



LAWYER WELL-BEING WEEK

MAY 4-8, 2020



STAY STRONG
Physical Well-Being



ALIGN
Spiritual Well-Being



ENGAGE & GROW
Career & Intellectual Well-Being



CONNECT
Social Well-Being



FEEL WELL
Emotional Well-Being

YOU'RE INVITED TO BE A LAWYER WELL-BEING CHAMPION

WHAT IS IT?

The evidence is in and can no longer be ignored: Too many lawyers aren't thriving. It's time to take action. The first annual **Lawyer Well-Being Week** is one way to do so. You're invited to join organizations across the legal profession to lead and participate in activities that promote health and happiness among lawyers and their support teams.

WHEN IS IT?

May 4-8, 2020. The month of May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

MAY							01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31								

WHO'S INVOLVED?

The "who" is you! Multiple organizations that care about well-being in the profession also are involved, including the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, the ABA Law Practice Division Attorney Well-Being Committee, and the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Program's Well-Being Committee. We invite you to join them in being a champion for lawyer well-being.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Lawyer Well-Being Week team of volunteers has been working hard to make it easy for you to get involved. On our web page, you'll find out how to join an event or organize your own activities:

1. Sign up for a webinar presented by the ABA Law Practice Division.
2. Download an Activity Planning Guide to plan your own activities.
3. Read and download resources and tools (e.g., tip sheets, etc.).
4. Find materials to market your activities, like logos, stickers, social media post ideas, and more.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Too many lawyers struggle with mental health and alcohol use disorders. Many others, while not dealing with a diagnosable illness, still are not fully well. You may already have taken initial steps to combat the well-being crisis. Lawyer Well-Being Week is a tangible way that your organization can demonstrate that, as a well-being champion, you are committed to helping over the long-term.

THE EVIDENCE IS IN ON LAWYER WELL-BEING

36%

ALCOHOL

21-36% qualify as problem drinkers. Most problematic for men; under age 30; and private practice, especially solo practitioners.

28%

DEPRESSION

28% report mild or higher depression symptoms. Highest for men and solo practitioners.

23%

STRESS

23% report mild or higher stress symptoms. Highest for women and solo practitioners.

19%

ANXIETY

19% report mild or higher anxiety symptoms. Highest for women and solo practitioners.

TOP
10

SUICIDE

Ranked #8 in a study of suicide by occupation. Rate is 1.33 times the national norm.

(Source: [Krill et al., 2016](#); [Mental Health Daily](#) report of suicide by occupation)



KEY ISSUES TO TARGET

Your choice of activities for Lawyer Well-Being Week (and all year around) should take into account key contributors to poor mental and physical well-being. Research has found that the factors below are common culprits. Many of these challenges relate to cultural norms, organizational structures, and ingrained habits that will take persistence and patience to change. We won't resolve these tough issues in a single Well-Being Week. But we can make progress on spotlighting them and starting small steps toward positive change.



Job Factors

- Long Work Hours (suicidal thinking spikes at over 49 hours per week)
- Overload: Too Much Work, Too Little Time
- Ambiguity in Expectations
- Feeling Stagnate – Not Learning New Things or Being Challenged
- Perceived Lack of Control
- Lack of Autonomy of What You Do and How You Do It
- Feeling Unskillful or Incompetent



Work Culture & Relational

- Low Belonging or Ostracism
- Competition in the Workplace
- Excessive Profit-Oriented
- Unfairness
- Misaligned Incentive Systems
- Effort-Reward Imbalance
- Incivility
- Interpersonal Conflict
- Toxic Leadership
- Loneliness
- Low Social Support



Individual Factors

- High Stress Reactivity
- Rumination Tendencies
- Psychological Inflexibility (unskillful management of thoughts and emotions)
- Sleep Deprivation
- Junk Food
- Inactivity
- Low Self-Esteem



10 ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Below are 10 ideas to ignite your brainstorming about your organization's participation in Well-Being Week.

Be sure to recruit your leaders. Progress will depend on respected influencers in your organization aligning their words and actions with the cultural value of well-being--including being good role models. Your activities are much more likely to be perceived as credible and to be effective if leaders are highly visible participants and proponents.

