



**STATE BAR *of* TEXAS**

# Mental Health Issues for Attorneys During COVID

Presented by

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# Major Problems for Attorneys:

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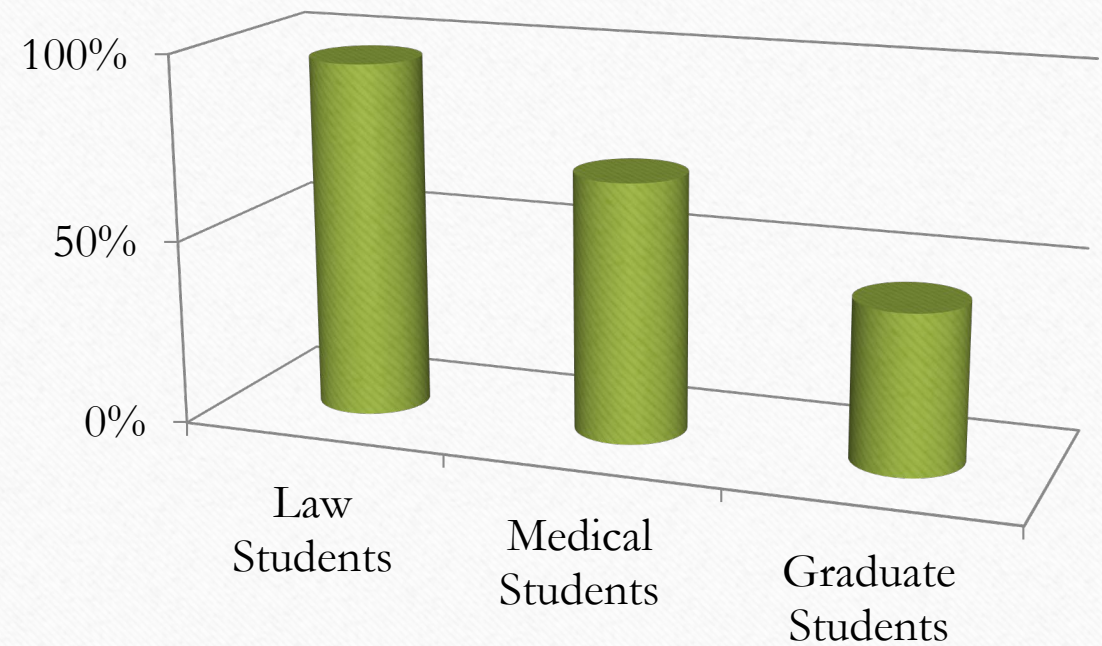
- Stress / Anxiety
- Depression
- Burnout / Secondary Trauma
- Alcohol / Substance Abuse
- Cognitive Impairment
- Suicide
- Gambling and other process addictions



