



Defining Lawyer Well-Being: A Multi-Dimensional Approach

Well-being cannot be defined just by the absence of illness but also encompasses a positive state of wellness. From a whole-health perspective, it can be viewed as a continuous process in which we work across multiple dimensions of wellness. The way we function in one dimension can enhance or impede the way we function in another dimension. The [report](#) of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being identified six dimensions that make up full well-being for lawyers:

1. OCCUPATIONAL

Cultivating personal satisfaction, growth, and enrichment in work; financial stability.

2. EMOTIONAL

Recognizing the importance of emotions. Developing the ability to identify and manage our own emotions to support mental health, achieve goals, and inform decision-making. Seeking help for mental health when needed.

3. PHYSICAL

Striving for regular physical activity, proper diet and nutrition, sufficient sleep, and recovery; minimizing the use of addictive substances. Seeking help for physical health when needed.

4. INTELLECTUAL

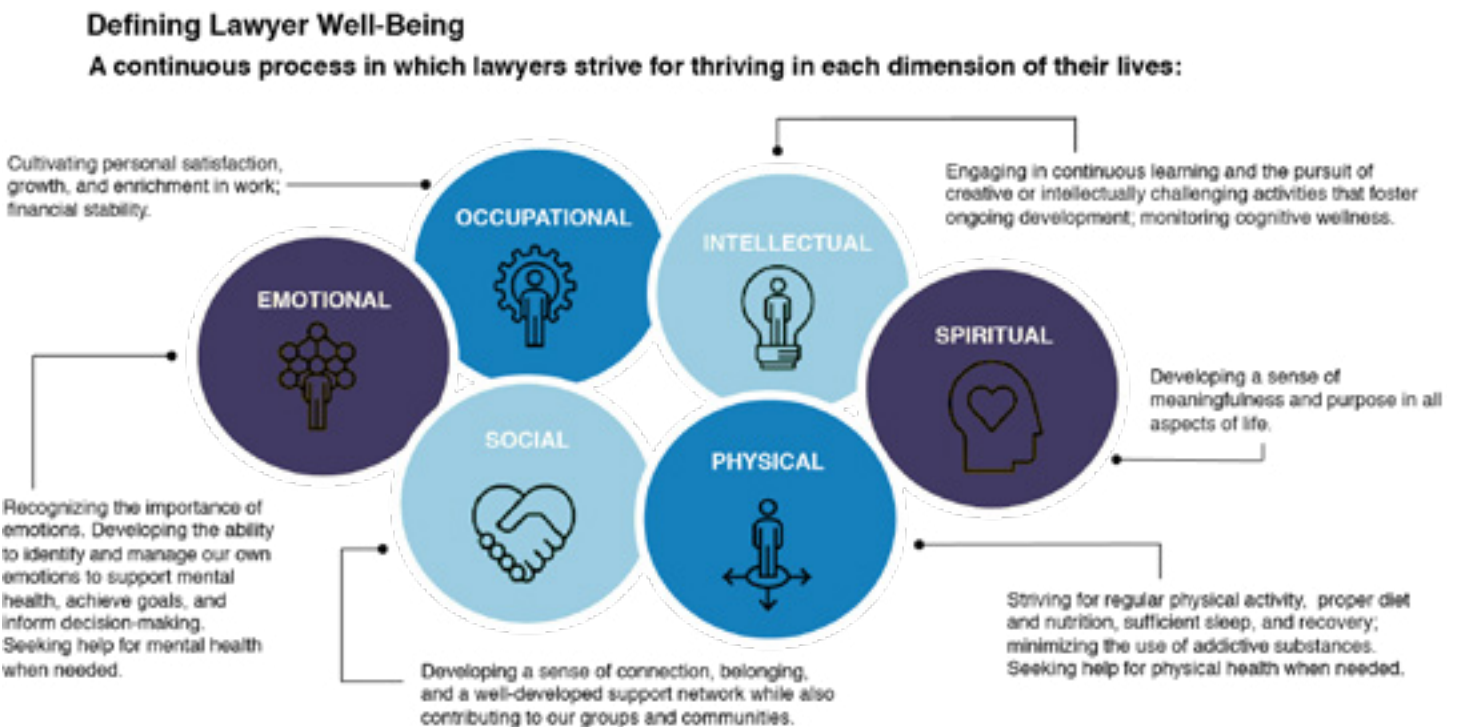
Engaging in continuous learning and the pursuit of creative or intellectually challenging activities that foster ongoing development; monitoring cognitive wellness.

5. SPIRITUAL

Developing a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in all aspects of life.

6. SOCIAL

Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support network while also contributing to our groups and communities.





Like individual well-being, there's no single definition of a healthy workplace. Adapting the World Health Organization (WHO)'s definition of a [healthy workplace](#), the Toolkit defines it as follows:

A healthy workplace is one in which all organizational members collaborate to continually improve processes to protect and promote member well-being and organizational success. All seek alignment of organizational and member goals and needs so that they can grow and thrive together.

The WHO proposes that healthy workplaces depend on an interaction among four areas:

1. Psychosocial work environment
2. Physical work environment
3. Personal resources of each organizational member
4. Community contribution

The psychosocial work environment--which can have a big impact on lawyer well-being--is an area of vulnerability for many legal employers. The Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation, an Australian charitable organization focused on healthy legal workplaces, has published [Workplace Well-Being: Best Practice Guidelines](#) for promoting and protecting psychological well-being in the legal profession. The Guidelines aim to help legal employers create workplaces that fulfill 13 factors that have been identified by extensive research as critical to psychological health.

Also helpful is the [Guarding Minds@Work](#) website,

recommended by the WHO, which provides free resources including [a survey and supporting documents](#) to help employers assess and enhance these 13 factors:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

A culture characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Supervisors and coworkers are supportive of organizational members' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately.

3. CLEAR LEADERSHIP & EXPECTATIONS

There is effective leadership and support that helps organizational members know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.

Healthy Workplace Dynamics





4. CIVILITY & RESPECT

Employees are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with clients and the public.

5. PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES & REQUIREMENTS

There is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.

6. GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional, and job skills.

7. RECOGNITION & REWARD

There is appropriate acknowledgment and appreciation of organizational members' efforts in a fair and timely manner.

8. INVOLVEMENT & INFLUENCE

Organizational members are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.

9. WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

Tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.

10. ENGAGEMENT

Organizational members feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well.

11. BALANCE

There is recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family, and personal life.

12. PSYCHOLOGICAL PROTECTION

Organizational members' psychological safety is ensured.

13. PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL SAFETY

Management takes appropriate action to protect the physical safety of organizational members.