1 Plan an alcohol-free "Happy Hour" with fun activities to improve team cohesion and belonging (team-building activities, board games, "10 questions," etc.).

2 Organize an attorney-client relationship event that includes law firms and corporate legal departments to discuss facilitators and obstacles to their collective well-being.

3 Have an off-site retreat or internal meetings to discuss ways to remove obstacles and implement practices to promote health, happiness, and work engagement.

4 Ask a senior leader to host a town hall to discuss well-being or convey support for Well-Being Week activities via email.

5 Invite a panel of lawyers to share about their own well-being practices and challenges. It might include panelists willing to share their own stories about managing mental health and alcohol use disorders. [Talking openly](#) about such challenges is one practice that can help [lower stigma](#), which is an obstacle to help-seeking.

6 Attend or organize a [Mental Health First Aid](#) training.

7 Plan a Technology Blackout. For one day, ask people not to email, text, or call colleagues outside designated hours (e.g., after 6:30 pm) unless it is an emergency. It may encourage organizations to [rethink the unthinkable](#).

8 Hold a positive leadership workshop to educate senior leaders about the [powerful impact that leaders](#) and positive [work cultures](#) have on members' well-being, satisfaction, and engagement. Leaders are [primary drivers](#) of work culture---good or bad.

9 [Invite a therapist](#) or professional coach to hold on-site "office hours" to lower perceived barriers of exploring therapy or coaching as helpful options.

10 Circulate a research blurb about the [positive effects of gratitude](#) (including in the [workplace](#)). Invite your colleagues to convey their appreciation on gratitude postcards that you design.

TELL US ABOUT IT

We invite you to submit your planned activities for inclusion in our Blog. This will give your organization recognition for your good work and also will serve as a source of ideas for other organizations. Send your 400-word-or-less description to **Anne Brafford**, abrafford@aspire.legal.

FIND MORE IDEAS AT lawyerwellbeing.net



It's **GOOD** for clients.
 It's **GOOD** for business.
 It's the **RIGHT THING TO DO.**



Jonathan Beitner, *Chair ABA CoLAP Attorney Well-Being Committee.*

“Many law firms, corporate legal departments, government agencies, law schools, judge associations and more have responded to the urgent call to action to improve well-being in the profession. Over 160 entities already have signed the ABA Well-Being Pledge. Participating in Lawyer Well-Being Week will be another tangible way to demonstrate that we’re serious and committed.”



Anne Brafford, *Chair ABA Law Practice Division Attorney Well-Being Committee, National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being member and Chief Editor of the 2017 report, ABA CoLAP Well-Being Committee member.*

“For law firms, caring about lawyer well-being is not just the right thing to do, it’s also good for clients and for business. Healthy lawyers are more engaged and productive. They are more energized to fully contribute to their firms, colleagues, families, and communities.”



Bree Buchanan, *Chair ABA CoLAP, Co-Chair and Co-Founder of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, Senior Advisor, Krill Strategies.*

“So much progress has been made since the National Task Force published its Path to Lawyer Well-Being report in 2017. Still, there’s a long way to go. A goal of Lawyer Well-Being Week is to keep the movement energized and focused on innovation. There’s power and responsibility for every stakeholder group in the profession to continue making steps toward positive change.”

THE BUSINESS CASE: One of These Things is Not Like The Other.



Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. It costs employers \$210 billion annually--50% is due to lost productivity.



Burnout contributes to turnover, reduced work quality, depression, substance use, suicidal thinking, and ethical lapses.



Lack of sleep costs \$411 billion annually in lost productivity. Impairs cognitive functioning and contributes to depression. One study found lawyers among the most sleep deprived occupations.