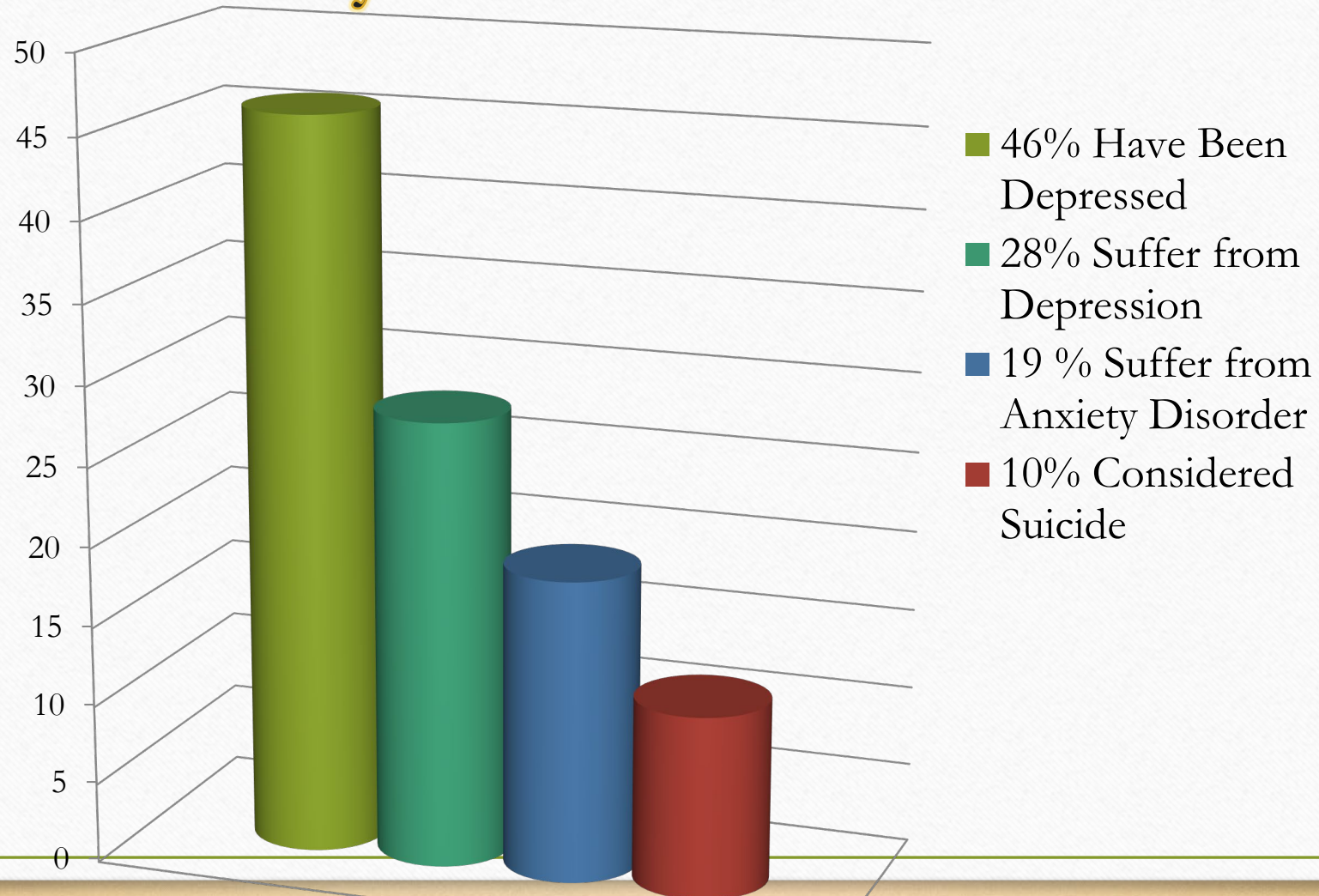
# How Graduate Students Rank for Anxiety

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Law Students: 96%  
Medical Students: 70%  
Graduate Students: 43%

