

Mental Health & the Legal Profession

The Facts.

Research shows that the legal profession experiences higher rates of mental health issues as compared to other professions.

- **Depression:** 19.0% of lawyers suffer from depression at any given time, compared with 6.7% of the population as a whole. Lawyers ranked first in incidence rate for clinical depression among 104 professions surveyed (when adjusted for socioeconomic factors).ⁱ
- **Alcohol Abuse:** One in five lawyers is a problem drinker – twice the national rate.ⁱⁱ
- **Anxiety:** 25% of lawyers experienced physical symptoms associated with extreme anxiety (including trembling hands, racing hearts, clammy hands, and faintness) at least three times per month during the past year.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ignoring mental health is costly.

- Mental illness and substance use disorders annually cost employers in indirect costs an estimated \$80 to \$100 billion.^{iv}
- Individuals with depression are twice as likely to develop coronary artery disease, twice as likely to have a stroke, and more than four times as likely to die within six months from a myocardial infarction.^v
- More days of work loss and work impairment are caused by mental illness than many other chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and arthritis.^{vi}

Investing in mental health improves the bottom line.

- Major depression is treated successfully with psychotherapy and antidepressant medications in 65-80% of all cases – a success rate which exceeds that for many common medical treatments for non-psychiatric illnesses.^{vii}
- Studies prove that treatment of depression results about a 40-60% reduction in absenteeism/presenteeism.^{viii}
- One *Fortune* 500 company achieved a 1.7:1 return on investment by conducting a depression screening program.^{ix}
- When care management was instituted at another company, outpatient costs went down by \$400,000 in the first year and by \$500,000 the next.^x

Learn more.

Take advantage of resources that focus specifically on the legal profession.

- **Lawyers With Depression** (founded by Daniel T. Lukasik, Esq.)
Web site: www.lawyerswithdepression.com
- **Depression Is Real Podcast:** Watch a 15-minute podcast with lawyer Daniel Lukasik, Esq. and Dr. Reef Karim on the "Down & Up" series, a part of the *Depression is Real* education campaign. Visit www.depressionisreal.org/podcast/show53.php
- **Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP)**
American Bar Association
321 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60654-7598
<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/colap/>
CoLAP's hotline: 1-866-LAW-LAPS

Additional Resources.

American Psychiatric Association (APA)

1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825
Arlington, VA 22209
888-35-PSYCH
www.psych.org
Information for public: www.HealthyMinds.org
For Employers: www.WorkplaceMentalHealth.org

Mental Health America (Formerly the National Mental Health Association)

2000 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22311
800-969-MHA (6642)
www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
Information Helpline: 800-950-NAMI (6264)
www.nami.org

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

730 N. Franklin Street, Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-7224
800-826-3632
www.dbsalliance.org

ⁱ William W. Eaton et al., *Occupations and the Prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder*, 32 J. OCCUPATIONAL MED. 1079 (1990).

ⁱⁱ G. Andrew H. Benjamin et al., *The Prevalence of Depression, Alcohol Abuse, and Cocaine Abuse Among United States Lawyers*, 13 INT'L J.L. & PSYCHIATRY 233, 240 (1990).

ⁱⁱⁱ NORTH CAROLINA BAR ASS'N, REPORT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE TASK FORCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

^{iv} *An Employer's Guide to Behavioral Health Services*, National Business Group on Health, December 2005.

^v Sederer LI et al: Integrating Care for Medical and Mental Illnesses. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, April 2006.

^{vi} Stewart WF et al: *Cost of Lost Productive Work Time Among U.S. Workers with Depression*. *JAMA*, June 18, 2003.

^{vii} The University of Michigan Depression Center. Finkelstein SN et al: Improvement in Subjective Work Performance after Treatment of Chronic Depression: *Psychopharmacology Bulletin*, vol. 32, 1996, pp. 33-40.

^{viii} Dunlop, DD *Am J Pub Health* 2005. Wang, PS *Am J Psych* 2004. Simon, GE *Gen Hosp Psych* 2000. Claxton, *AJ JOEM*, 1999.

^{ix} *A Mentally Healthy Workforce: It's Good for Business*, Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, 2006.

^x *Mental HealthWorks*, Second Quarter 2004, Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, 2004.