1 LAWYER WELLNESS –WHY IT MATTERS
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2 THE PROBLEM:
THE WOEFUL STATE OF LAWYER WELL-BEING

3 2015 ABA LAWYER STUDY

4 LAWYER STUDY: LAWYERS VS. DOCTORS
(FREQUENCY AND VOLUME OF DRINKING)

5 LAWYER STUDY: MENTAL HEALTH
• 28% depression
• 19% severe anxiety
• 11.5% suicidal thoughts during career

6 •
• The younger the lawyer, the greater the
likelihood of:
• Substance Use Disorder
• Depression
• Opposite of current perception

7 IT BEGINS IN LAW SCHOOL
• 25% at risk for alcohol use disorder
• 17% depression
• 14% severe anxiety
• 23% mild/moderate anxiety
• 6% suicidal thoughts in last year

8 WHAT MAKES A LAWYER HAPPY?

External Factors
(prestige, income, status, honors, fame)

OR

Internal Factors
(integrity, connectedness, meaningful work)???
IMPACTS ON LAWYER WELL-BEING

- External factors are minimal
- Internal factors are critical

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM:
WELL-BEING AS PART OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

ABA MODEL RULE 1.1: COMPETENCE
- Competent representation requires... thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

ABA MODEL RULE 1.3: DILIGENCE
- A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
- A lawyer must also act with commitment, dedication and with zeal in advocacy.

ABA MODEL RULE 8.3: REPORTING PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT
- A violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct that raises a substantial question as to that lawyer's...fitness as a lawyer, [reporting is required].

IT'S A NO BRAINER!
A lawyer's mental, emotional and physical state affects our duties to:
- Clients
- The Court
- The Profession

LET'S TALK SOLUTIONS:
TIPS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCY

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?
- The ability to respond to stress in a healthy, adaptive way such that personal goals are achieved at minimal psychological and physical cost. (Physician Wellness Research)
- The ability to persist in the face of challenges and to bounce back from adversity. (U.S. Army Resilience Program)
- The courage to grow from stress.

HOW DOES RESILIENCE BOLSTER COMPETENCE?
- Can better tolerate stress, uncertainty, adversity
- Speeds recovery after setbacks, losses
- Diminished -
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
OPTIMISM
Choosing How to Think About Why Things Happen

WHAT IS OPTIMISM?
• Disposition toward believing the future is bright and things will work out
• Tendency toward a positive explanatory style
  o How we explain causes of bad events
  o Habit of thought
  o How we explain adversity makes us either prey to helplessness or mentally resilient

YOU LOSE A BIG CASE
1 SUCCESSFUL COPING
2 DIFFICULTY COPING

OPTIMISM PRACTICES
• Optimism practice: seeing the bright side
• Done daily: increases engagement in life and decreases dysfunctional thinking (such as believing that small failures make one a failure as a person)
• Pessimists benefited more and showed fewer depressive symptoms afterward

CONNECTION
Relationships, Social Support, and Belonging

CONNECTIONS
• We are hard wired to need relationships; belonging
• Critical to your brain’s feeling of happiness
• Physical touch releases oxytocin
• Positive people are key

BENEFITS OF CONNECTION
• Longer life
• Improved immune system
• Reduced depression and anxiety
• Overall better functioning and well-being
• Reduced cardiovascular disease
• Reduced perceptions of pain and threat

POSITIVE EMOTIONS
Creating Upward Spirals

CREATING AN UPWARD SPIRAL
• Positive emotions boost resilience
  o Quicker cardiovascular recovery after disruption
  o Post 9/11, people with more frequent positive emotions showed greater post-traumatic
growth and less depression
• Better physical health
• More life and work satisfaction
• Less anxiety and depression

27  □  POSITIVITY RATIO
Bad outweighs good

28  □  GRATITUDE

29  □  GRATEFUL PEOPLE
• Stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure
• Higher levels of positive emotions
• More joy, optimism, and happiness
• Less likely to engage in self-blame
• Acting with more generosity and compassion
• Feeling less lonely and isolated

30  □  PHYSICAL WELLNESS
Eat Move Sleep

31  □

32  □

Get adequate sleep!

33  □  SLEEP DEPRIVATION = COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT
• Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to:
  o Deficits in reasoning
  o Global cognitive status
  o Vocabulary
• Highest predictive value for depression
• Greater rate of burnout
• Increases heart attacks, blood pressure, strokes
• Less than 6 hours = 30% rise in obesity

34  □  SPIRITUALITY
What Gives Your Life Meaning

35  □  MEANINGFULNESS
• Work is meaningful when we believe
  o It matters
  o Is valuable
Contributes to personal growth/greater good
Is a good fit with our values
• Primary motivational force
• Largest contributor to engagement (opposite of burnout)

HOW MEANING BENEFITS US
• Better emotional regulation
• Reduced risk of depression and anxiety
• Reduced substance abuse
• Healthy sleep
• Cardiovascular health
• Slower cognitive decline in Alzheimer’s patients

BUILDING MEANING IN WORK
• Reframing (job crafting)
  o What is/who is the benefit of our work?
  o How does it fit into the overall picture?
• Positive challenge – pushed but not overwhelmed
• Seek variety
• Seek connection

SHOW VULNERABILITY (COURAGE)
Ask for Help

LAWYER STUDY: BARRIERS TO HELP-SEEKING
• Not wanting others to find out they needed help
• Concerns regarding privacy or confidentiality
• Stigma and shame
• “I can handle it myself”