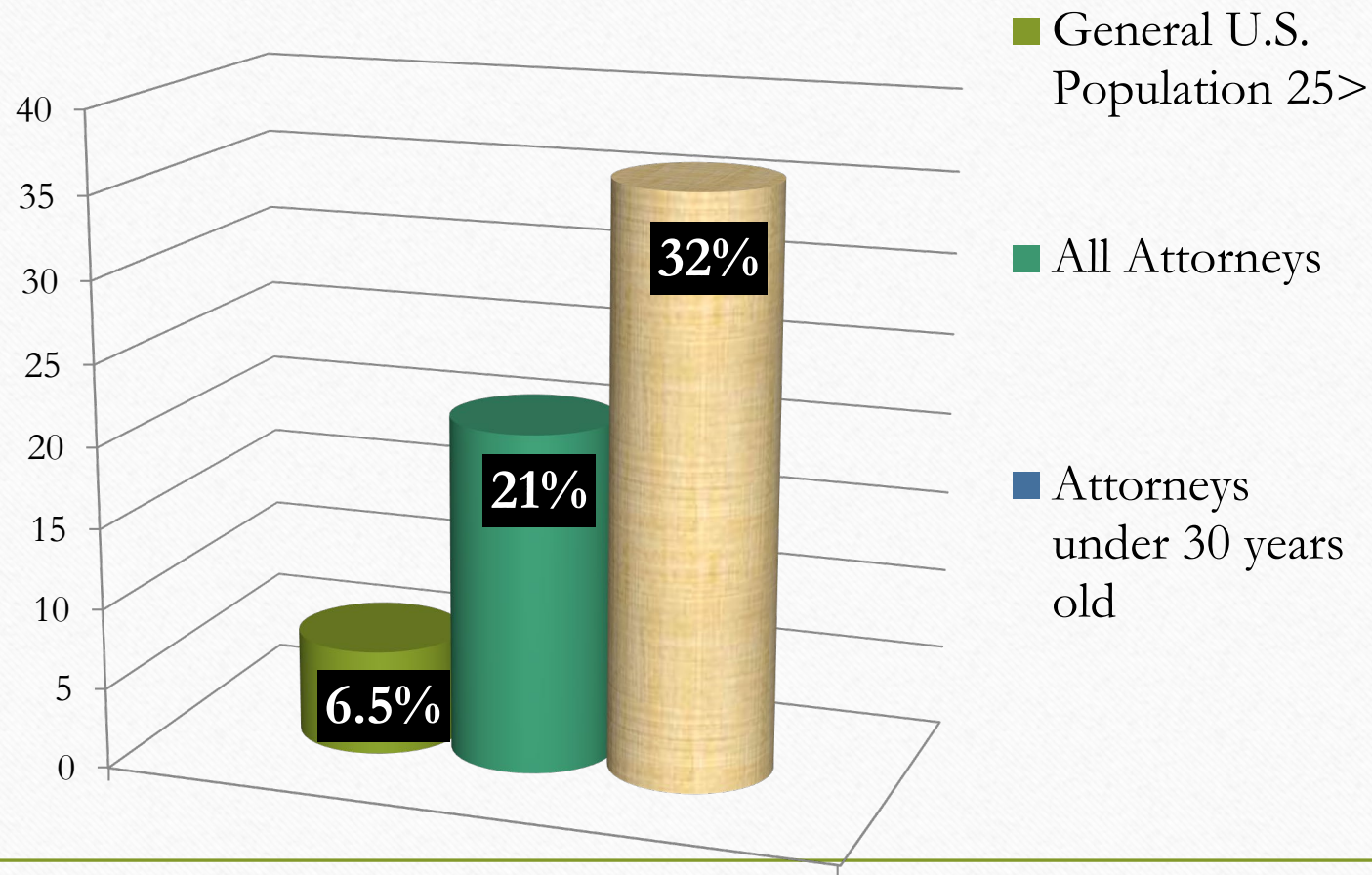


## 2015 ABA Study of Almost 13,000 Attorneys: Attorney Mental Health Issues



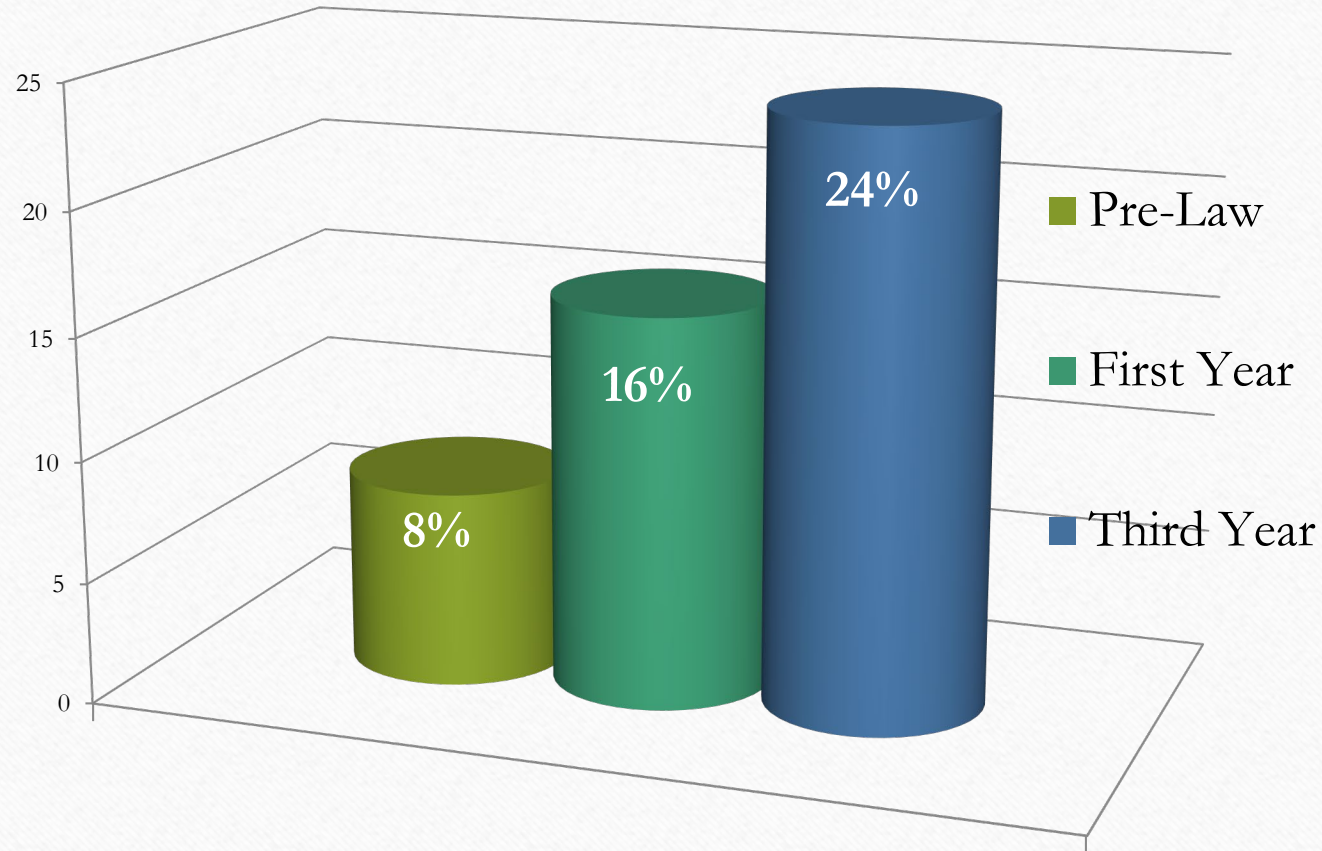


## 2015 ABA Study of Almost 13,000 Attorneys: Attorneys with Problematic Alcohol Issues



"Problematic Drinking" = hazardous, possible dependence

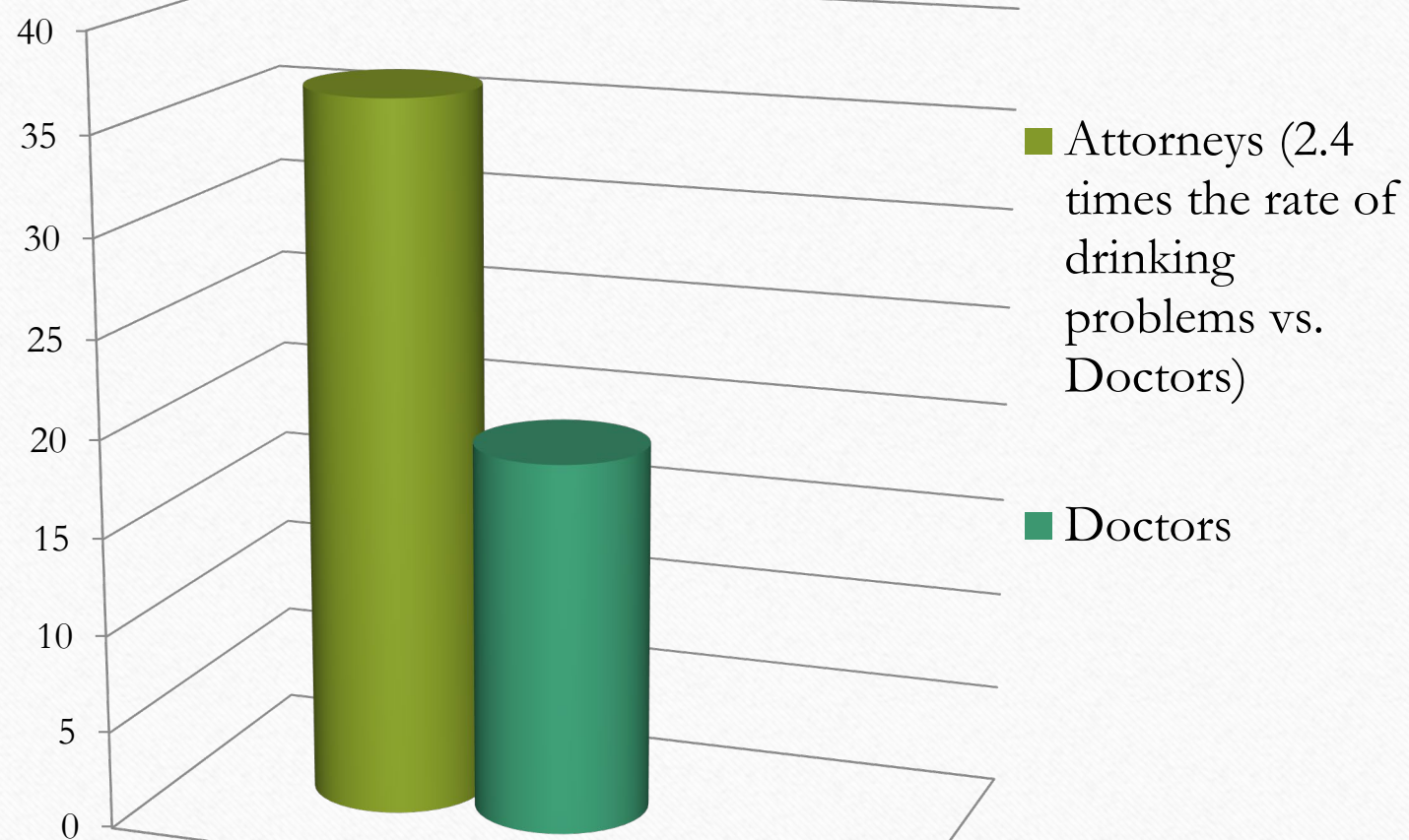
# How Drinking Affects Law Students



Percentage of Law Students Reporting  
a Problem with Alcohol



# 2015 ABA Study: Lawyers' vs. Doctors' Problem Drinking Based on Frequency and Volume



# Depression

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According to a 1991 Johns Hopkins University study of depression in 105 professions, lawyers ranked number one in the incidence of depression.





# Lawyers and TRAUMA

trau·ma

'troumə, 'trômə/

*noun*

noun: **trauma**; plural noun: **traumata**; plural noun:  
