Running on Empty: Professional Burnout (And How To Refuel)

Practical & Anecdotal Tips

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29+ years of experience as an attorney in California handling corporate, real estate and healthcare matters.

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Professional Burnout

- Mental Health Stats: Cause For Alarm
- Legal Profession Burnout: What's Going On?
- How To Refuel: Resources & Tips

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US MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- “Over 41,000 people commit suicide annually in this country – twice the number of deaths from homicide. The vast preponderance of suicides occurs in people with an active mental disorder, especially depression. In addition, poisonings from alcohol and other drugs now exceed deaths from lung cancer, and suicide rates, which continue to rise, are on a path to do so as well.”

US NEWS & WORLD REPORT, Nov 4, 2015, Lloyd Sederer (Medical director of the New York State Office of Mental Health, adjunct professor at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and medical editor for mental health for the Huffington Post) http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/policy-dose/2015/11/04/white-americans-are-dying-because-we-ignore-mental-health

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US MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- 43.8 million adults experience mental illness in a given year
- 1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness
- Nearly 1 in 25 (10 million) adults in America live with a serious mental illness
- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the global burden of disease

NAMI, https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-media/Infographics/GeneralMHFacts.pdf

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US MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- 1 in 100 (2.4 million) American adults live with schizophrenia
- 2.6% (6.1 million) of American adults live with bipolar disorder
- 6.9% (16 million) of American adults live with major depression
- 18.1% (42 million) of American adults live with anxiety disorders

NAMI, https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-media/Infographics/GeneralMHFacts.pdf

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US MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- Serious mental illness costs America $193.2 billion in lost earning every year
- Nearly 60% of adults with a mental illness didn't receive mental health services in the previous year
- Approximately 10.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders
- Approximately 26% of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness

NAMI, https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-media/Infographics/GeneralMHFacts.pdf

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MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND LEGAL WORK

WHAT LEGAL PROFESSIONALS DO

* Unforgiving deadlines, duties, expectations
* Profound losses and financial stress
* Analyze and interpret reality (disputes/transactions), massive data intake & analysis loads
* Conflict!
* Uncertainties, lack of guaranteed positive outcomes
* Anticipating risk and loss—can infect thinking
* Perfectionism & procrastination: hand-in-hand

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Mental Health Initiative

- Practicing lawyers exhibit clinical anxiety, hostility, and depression at rates that range from 8 to 15 times the general population
- 20 to 40 percent of law students suffer from clinical depression by the time they graduate
- Out of 104 occupational groups, lawyers rank the highest in depression
- Lawyers rank 5th in incidence of suicide
- Lawyers exhibit very high levels of substance abuse

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/law_students/mhw-handbk.authcheckdam.pdf

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Top 14 Ways Attorneys Can Avoid Burnout from the Stress of Practicing Law



http://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900044563/Top-14-Ways-Attorneys-Can-Avoid-Burnout-from-the-Stress-of-Practicing-Law/

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Top 14 Ways Attorneys Can Avoid Burnout from the Stress of Practicing Law

- Emotional exhaustion, disconnection, feeling ineffective?
- Work hours & effectiveness
- Take a breather & take a break, exercise
- Get help!

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How lawyers can avoid burnout and debilitating anxiety

How lawyers can avoid burnout and debilitating anxiety

Posted Jul 01, 2015 06:00 am CDT

By Leslie A. Gordon

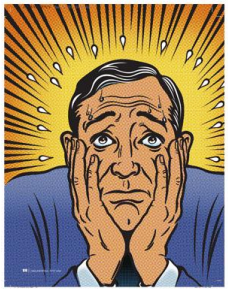


Illustration by Jeff Dionise

http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/how_lawyers_can_avoid_burnout_and_debilitating_anxiety

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How lawyers can avoid burnout and debilitating anxiety

- Perfectionism & Pessimism
- Avoiding Anxiety: Take Action
- Focus On Present Moment (And What We Can Control)
- Health
- You Have Choices To Make

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Another great article:

How to Recognize and Prevent Lawyer Burnout

By Kate Mangan on September 9th, 2016



https://lawyerist.com/94605/recognize-prevent-lawyer-burnout/

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How to Recognize and Prevent Lawyer Burnout

- "A disease of disengagement…."
- "Our Personalities and Our Profession Put Us at High Risk…."
- Take Time To Recharge
- Find Or Create More Meaning
- Forget Perfection
- Self-Awareness & Manage Energy

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Burnout: Avoidable, Not Inevitable

Burnout: Avoidable, Not Inevitable

Volume 38 Number 3

By
Meloney C. Crawford and Douglas S. Querin

About the Authors

Meloney C. Crawford joined OAAP as an attorney counselor in 1999. She is certified as an alcohol and drug counselor and gambling addiction counselor. She is past president of the Addiction Counselor Certification Board of Oregon and continues to serve on its board of directors.

