SUDS)
AND OTHER
ADDICTIONS

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) defines substance use disorder (SUD) as:

- Uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences.
- People with SUD have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s) such as alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs, to the point where the person's ability to function in day-to-day life becomes impaired.
- People keep using the substance even when they know it is causing or will cause problems.
- Other addictions include gambling, sex, food, pornography, etc.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER REFERRALS

TLAP referrals for addiction/substance use:

- 12 Step meetings
- Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers meetings
- Individual therapy
- Intensive outpatient treatment (IOP)
- Inpatient treatment
- Assessment/evaluation by ASAM physician
- Peer assistance

**LAWYERS ARE
PARTICULARLY
SENSITIVE TO
BURNOUT BECAUSE:**

We suffer from “**secondary trauma**” while dealing with the stress, anger, frustration, and emotions of our clients.

We often have a sense of **perfectionism**, that everything must be exactly right, or we risk absolute failure.

We are asked to act in ways that aren't aligned with our **core values**.

It often requires extremely **long hours** that are not physically, mentally, or emotionally sustainable.

It is an adversarial system!



UNDER HIGH STRESS WE LOSE:

- Flexibility in our thinking
 - Challenge all-or-nothing thoughts
 - Think about alternatives
- Empathy for others; ability to attune to another person
- Ability to let go of fears or interrupt worry thoughts

BURNOUT IS NOT A SIGN OF FAILURE

Burnout is not any kind of personal failure. It's an opportunity to stop and be present with yourself, and to exercise greater self-care and compassion.

Burnout can be a healthy response when our human needs aren't being met.

EVIDENCED-BASED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LAWYER WELL-BEING



HELP HELPS



CONNECT WELL



DEVELOP
AWARENESS OF
SELF-TALK



LEARN TO RELAX



PRACTICE
GRATITUDE



I. HELP HELPS!

- DON'T be afraid to ask for help.
- If stress and anxiety for any reason are getting in the way of daily activities, seek help.
- 80% of people suffering from depression get remission within 6-8 sessions of talk therapy. The other 20% feel better.
- Primary care physicians or providers are trained to help identify mental health issues, render care and/or refer to specialized providers, including free and confidential resources.
- TLAP can help with resources.

TLAP PROVIDES:

- Confidential support
- Referrals to licensed professionals with the experience or expertise you need
- Information about local group support and resources
- 'In the Moment' counseling
- One-to-one local peer support
- Self-care information
- CLE / Education on Wellness
- Service opportunities



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CONNECTING LAWYERS AND
LAW STUDENTS TO FUNDS
FOR NEEDED CARE

Sheeran-Crowley Lawyer Wellness Trust

Up to \$3,000 for outpatient counseling
and medication,

Up to \$4,000 for intensive outpatient
treatment and medication; and,

Up to \$10,000 for inpatient treatment.



2. CONNECT WELL

It is important to create opportunities to connect with friends and loved ones.

Process- communicate with someone about what has happened, or go over an experience or set of actions, to achieve some sort of order or meaning concerning them.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



Psychological safety is the belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes



Team - Team psychological safety is a shared belief held by members of a team that it's OK to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes — all without fear of negative consequences. —Harvard Business Law



FEEL LIKE A RESPECTED PART
OF THEIR TEAM



SEE THE VALUE OF THEIR
WORK



FEEL ACCEPTED FOR WHO
THEY ARE AND THE UNIQUE
STRENGTHS THEY BRING

BENEFITS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

UNCONDITIONAL REGARD

“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.”

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma





WHAT CAN YOU BRING INTO YOUR COURT TO
IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY?

3. DEVELOP AWARENESS OF SELF-TALK

Negative self-talk is a bad habit, and it can heavily influence sour stress and anxiety levels.

"Being kind to yourself" simply means changing the way you talk to yourself in your head by practicing *positive* self-talk. Not only can it help you become less stressed and anxious, but it can also help you build the courage to do things that'll bring you greater rewards.

Perfectionism feeds into imposter syndrome and burnout. When you feel like a fraud, it's often because you are comparing yourself to an unrealistic or impossible outcome.



**I have imposter
syndrome**

**Are you even good enough
to have imposter
syndrome ?**



4. LEARN TO
RELAX

SCHEDULE SELF-CARE TIME.

4% of your life is 1 hour per day, make that the minimum for self-care.

Use your calendar and other technology to remind you to unplug.

By scheduling events that are away from screens, it can free you from technology.

Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic System

- Heart and blood pressure increases
- Respiration accelerates, blood sugar is released from the liver
- Adrenalin, noradrenalin are released from the adrenal glands
- **Fight, flight, or freeze**

Parasympathetic System

- Heartbeat slows
- Blood pressure reduces
- Respiration slows
- Your body experiences visceral responses typical of periods of rest and relaxation
- **Rest and digest**

WAYS TO ACTIVATE THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Running/Hiking/Walking

Swimming/Lazy River

Dancing/Aerobics

Yoga/Sitting in Stillness

Playing a Musical Instrument/ Listening to Music

Painting / Creating Art

Gardening / Working with Hands

Cooking/Mindful Eating



TAKE A BREAK

Move

- your body

Schedule

- time to unwind

Place

- your worries on a cloud

Leave

- electronic devices behind

Activate

- your senses

5. PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Research has established an overwhelming connection between gratitude and good health.

Keeping a gratitude journal causes less stress, improves the quality of sleep, and builds emotional awareness.

WELLNESS
IS HOLISTIC



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