**traumas**

1.

a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.





# Kinds of Traumas Lawyers Experience

## Direct:

- threats from criminal defendants
- being yelled at by a client
- death
- being devastated by a result
- attorney or judge conflict

## Secondary:

- seeing a client lose a custody matter
- dealing with serious injuries and
- seeing a client go to prison
- dealing with assaults



# The Negative Impacts of Technology on Law Students and Lawyers

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- Inundates them with information that causes anxiety
- Reminds them of tasks not performed and needs not yet met
- Distracts them from making progress on important work
- Impacts their self-concept, self-esteem, and expectations negatively

## The Negative Impacts of Technology on Law Students and Lawyers (continued)

- Wastes their time so that self-care time and sleep time is unavailable
- Results in an addictive cycle of stimulation and hard to quit dependencies
- Prevents healthy social interaction / substitutes for actual social interaction



# Television

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- Americans between 25 and 34 watch 26.5 hours per week of television, those 35-49 watch 36.5 hours per week (Koblin, 2016).
- Americans are watching more than 7 hours, 50 minutes per day of television per household (Madrigal, 2018).

# Internet Use

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- A recent study showed that people are averaging 24 hours per week on the internet (Hymas, 2018).



# Email

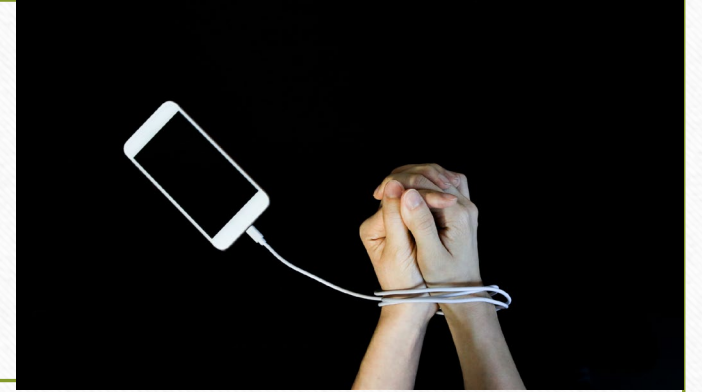
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- On average, professionals have more than 200 emails in their inbox and receive 120 new ones each day (Plummer, 2019).

