



Assisting Attorneys in their Wellness Transition from School to Firm

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At the end of today's session...

- You will have a better understanding of wellness programs at law schools and law firms.
- You will have a better understanding of the gap between wellness at law schools and law firms.
- You will have received concrete tools to help law students and lawyers bridge the wellness gap.

Wellness at Law Schools

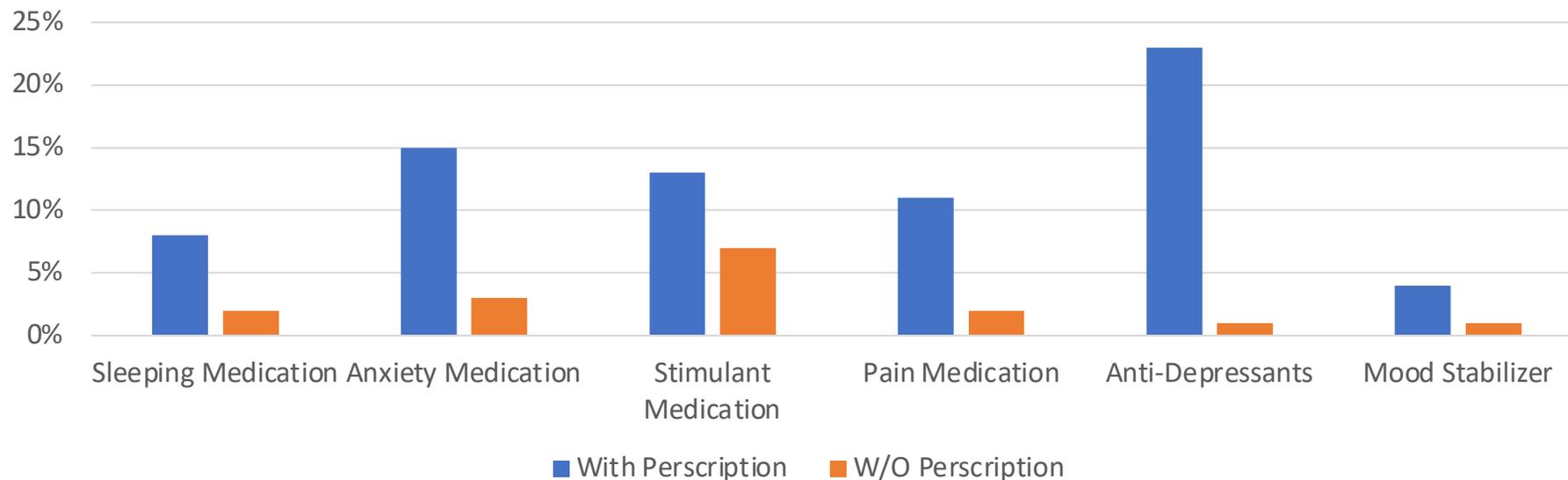
Law School Wellness – WHY?

- Study conducted in conjunction with AccessLex with over 39 law schools (5,000 responding students)

Prior 30 days – Drank enough to get drunk	53%
Prior 2 weeks – Binge drank at least once	39%
Prior 2 weeks – Binge drank 2 or more times	18%
Prior 12 Months – Marijuana use	39%
Prior 12 Months – Cocaine use	6%