Douglas S. Querin, JD, MA, was in private civil practice as a trial lawyer for over 25 years. He is currently an attorney counselor with the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program where he counsels lawyers, judges, and law students on mental health, addiction, and stress-related issues.

Burnout. you've probably heard the term many times, and possibly used it yourself to express boredom, fatigue or annoyance, as in "Not another feature article about incredibly successful lawyers. I'm burnt out on this stuff!" But those casual references fall short of describing the genuine distress that lawyers with burnout experience. It's a condition that profoundly impacts their professional and personal life.



First, let's determine what burnout is not. It's not merely stress, although continuing, unrelieved stress can lead to burnout. It's not ennui, although people experiencing burnout become disenchanted about work that they once found fulfilling and engaging. And, while an intense workload may be linked to stress, an individual in the extreme stages of burnout stops being productive—they've stopped in their tracks. Psychologist, author and speaker Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., recently published a book on the topic titled, *Fried: Why You Burnout and How to Revive*.

http://www.americanbar.org/publications/law_practice_magazine/2012/may_june/burnout-avoidable-not-inevitable.html

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Burnout: Avoidable, Not Inevitable

- “Can’t do what needs doing….”
- List what gives meaning to your life
- Stay in touch with friends
- Schedule vacations in advance
- If you need help, get help

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Lawyer's Assistance Program



http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/MemberServices/LawyerAssistanceProgram.aspx

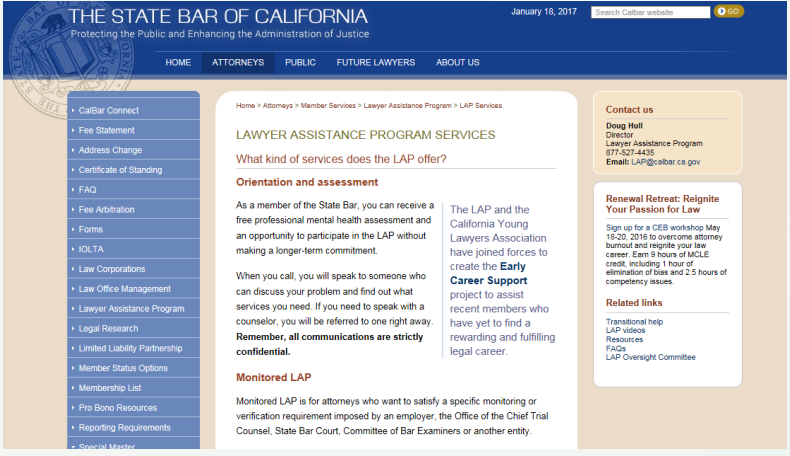
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Lawyer's Assistance Program

- Fully confidential
- Two (2) free sessions with therapist experienced and trained to help attorneys—take the offer if you need it!
- Support groups, other services

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Lawyer Assistance Program Services



http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/MemberServices/LawyerAssistanceProgram/LAPServices.aspx

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A Law Student's Guide To Being a
Happy, Healthy and Honorable Lawyer



- "How you react to situations, the responses you make to questions and the choices you make in your life, determine the type of lawyer you will become and influence your professional and personal satisfaction with life."

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/lsd/mentalhealth/happy.authcheckdam.pdf

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A Law Student's Guide To Being a Happy, Healthy and Honorable Lawyer

TIME FOR FRIENDS….
TIME FOR FUN….
BE NICE….
LEARN TO PRIORITIZE….
BE HONEST, EVEN WHEN IT HURTS….
BE PART OF A TEAM….
FAMILY/FRIENDS COMES FIRST….
PROTECT YOUR HEALTH….
NEVER CHEAT & LEARN HOW TO LOSE WELL….[http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/lsd/mentalhealth/happy.authcheckdam.pdf]

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THANK YOU

NOW REFUEL!

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