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Before You Were a Lawyer
You Were a Human Being



Those Were the Days



From the time we start law school we are under incredible pressure.

- Pass the course
- Pass the bar
- Get a job
- Pay your student loans
- Build a client base
- Bill the hours*
- Win the cases
- Bill the hours**
- Pay your staff
- Pay your overhead
- Bill the hours**
- Run to the courthouse
- Run to your office
- Run home
- Run to the kid's soccer games, school plays
- Pay the tuition




Life + Law

- Meet with the clients
- Meet with the judges
- Meet with opposing counsel
- Meet with your family
- All of whom are most pleasant and agreeable
- Bill the hours**
- Pay the alimony
- Pay the child support
- Pay your medical bills
- Rebuild your retirement accounts hoping that one day you might be able to retire



Depressed yet?

- What happened to all those plans you made?
- What happened to your dreams?
- Do you even remember why you chose this career in the first place?



Attorneys as Control Freaks

- Our training encourages us to identify problems and correct them or at least obtain the best possible outcome for our clients.
- Sometimes our clients don't cooperate.
- When they don't it's not our fault, but we still struggle to "fix" the problem or we cut them loose.

Emotional Involvement

- We should not be emotionally involved in our client's cases.
- But we can't help, but be emotionally involved in the problems of our families and friends.
- Cutting them loose is often not a viable option unless it is the last resort.

Personal v. Professional

- If your child, your spouse, your sibling, your parent or your friend is in crisis YOU are also in crisis.
- You experience:
 - feelings of guilt,
 - embarrassment
 - isolation
 - feelings of failure because you can't "fix" them.

Crisis Transference

- The problems of a loved one become your problems.
- They weigh you down.
- They affect your ability to work and interact on a personal and professional level.
- How can you fix your client's problems when you can't even fix your own?

Depression

Depression is more than being a little down because things didn't go so well today.

Chronic Disease

- organic,
- psychological or,
- interpersonal in nature.

At Its Worst

- deep dark place
- where you are alone,
- where you feel there is no way out
- no one to talk to
- where you feel you are a failure as a lawyer
- a parent, a spouse, and as a person.
- where your successes are insignificant
- your setbacks are monumental *prima facie* evidence of your incompetence
- you live in fear that you will be found out.

Take the Test

- Do you or they feel a deep sense of depression, sadness, or hopelessness most of the day?
- Have you or they experienced diminished interest in most or all activities?
- Have you or they experienced significant appetite or weight change when not dieting?
- Have you or they experienced a significant change in sleeping patterns?
- Do you or they feel unusually restless...or unusually sluggish?
- Do you or they feel unduly fatigued?
- Do you or they experience persistent feelings of hopelessness or inappropriate feelings of guilt?
- Have you or they experienced a diminished ability to think or concentrate?
- Do you or they have recurrent thoughts of death or suicide?

Confidentiality with the Lawyer Assistance Program

- If you call to seek help for yourself, your inquiry is **confidential**.
- If you call as the spouse, child, or friend of a lawyer who you suspect may have an alcohol, drug or mental health problem, and needs help, your communication is also treated **confidentially** and **never** related to the lawyer for whom you are seeking help without your permission.

LAP ≠ State Bar Discipline

- In order to insure a high degree of trust and confidence in the lawyer's assistance program the LAP is entirely separate from any ethics or disciplinary committee of the State Bar.
- By rule of the NC State Bar
- By order of the NC Supreme Court

Confidentiality Cont.

- All inquiries, questions and conferences are privileged and held in the strictest **confidence**.

Under Rule 1.6 of the Rules of Professional Conduct of the North Carolina State Bar, the attorney/client privilege is applied to communications between a lawyer seeking assistance with the Lawyer Assistance Program

Depression Insights...

- The good news is that depression is *treatable*. The Lawyer Assistance Program provides assistance to lawyers suffering from depression and other mental health disorders.
- The LAP seeks to *confidentially* help a lawyer evaluate any problem he or she is encountering that may potentially adversely affect his or her ability to carry out his or her duties as a lawyer and to also address the problem.
- The goal of the program is to provide assistance to lawyers who may suffer from depression or other mental health disorders before such issues become debilitating and cause adverse consequences to the lawyer and his or her clients.
- Let Us Help You - Call Confidentially Today,
Robynn E. Moraites at 1-800-720-7257,
Ed Ward at 1-877-627-3743, 919-828-6425 or
Towanda Garner at 1-877-570-0991



Grab the Lifeline

- Help is a phone call or email away.

Robynn E. Moraites
1-800-720-7257
1-704-892-5699
robynnmoraites@gmail.com

Ed Ward
1-877-627-3743
919-828-6425
eward@ncbar.gov

or
Towanda Garner
1-877-570-0991
1-919-828-4620 ext. 290
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Receive the guidance you need, not just for yourself, but for those you love.
You are definitely not alone!

Contact Info

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