



Share Your Well-Being Boosting Passion

Well-Being Week in Law 2024 | Friday, May 10

How legal professionals invest their non-work time and energy can have a big impact on their mental health and work engagement. But many feel so busy and tired from work, that their non-work activities dwindle. The aim of this program is to provide inspiration, guidance, and resources to try out new, well-being-boosting activities outside work.

Session leaders will:

- Share activities they do to disconnect from work, revitalize their energy, stave off burnout, and feed their soul.
- Explain how they fit their passion into their busy lives.
- Provide tips and resources for trying out the activity.

Linking Nonwork Passions to Well-Being

Nearly all the *Share Your Passion* sessions involve some form of creativity. Creativity supports mental health and fuller, happier lives and can help stressed-out lawyers relax, recover from stress, and rejuvenate.

Everyday Creativity

The positive effects of creativity aren't tied to specific activities or to any special talent. It's the [creative process](#) that appears to be most important for our well-being and positive psychological development (Silvia et al., 2014). For example, a [2018 study](#) found that people who identified themselves as "Makers" tended to be happier and more likely to have indicators of psychological health, such as less rumination and excessive self-focus (Collier & Wayment, 2018). This study involved everyday creativity like domestic activities (e.g., baking, cooking, gardening, scrapbooking) and arts and crafts (photography, quilting, drawing, painting, sewing, jewelry-making, knitting, crochet, ceramics, computer graphics).

Pathways Between Creativity & Well-Being

Creativity connects to well-being through multiple pathways:

- Sparks positive emotions.
- Generates the mental state of flow.
- Connects us with other people and aids a sense of belonging.
- Enables self-expression.
- Promotes a sense of meaning.
- Helps us relax and detach from work.
- Provides positive challenge & experiences of mastery and accomplishment.
- Builds self-awareness.

SESSION #1: MUSIC

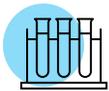


DESCRIPTION

60 Minutes: Friday, May 10, 11:00 am ET-12:00 pm ET

Speakers: Kendra Brodin, Jessica Moore, Denise A. Robinson

Three music lovers will share how they infuse music into their lives in ways that enrich their well-being: (1) singing, playing instruments, taking lessons, teaching, and jamming with others (Jessica); (2) serving as a guest musician and organist for a faith community (Kendra); and (3) mindfully listening to music to regulate emotions and to connect with her cultural identity (Denise). You'll get to absorb different types of music as the session leaders share and demonstrate their music passion and share ideas and resources to bring music into your life more actively and in different ways.



SCIENCE

Link Between Music & Well-Being

Maya Angelou referred to music as her “refuge.” “I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness,” she said. And singer Jason Mraz said: “Music is a weapon in the war against unhappiness.”

Science agrees. Music is powerful. It affects our brains, bodies, and social connections. It has many [psychological benefits](#) and can be an antidote to stress, depression, anxiety, and pain—with some research finding it as [powerful as exercise](#) for improving mental health (Adler, 2020; Cherry, 2019; Jagoo, 2022). This is why [music therapy](#) has been used to treat a variety of emotional, cognitive, social, and physical issues (Scott, 2023). You can reap benefits not only from listening to music but also playing music, singing, and [dancing](#)—alone and with others (Field, 2024).

Acting in synchrony with others—as we do when, for example, making music, singing, engaging in religious rituals, dancing with others—has special effects. Moving in synchrony can increase social attachment, positive feelings towards group members, trust, and cooperation. It boosts levels of endogenous opioids associated with social bonding and reduced pain (Baranowski-Pinto et al., 2022; Charles et al., 2020). “Collective effervescence” has been used to describe the joy of group synchronous activity (Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009).



TIPS & RESOURCES

Use Music to Relax

- Choose low-tempo music that you like to relax and promote mindfulness. Listening to music that you know and like tends to cause the strongest brain response and dopamine release.
- The best results come from listening intentionally and becoming absorbed in the music. Doing so is associated with a reduction in cortisol, reduced anxiety, and positive effects on the immune system (Adler, 2020; Koelsch, & Stegemann, 2012; Kreutz et al., 2012).
- Research has found that a song called [Weightless](#) by Marconi Union is particularly effective at turning down the stress response. Listeners experienced a drop in anxiety by a striking 65%. The song was constructed for the specific purpose of helping slow listeners' heart rate, reduce blood pressure, and lower levels of cortisol.
- [A lullaby really can work magic. Science tells us why and how.](#)” (NPR).

Make a Music Playlist

- Make a play list of your favorite music to kindle specific, desired emotions—for example, to feel relaxed, uplifted, happy, energized, or reflective.