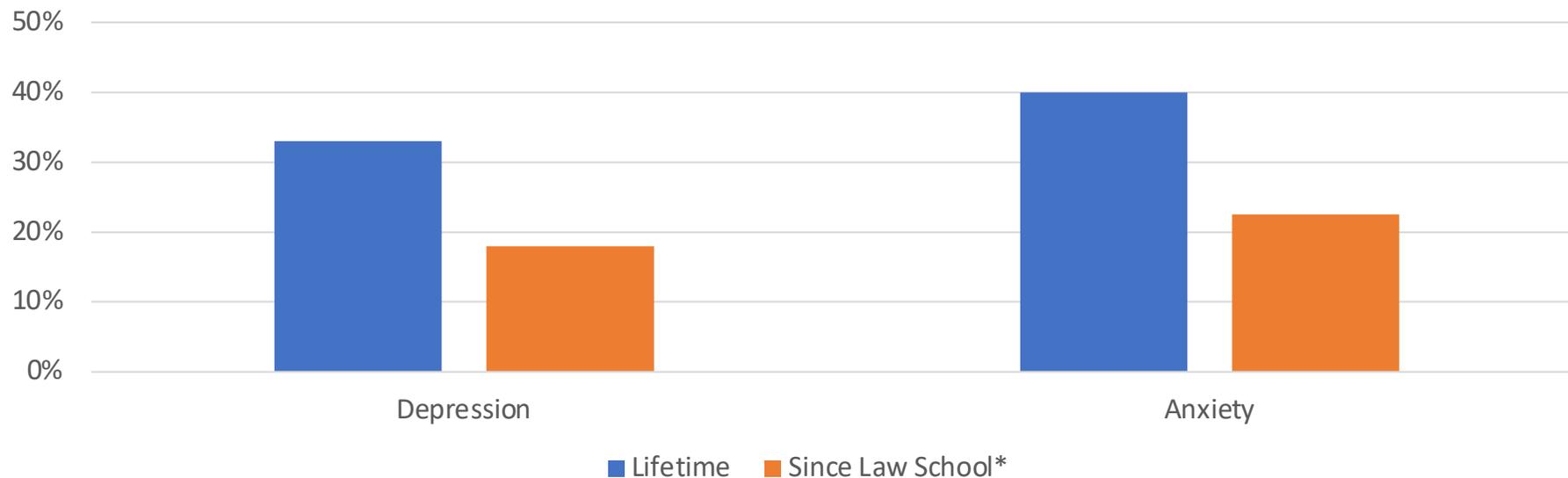
Law School Wellness – WHY?

Prescription Drug Use in the Past 12 Months



Law School Wellness – WHY?

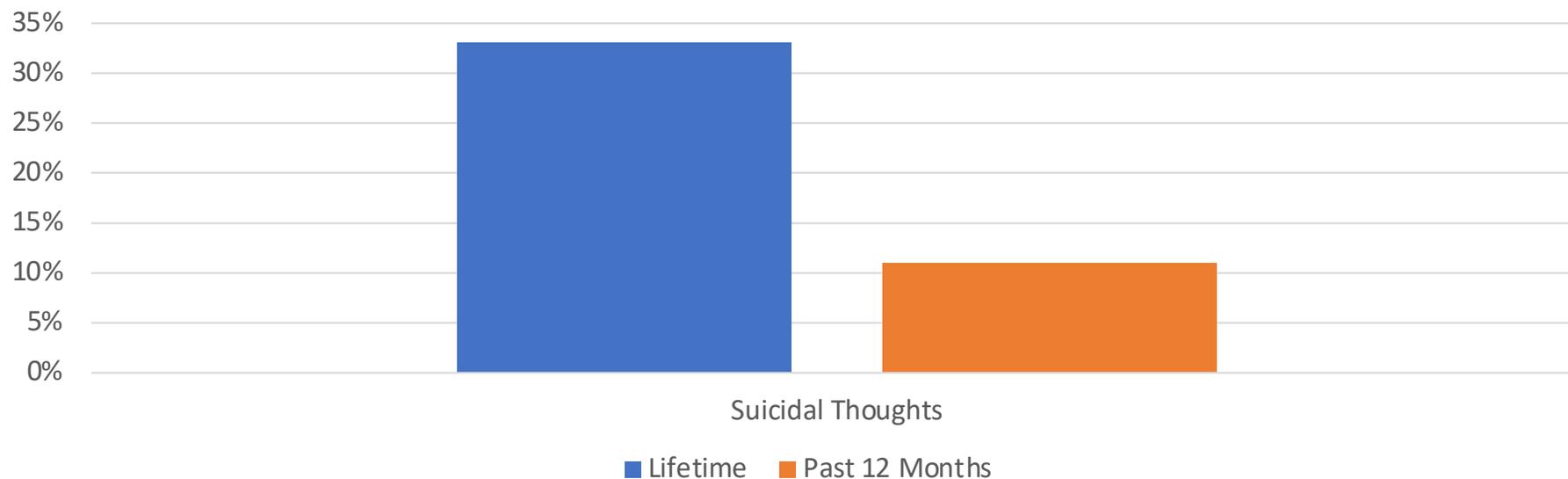
Depression or Anxiety Diagnosis



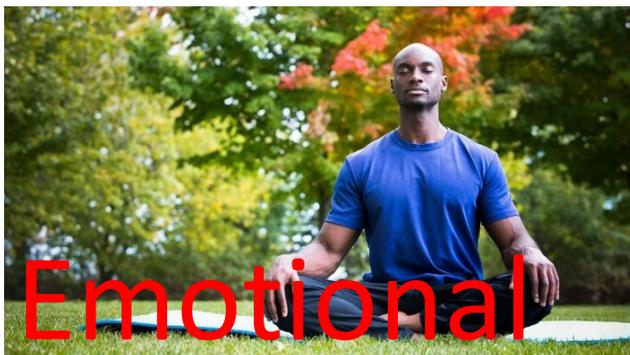
* Since Law School data included in Lifetime data

Law School Wellness – WHY?