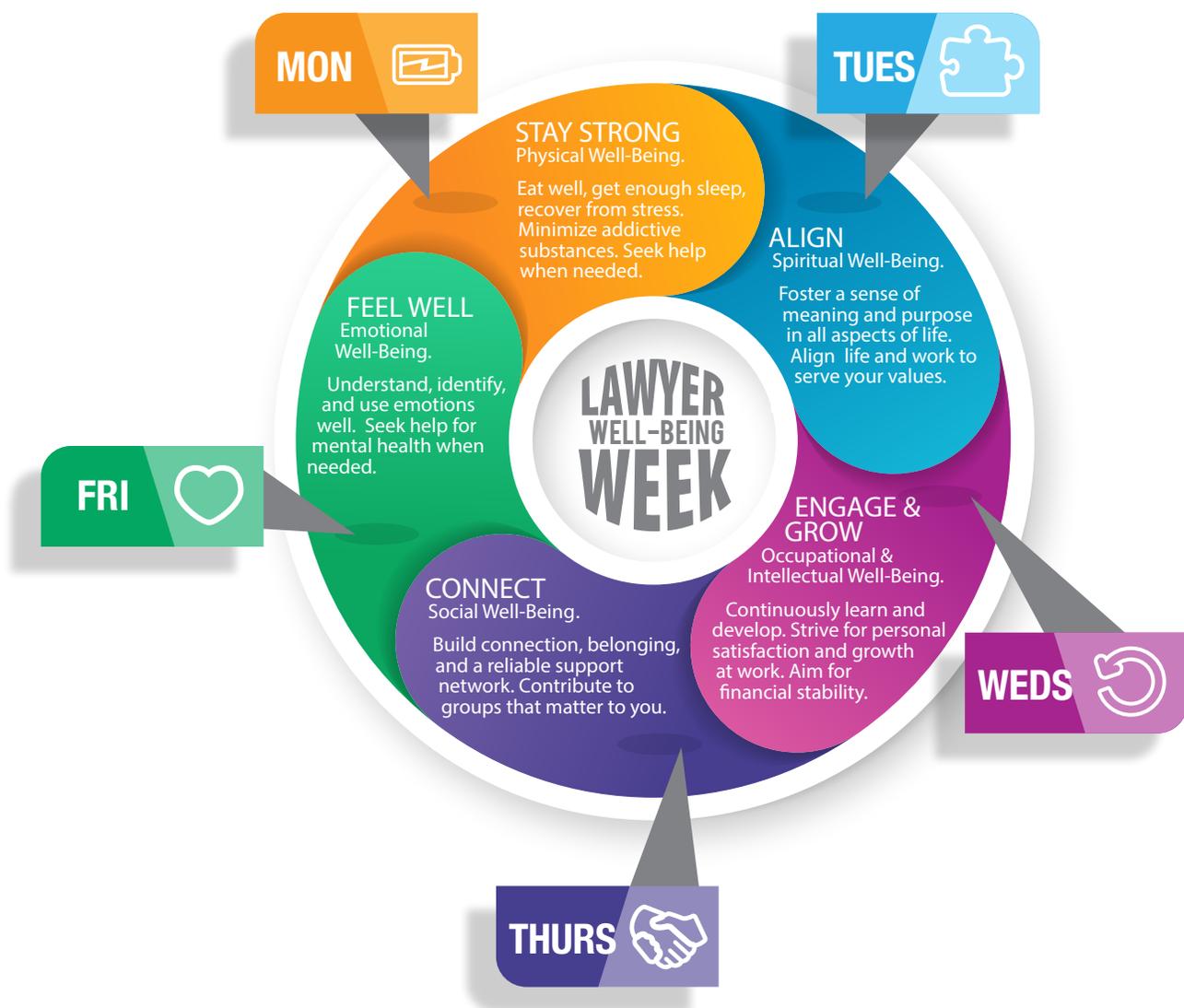
Alcohol use costs employers \$250 billion annually. 72% is due to lost productivity. Most of the loss (77%) is due to binge drinking.



A 2019 SHRM study found that toxic work cultures cost \$223 billion over the last five years in turnover alone. Direct supervisor behavior was a key cause.



Work engagement (energy, dedication, and absorption in work) contributes to higher performance, profitability, productivity, client satisfaction, and talent retention.



SUPPORTING THE WHOLE LAWYER

The 2017 National Task Force report defined “Lawyer Well-Being” as “a continuous process in which lawyers strive for thriving in each dimension of their lives.” It defined six dimensions of holistic

well-being: Physical, Spiritual Social, Occupational, Intellectual, and Emotional Well-Being. Each day of Lawyer Well-Being Week will focus on a distinct dimension.