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Well-Being in Law:

Redefining What It Means to Work in the Legal Profession
One Breath at a Time

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Agenda

- Studies Regarding Lawyer Well-Being
- Stress in the Current International Climate
- How Stress Affects Lawyer Competence
- Why Lawyers are Prone to Stress-Induced Disease
- Strategies to Improve Well-Being

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The State of Well-Being in Law (ALM Intelligence 2023 Data)


- 71% of lawyers reported anxiety
- 38% of lawyers reported depression, and 63% said they knew a colleague who was depressed
- 49% of lawyers believed mental health problems and substance abuse are at a crisis level in the legal industry
- 15% of lawyers contemplated suicide at some point in their professional careers. In 2021, ALM reported this was 31% for Black lawyers.
- 76% of lawyers thought their work environment negatively contributed to their mental health issues

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Causes of Traumatic Stress

- National and international tension
- Heightened polarization
- Loved ones in the zone of conflict
- Secondary trauma
- Feeling unsupported
- Feeling isolated or alienated
- Constant media coverage of violent events
- Parenting in times of international tension



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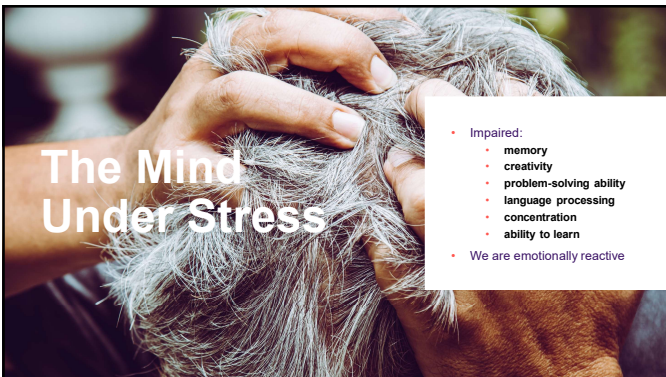


The Mind of a Lawyer

Need well-functioning executive capacities to make good decisions and evaluate risks, plan, prioritize, cope with new situations

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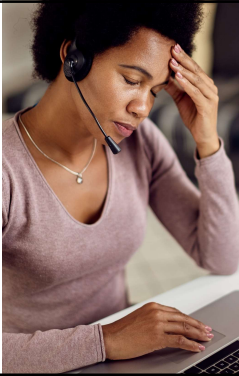
The Mind Under Stress

- Impaired:
 - memory
 - creativity
 - problem-solving ability
 - language processing
 - concentration
 - ability to learn
- We are emotionally reactive

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Physiological Effects of Chronic Stress

- **Chronic stress** increases risks of:
 - headaches
 - hypertension
 - heart disease
 - digestive disorders
 - susceptibility to infection
- **Anger** increases blood pressure
- **Anxiety** damages arteries, kills brain cells, increases risk for osteoporosis, and suppresses immune system



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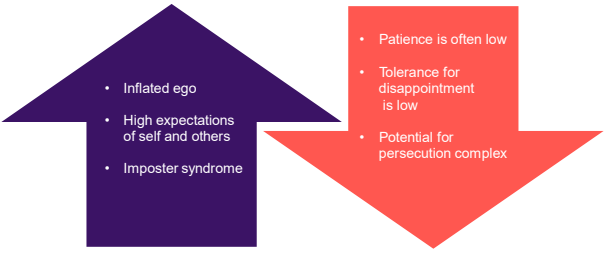
Why are we like this?

- 3 P's:
 - **Perfectionism** – precision
 - **Pessimism** – inherent negativity bias + law school
 - **Pressure** to:
 - Add value to the organization
 - Be responsive
 - Be knowledgeable about a broad range of legal topics
 - Advance
 - Be a good corporate citizen
 - Compete with others (external/internal)
 - Get results leadership team expects

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As a result...often



- Inflated ego
- High expectations of self and others
- Imposter syndrome
- Patience is often low
- Tolerance for disappointment is low
- Potential for persecution complex

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Impact of COVID and the Past Three Plus Years on Well-Being

- Fear of the unknown
 - Personal/Family's health
 - Political Turmoil
 - Racial Strife and Increased Activism
 - Increased struggles/awareness with mental health, isolation and depression
- Less control over work and life-uncertainty about the future
- Remote work challenges and pressure to return to office
 - Loss of separation between home/work
 - Kids/pets
 - Home internet
- Reduced opportunities for exercise

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Defining "Lawyer Well-Being"

- A Continuous process toward thriving across all life dimensions:
 - Physical health
 - Emotional health
 - Environmental and financial security
 - Occupational pursuits
 - Social connections
 - Creative or intellectual endeavors
 - Sense of spirituality or greater purpose in life

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Reasons to Improve

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More Reasons to Address Well-Being in the Law

- 1.1 Competence
- 1.3 Diligence
- 1.4 Communication
- 2.1 Professional Judgment
- 4.1 Truthfulness

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Good News: Science and the Mind

- We can change our brains and the way we respond to our conditions
- Shift in brain activity
 - 90 days to create a new neural pathway
 - Sense of balance that comes from wisdom
 - Ultimately leads to sense of fulfillment

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Other Strategies to Improve Lawyer Well-Being

L.E.A.R.N

Small

Steps

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L
is for Laughter

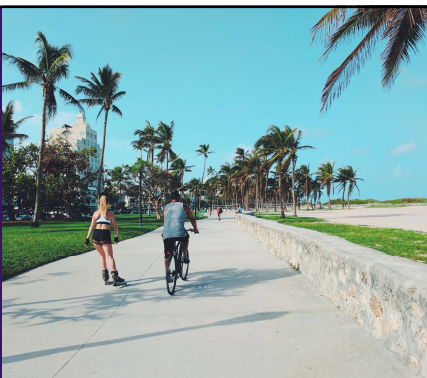
- Relaxes the body
- Boosts immune system
- Releases endorphins
- Connects us
- Seek out opportunities
- Don't take yourself too seriously