Frequency of Suicidal Thoughts



Law School Wellness Initiatives



Law School Wellness Initiatives

- Physical
 - Walk and Talk with the Dean
 - Counseling On the Go
 - Study Bikes
 - Hip Hop Cardio
 - Yoga
 - Healthy cooking



Law School Wellness Initiatives

- Emotional
 - Nursing room
 - Play with a Puppy
 - Law Students Helping Law Students
 - Virtual Reality Games
 - Wellness Books
 - Therapy Assistance Online
 - Affinity Groups



Law School Wellness Initiatives

- Financial
 - The Road to Zero - A strategic Approach to Student Loan Repayment AccessLex Institute
 - Financial Counselors to discuss money management post degree
 - Law Suits
 - Food Pantry



Law School Wellness Initiatives

- Social
 - Waffle Night
 - Bingo
 - Free Coffee for National Unplug Day
 - Student Bar Association Field Day
 - Big Event





Law School Wellness Initiatives

- What other wellness initiatives exist at your School?
- Assume someone in this room does not yet have a wellness initiative at their School. What would be your recommendation for a quick but impactful “win”?

Wellness at Law Firms

Law Firm Policies and Infrastructure



- Written policies
- Billable time for Wellness
- Wellness Rooms

Wellness Curriculum



NALP Annual Education Conference

April 5 – 8, 2022 • New Orleans, LA

Incorporating Wellness Into Existing Initiatives

Attorney
Curriculums

Mentoring
Programs



Affinity /
Business
Resource Groups

Practice Group
Meetings



Summer
Associate
Program

Intern Program

Wellness as a Retention Tool



Family Time



Connections



Swag

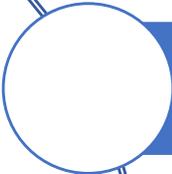
Measuring Time Spent on Wellness



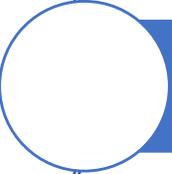
- Vacation Reports
- Responsibility of Supervising Partner / Mentor to monitor vacation time
- Encouraging Vacation Time
- Requiring Vacation Time



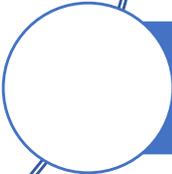
Rely on External Resources



Coaches and Consultants



Companies



Speakers





Law Firm Wellness Initiatives

- What other wellness initiatives exist at your Firm?
- Assume someone in this room does not yet have a wellness initiative at the Firm. What would be your recommendation for a quick but impactful “win”?

Bridging the Gap

The Gaps Between Law Schools and Firms

In Law Schools . . .

Students are often open about and encouraged to discuss their mental health needs

Schools have more internal wellness resources for referral (i.e., University Counseling, Student Affairs, etc.)

Students feel comfortable asking for accommodation (extra time to read a test aloud)

Students can easily get financial and other support (i.e., food pantries, emergency loans)

School Folks: What else?

In Law Firms . . .

There is a stigma attached to asking for help, acknowledging what would be perceived as “weakness”

Every few years there is a headline that stirs a reaction (e.g., OD, suicide) but most firms lack wellness resources

Personal problems are often ignored until they become liabilities

Financial stress, especially when the loan repayments start, can be overwhelming for new associates

Firm Folks: What else?

Bridging the Gap: Make Sure New Associates . . .

- Understand the business of law and their roles/responsibilities
- Acknowledge partners' expectations, including:
 - Availability
 - Attention to detail
 - Productivity
 - Initiative
 - Value add
 - Responsiveness
 - And, for some, face time
- Recognize the need to proactively communicate/adapt to their audiences
- Know when and whom to ask for help
 - Provide and remind them of wellness and other resources



Bridging the Gap: Remind Your Partners . . .