# Smart Phones

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- A 2018 study found that people age 15 to 24 are averaging 4 hours per day on smartphones and all adults were averaging 2 hours and 49 minutes per day (Hymas, 2018).
- Nokia conducted a study that found that the average person looks at their smart phone 150 per day (Ahonen, 2011).
- In 2016, Americans sent about 94 text messages per day. (Burke, 2016).



# Social Media

facebook

twitter 

- In 2018, Facebook users averaged 24 minutes per day (Clearvoice.com, 2018).
- A clear link between Facebook use and depression involving social comparison and envy or disappointment in one's status (Cheever, 2014).
- Unfriending on Facebook was associated with strong negative emotional responses (Bevan, Pfyle, & Barclay, 2012).
- Increased loneliness was shown among more intense Facebook users (Lou, Yan, Nickerson, & McMorris, 2012).

## Social Media (cont.)

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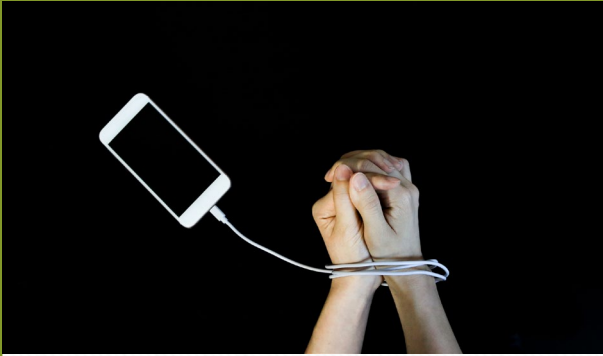
facebook

twitter 

- Instagram users average 15 minutes per visit
- Twitter users average 2.7 minutes per user per day
- Pinterest users average 14.2 minutes per visit
- LinkedIn users average 17 minutes per user per day

(Bagadiyat, 2019)





# Weekly Screen Time



26.5-36.5 Hours on Television

19.6-28 Hours on Smartphone

25+ Hours on a PC in the Office

**WEEKLY:**

**71-89.5+ Hours per Week Staring at Screens**

**DAILY:**

**10-13+ Hours per Day Staring at Screens**

# Five Strategies for Improving Your Relationship to Technology

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# 1. Set Limits

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- Check email 2-3 times per day (and let clients and colleagues know/expect that).
- Limit Social Media to 10 minutes per platform per day, Use a timer (Hunt et. al, 2018).
- Monitor your use (use monitoring apps, check Screen Time on Iphone, etc.).
- Use Do Not Disturb.

# Additional Email Time Saving Suggestions

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- Move every email out of your inbox the first time you read it
- Use the search functionality with search operators to re-find emails
- Set up just two email folders and use shortcuts to archive emails there
- Avoid processing irrelevant or less important emails individually



## 2. Disconnect.

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- Turn off notifications.
- Do not charge your phone beside bed.
- Do not keep phone with you during meals, exercise, or social activities.
- Read a book or magazine rather than your phone or tablet.
- Get away from your PC to do some work, take healthy breaks from the screen, and don't take the laptop with you on weekends or vacations.



### 3. Manage the Apps.

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facebook

twitter 

- Delete Facebook, Twitter, Instagram from your phone.
- Install wellness, mindfulness, usage, and other healthy apps.



## 4. Unfollow the Unhealthy.

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- Unfollow friends on Facebook that are hateful, hurtful, or distressing.
- Stop checking what is trending in the news: it's mostly bad.
- Do follow uplifting people and resources, we are what we read.