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EA
is for Exercise Aerobically


- Every study = positive effects
- Moderate exercise throughout the week
- Exercise "snacks"
- Increase breathing & heart rate



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R
is for Recreation


- Healthy people have many interests and hobbies
- Too little balance
- Go outside and play
- Impact of nature



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N
is for Nutrition


- You are what you eat
- Hurried/distracted eating is often poor eating
- Chew 25-30 times
- *The Game Changers* 80/20 Rule
- Reduce alcohol consumption



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S
is for Sleep

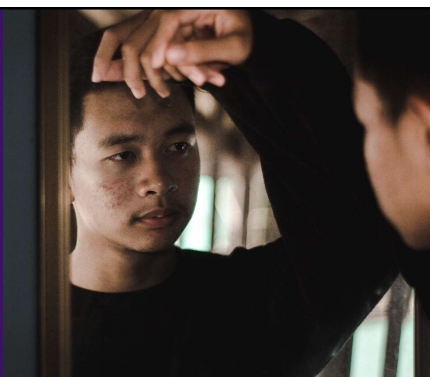
- We need 7½ to 8½ hours per night
- Less can induce psychotic-like symptoms
- Hidden Brain podcast "Eyes Wide Open"



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S
is for "Self-Reflection"

- Know Thyself
 - Understand what your stress triggers/signals
- Develop tools for stress
- Self-care first
- Explore meditation
 - Small bites
- Reach out for support
 - Drowning/sawped/buried



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“Habit is the most powerful influencer in life. If you want better results, adopt better habits.”


Vala Afshar
Chief Digital Evangelist, Salesforce

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Mindfulness as a Tool

- Observing your physical, emotional and mental experiences with deliberate, open and curious attention
- When we are mindful we are engaged
- Use wise effort to recognize thoughts that are not beneficial; learn to choose where to place our attention
- Practice discernment v. criticism
- Balance "doing" with "being"
- Mindfulness apps... "Calm"



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How to Be Mindful

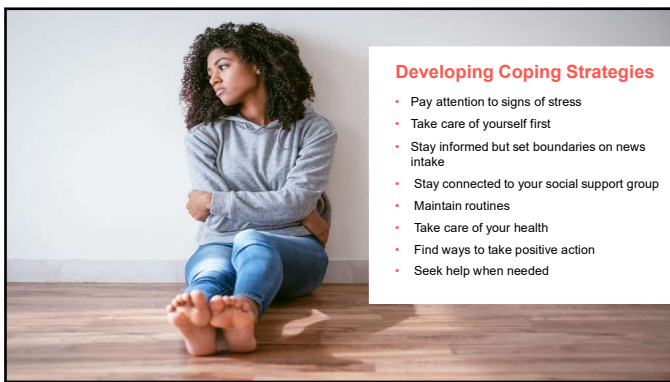
- ▶ Actively observe one thing at a time
- ▶ Be curious about everything
- ▶ Avoid becoming judgmental
- ▶ Be kind to yourself
- ▶ Listen constructively
- ▶ Communicate consciously

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Managing Stress In Times Of International Conflict

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Developing Coping Strategies

- Pay attention to signs of stress
- Take care of yourself first
- Stay informed but set boundaries on news intake
- Stay connected to your social support group
- Maintain routines
- Take care of your health
- Find ways to take positive action
- Seek help when needed

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Taking Care of Others

Recognizing potential issues in colleagues

Behavioral	Physical	Psychological	Work Changes
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Taking Care of Others

From:
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 3:18 PM
To: Thomas, Michael D. (Orange County) <Michael.Thomas@jacksonlewis.com>; Griffin, Michael A. (Seattle) <Michael.Griffin@jacksonlewis.com>
Subject: Mental health resources and advice

Happy MLK Day to all of you! I hope you had a chance to relax and reflect today.

A client of the firm, a mid-sized law firm (my best friend is a partner there), lost one of their attorneys to suicide a couple days ago. He left behind 5 year old and 8 month old children. He was a remote employee. They are devastated and I would like to offer them some ideas for mental health and well-being resources beyond EAP. Any ideas? Have you ever helped a client through something like this?

Thanks everyone!

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How Do We Reimagine Our Profession?

Imagine a world...

Where everyone matters, including **you**.

Where your every move and word matters to **someone**.



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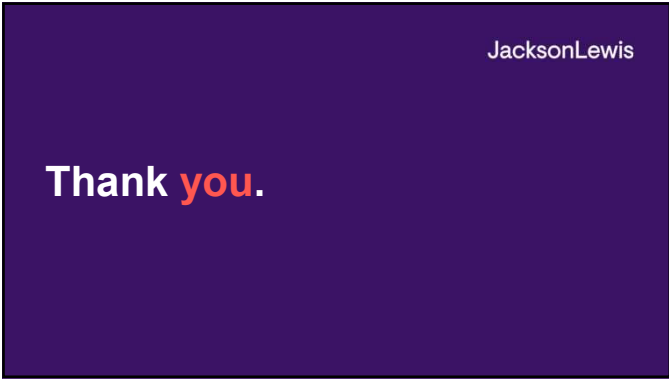
Final Thoughts

What you **think**, you **become**
 What you **feel**, you **attract**
 What you **imagine**, you **create**
 -Buddha

- “There is nothing more important to true growth than realizing you are not the voice of your mind – you are just the one who hears it” Author Unknown

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