- What associates have been used to and what they expect
 - *Consider asking your new associates what they want, need and what is important to them*
- What your recruiting messages are and avoid “bait and switches”
 - *Examples: “This is a lifestyle firm;” “No face time required;” “We have a ‘no jerks’ rule”*
- That the practice **and the world** have changed, especially in the last two years
 - *And not all associates have the same priorities, support, or want to be partner*
- To mentor, train and develop all new associates and incentivize and hold partners accountable to do so
- Work to identify and eliminate biases, including “Great Expectations”
 - *“When I was an associate ...”*
- Remind partners associates have choices and what it costs to lose them
 - *And that we have responsibility for each other*
- Inform partners of the resources and accommodations schools provide
 - *And the resources available at the firm*

Bridging the Gap: What Else You Can Do?

Make sure summer associate experiences, internships are realistic

Make your new associates feel welcome

- *Make them feel connected to the firm and each other*
- *“Brand” them; “wrap the firm flag and swag around them”*

Offer additional support to those who might need it, e.g., lawyers of color, the neurodiverse, first-generation attorneys

Get them “up and running” ASAP

- *Tell them what they need to know*
- *Share important information as part of new associate’s orientation and integration*

What Should You Make Sure They Know

Administrative	Firm Culture	Training
HR/Benefits	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Core Competencies
Wellness Resources	Pro Bono	Ethics and Professionalism
Policies and Procedures	Assignment and Review Process	Legal Research
Working with Assistants and Paralegals	Mentoring Programs	Legal Writing
Knowledge Management	Social Events, Culture Tips	Practice Area Training

Be a Wellness Resource Yourself

- See something, say something (“Are you ok?”)
 - *Know your resources (ombudspersons, general counsel, HR, EAP, coaching) and your authority*
- Provide periodic reminders to all available wellness resources
- Reach out during times of stress
 - *After trials and closings, during evaluation season, in response to personal situations, social unrest and world events*
- Consider learning more and getting certified
- Be a wellness role model yourself



Wellness and Diversity and Inclusion

Well-Being and Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- Belongingness is the human emotional need to feel like an accepted member of a group. It is a critical part of emotional and social well-being.
- Belonging is the feeling of security and support that comes with a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and authenticity. A person who feels like they belong can bring their whole selves to work.
- When people feel like they don't belong at work, their performance and their personal lives suffer.
- When we can create genuine feelings of belonging for everyone, engagement and performance improve, as well as the bottom line of the business.



Double-Stigma



- There is a double stigma faced by people in minority groups who often already feel pressure to “over perform” to overcome negative bias and prove that they “belong” at the firm.
- A significant contributor to well-being is a sense of “organizational belongingness” which means feeling personally accepted, respected, included, and supported.
- A weak sense of belonging is associated strongly with depressive symptoms.

Rejection Pain and Physical Pain

- The brain processes emotional pain and physical pain similarly. When someone feels physical pain, opioids are released in the brain so that the significance of the pain is inhibited. We now know this same experience occurs when an individual feels slighted or rejected by others. It triggers “fight or flight.”
- It is also important to remember that we recall emotional rejection more strongly than physical pain, and it can therefore cause longer-term sensitivity.





Impacts of Social Rejection & Micro-Aggressions

- Being on the receiving end of a social snub causes a cascade of emotional and cognitive consequences.
- Social rejection increases anger, anxiety, depression, jealousy and sadness.
- It reduces performance on difficult intellectual tasks and can also contribute to aggression and poor impulse control.
- People who routinely feel excluded have poorer sleep quality, and their immune systems don't function as well as those of people with strong social connections.

Psychological Safety and Well-Being



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/team-psychological-danger-work-performance/>

Mentoring, Well-Being, and Inclusion

- Mentoring fosters inclusiveness and belonging.
- Mentoring and sponsorship can enhance well-being and career progression for women and diverse professionals and reduce lawyer isolation.
- Both mentors and mentees report a greater sense of personal connection with others in the legal community, restored enthusiasm for the legal profession, and more resilience.





Discussion Questions

- What gaps do you think make it the hardest for law students to transition into the practice?
- What are ideas that the firms could “swipe” from the schools?
- What are ideas that the schools could “swipe” from the firms?
- What do you think stands in the way of bridging the gap?



To conclude: What about YOUR well-being?

- We couldn't end a well-being program without taking a moment to focus on YOUR well-being!
- In these last couple of minutes at the end of the conference, think about what YOU will do to tend to YOUR well-being?
 - This weekend
 - Next week when you are back in the office
 - Remember to fill your own cup first rather than simply pouring into everyone else.



Questions?

Thanks for being with us this afternoon!

Safe travels home!

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