## 5. Schedule Self-Care Time.

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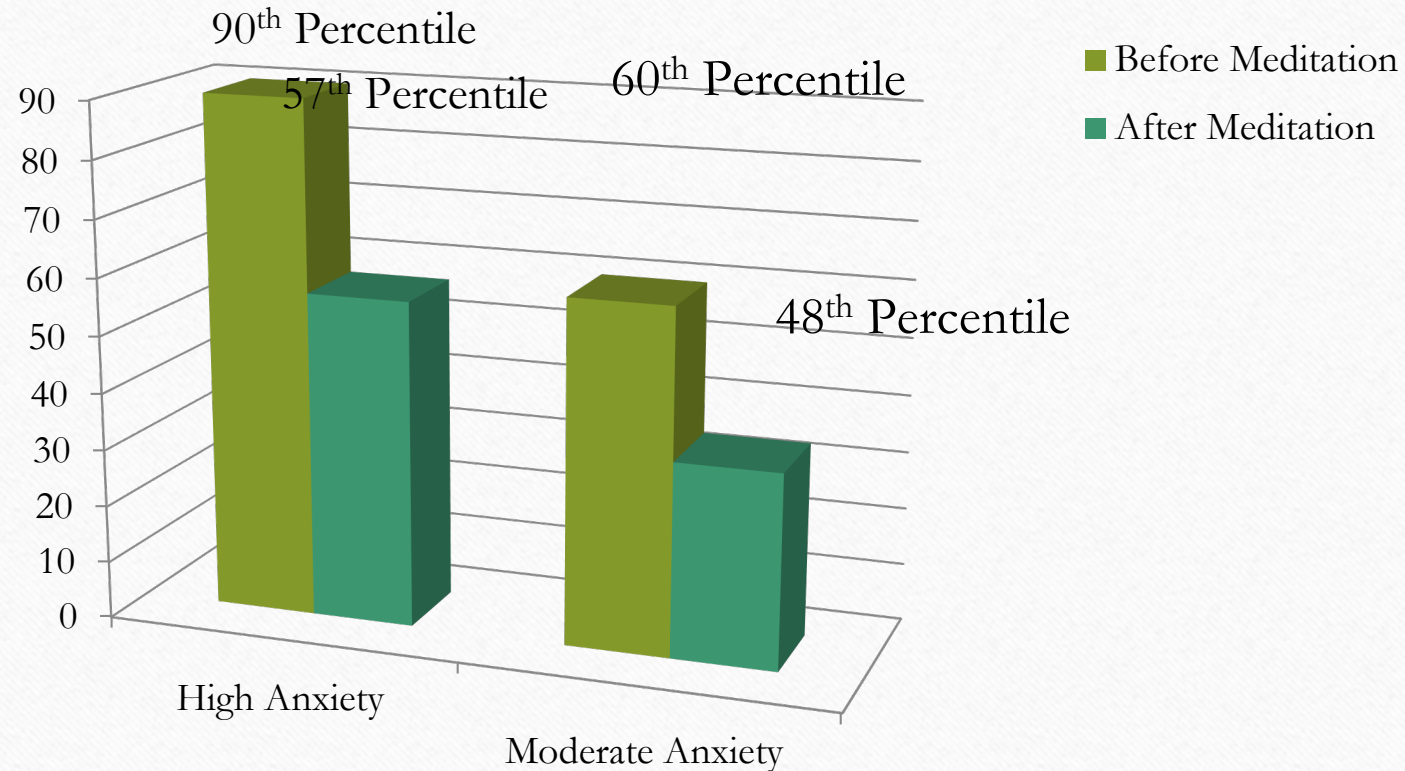


- 4% of your life is 1 hour per day, make that the minimum for self-care.
- Use your calendar and other technology to remind you to unplug.
- By scheduling events that are away from screens, it can free you from technology.