Make & Move to Music

- Sing, play instruments, or dance—especially with others—to relieve stress, express feelings, and build social connections. Find local chorales, group music-instrument classes, line-dancing, or other musical activities that you find enticing.
- Learning to play a musical instrument can offer a sense of mastery and self-esteem and spark neural connections. Your local music store will have resources for lessons and group music.
- Music-making can be easy to learn! For example, beginning drum circles are accessible to many as a way to start playing music, and anyone with functioning vocal cords can sing. You can start with a few individual lessons if you want to gain confidence before joining a larger group experience. Don't underestimate yourself!

Use Music to Bring Joy, Serve, and Connect

- Volunteer to provide music to others, no matter what your level of skill! Singing or playing for others is a beautiful way to serve and bring joy to others while you enjoy making music.
- Look for easy-access music-making opportunities, like singing in a choir through your community (geographic, faith, etc.) or finding opportunities to ring bells, play drums, etc.
- Music brings us together, improving social well-being. ([“How Music Bonds Us Together”](#) from “Greater Good” at Berkeley)
- Research shows that singing in a choir has health and happiness benefits: see e.g., Jacques Launay and Eiluned Pierce, “Choir singing improves health, happiness – and is the perfect icebreaker,” *The Conversation*, October 28, 2015.

<https://theconversation.com/choir-singing-improves-health-happiness-and-is-the-perfect-icebreaker-47619>.

Learn More About Music and the Brain

- [This Is Your Brain on Music](#) by Daniel Levitin
- [Your Brain on Music: The Sound System Between Your Ears](#) (Kennedy Center)
- [Musical Training and Shaping the Brain through Neuroplasticity](#)
- [Every Brain Needs Music: The Neuroscience of Making and Listening to Music](#)
- [The #1 Reason to Pick Up an Instrument After 50](#) (or at any age! Lots of great insights in this article about how research backs the brain benefits of learning to read and play music later in life.)



SPEAKERS BIOS

KENDRA BRODIN

Kendra Brodin is the Founder & CEO of EsquireWell, a leading lawyer well-being and performance consulting firm, providing education, strategic guidance, coaching, and online learning tools to help lawyers be happier, healthier, and more successful. Prior to founding her company, Kendra was Chief Attorney Development Officer at a large national law firm where she managed firm-wide lawyer training and development as well as well-being initiatives. Kendra is a frequent presenter, coach, and consultant for small, mid-sized, and large law firms, legal departments, and law schools, and she teaches a course called “Well-being and Professional Formation” at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis. With a master’s degree in social work, a law degree, and nearly 20 years of professional experience in legal professional development and well-being, Kendra brings together the "people" side and the "business" side of the law as she guides legal organizations and their team members to thrive now and in the future.

JESSICA MOORE

Jessica T. Moore (she/her), a former practicing attorney, has been a musician her whole life. A vocalist and multi-instrumentalist, she regularly jams in acoustic gatherings and writes songs. Jessica teaches singing, dance, and rhythm to preschoolers (and their parents) through the well-known *Music Together* program. She has a Master’s Degree in Education from UCLA and is committed to supporting joy and confidence in music-making in others. She is always taking music lessons of some kind (voice, piano, guitar, ukulele, etc.), and revels in the study of music-science and music theory.

Jessica was a practicing lawyer for more than 26 years, specializing primarily in whistleblower law, and remains actively involved in the legal profession. She is a member of the California Bar and contributes on multiple committees of the Institute for Well-Being in Law.

DENISE A. ROBINSON

Denise A. Robinson (she/her) is a diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) and well-being consultant, yoga teacher, and former practicing labor & employment attorney. Through her consultancy, The

Still Center LLC, Denise performs cultural assessments, provides strategic advice, and delivers training on DEI, well-being, and other talent development topics. In addition, she has directed benchmarking surveys and other think tank projects to advance DEI in the workplace. Before starting her consultancy, Denise served as the Director of Diversity & Inclusion for O'Melveny & Myers LLP and subsequently, the Diversity Officer for the International Monetary Fund.

Denise has been teaching yoga asana and meditation classes for over a decade and applies her knowledge and experience with these contemplative practices to her DEI work. Denise earned her undergraduate degree in philosophy from Ohio University's Honors Tutorial College, and she is a graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, where she served as the chapter president of the Black Law Students Association and a student advocate in the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic.

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MATERIALS NOTE

These materials were prepared for Well-Being Week in Law 2024, an event of the Institution for Well-Being in Law. The science blurbs were prepared by Dr. Anne M. Brafford, JD, MAPP, PhD. The session leaders contributed to the Tips & Resources for their sessions. Others are welcome to use these materials with proper attribution.



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