# Mindfulness and Breathing Exercises

After 2 Weeks of Breathing Exercises



# Ways to Activate the Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Running/Hiking/Walking
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Playing a Musical Instrument
- Yoga
- Painting / Creating Art
- Gardening / Working with Hands
- Golfing
- Cooking

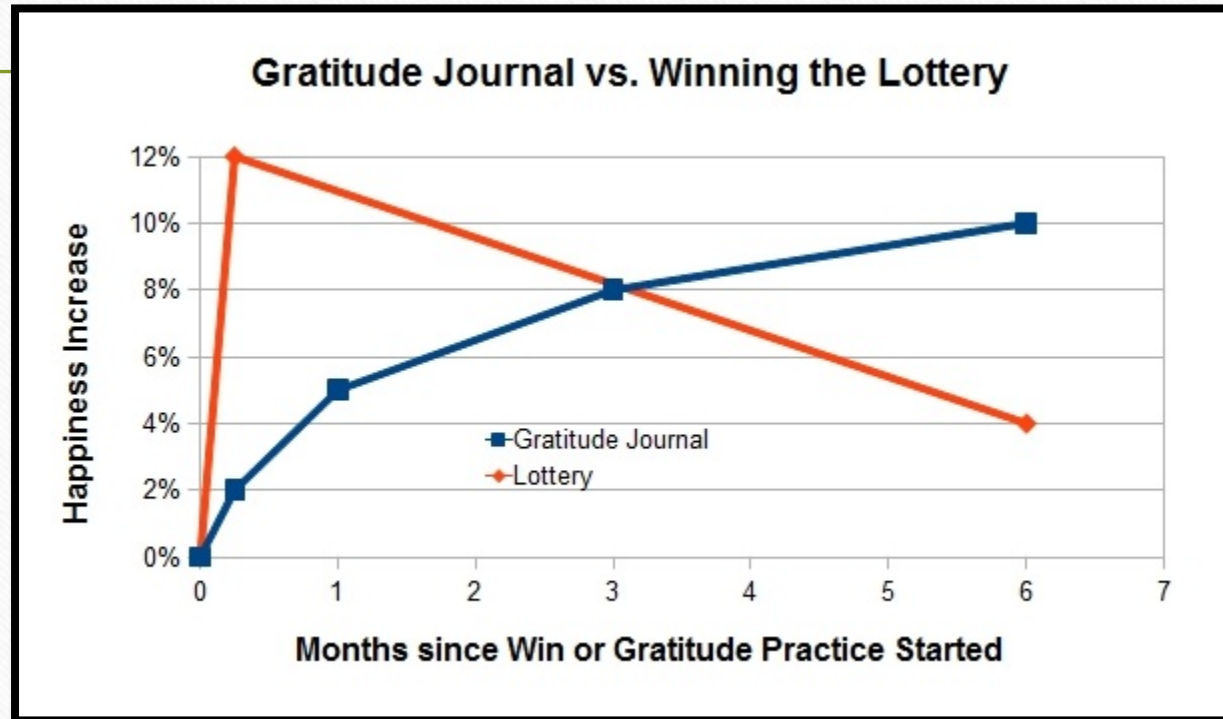


# Practice Gratitude.

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# Gratitude Journaling





# Debrief

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Debriefing is telling someone about what has happened, or going over an experience or set of actions, to achieve some sort of order or meaning concerning them.



# Help Others.





# Helping Others

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In a 30,000 person study on the affect of stress over 10 years on the rate of death, people who believed that they had a very stressful year and that stress was harmful to their health had 43% higher risk of death than those who did not.



A related study showed that the effect of stress on death rate was **completely offset** where people were regularly helping others.

# TLAP Provides:

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- Confidential support
- Referrals to licensed professionals with the experience or expertise you need
- Information about local group support and resources
- One-to-one local peer support
- Self-care information
- CLE / Education on Wellness
- Service opportunities



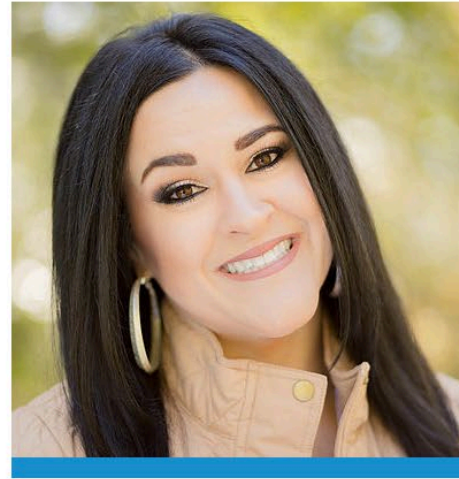
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