



TEXAS LAWYERS'
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
1-800-343-TLAP

HOW TO AVOID LOSING YOUR LICENSE:

THE ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF LAWYER WELL-BEING

(Y.G.A.F.)

Presented by:

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Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program

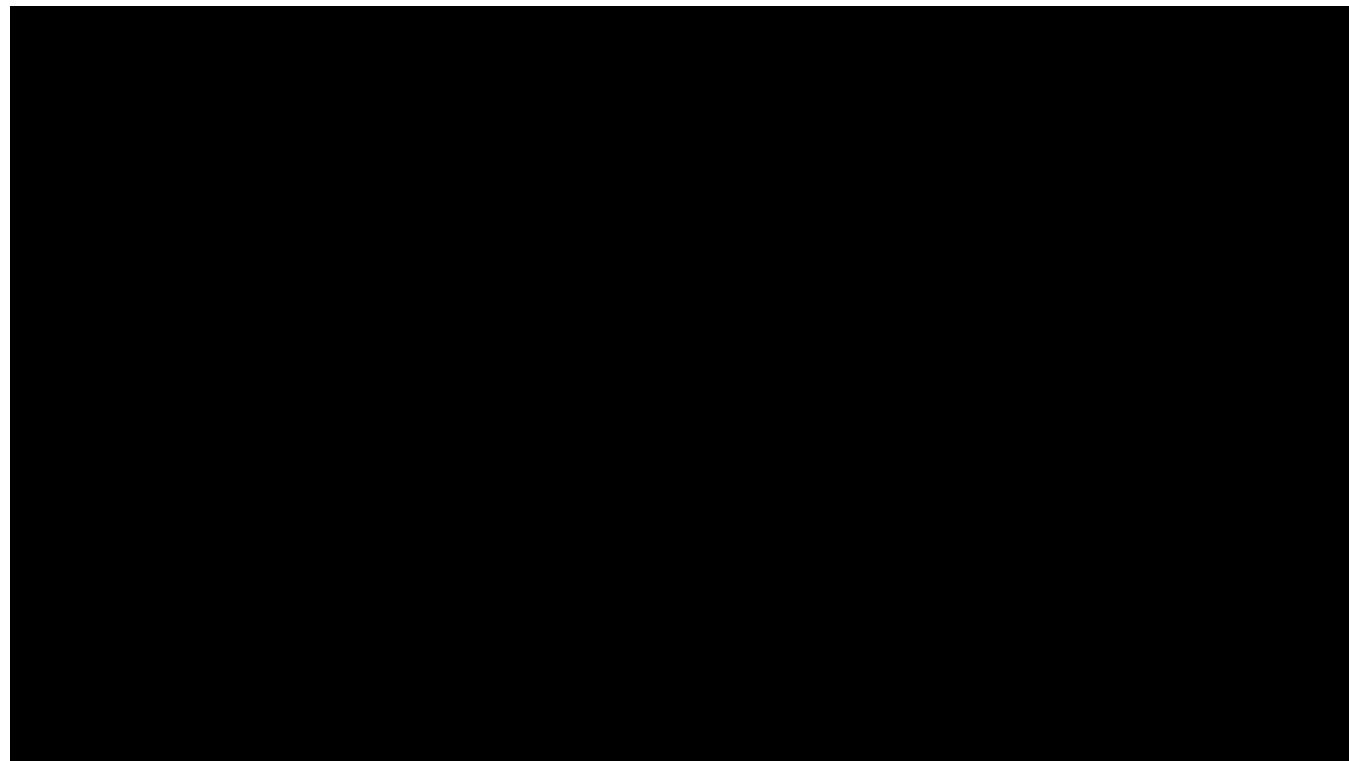
THE INNER WORKINGS OF A LAWYERS MIND





SHOWTIME

Money for nothing. . .



What is the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP)?

Established in 1989

To help law students, attorneys, judges, and legal professionals

- Initially: focus was on substance abuse
- Now: substance abuse, mental illness, cognitive impairment, and wellness

Services provided without regard to status of license

Services are free

Strict Confidentiality

WHEN YOU CALL TLAP:

Texas Health and Safety Code Section
467.007:

“CONFIDENTIALITY. (a) Any information, report, or record that an approved peer assistance program or a licensing or disciplinary authority receives, gathers, or maintains under this chapter is confidential. Except as prescribed by Subsection (b) or by Section 467.005(c), a person may not disclose that information, report, or record without written approval of the impaired professional or other interested person.”



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To learn more about
the
Texas Lawyers'
Assistance Program
scan the QR code.

****TLAP is Strictly
Confidential****

WWW.TLAPHELPS.ORG



TLAP PROVIDES:

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



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TLAP PROVIDES:

Monthly Wellness CLE Programming

1. Attorney Stories of Recovery and Remission: 2nd Monday from 12 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Zoom)

2. 4th Wednesday TLAP Wellness Program; from 12 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Zoom)

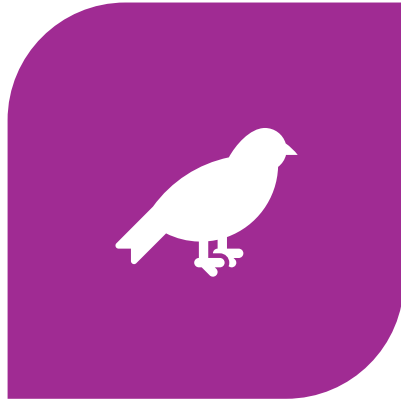
Connecting Lawyers to Funds for Needed Care

Sheeran-Crowley Memorial Trust

- Up to \$5,000 for outpatient counseling and medication;
- Up to \$7,500 for intensive outpatient treatment and medication; and,
- Up to \$15,000 for inpatient treatment.



WHY WE BECAME LAWYERS



TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
(GREGORY PECK)



THE VERDICT (PAUL
NEWMAN)



MY COUSIN VINNY (PESCI
AND MARISSA TOMEI)

Being a Lawyer is Not Easy...

[Home](#) / [Daily News](#) / Law is the most stressful profession, newspaper's...

CAREERS

Law is the most stressful profession, newspaper's analysis finds

BY DEBRA CASSENS WEISS

JANUARY 24, 2023, 12:48 PM CST

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Image from Shutterstock.

The most stressful occupation in the United States is being a lawyer, according to an analysis by the Washington Post of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The [Washington Post](#) looked at a subset of well-being data collected in four American Time Use Surveys between 2010 and 2021. The surveys asked respondents how meaningful their activities were or how happy, sad, stressed, pained and tired they felt on a six-point scale.

Lawyers were the most stressed,

Loneliness in Law

Lawyers are the loneliest of all professionals (Harvard Business Review (2018))

2023 Study shows 45% of firm lawyers felt isolated at work and 35% felt detached and alone in the world. (American Legal Media)

Major Problems for Attorneys:

Stress / Anxiety

Depression

Burnout /
Secondary
Trauma

Alcohol /
Substance Abuse

Cognitive
Impairment

Suicide

Gambling / Video
Gaming and
other process
addictions

Lawyers are particularly sensitive to Chronic Stress & burnout because:

We suffer from **secondary/vicarious trauma** while dealing with the stress, anger, frustration, and emotions of our clients.

We often have a sense of **perfectionism**, that everything must be exactly right, or we risk absolute failure.

We are asked to act in ways that aren't aligned with our **core values**.

It often requires extremely **long hours** that are not physically, mentally, or emotionally sustainable.

Law practice is often an adversarial system!

Prevalence of Substance Use among attorneys

- ▶ 21% qualify as problem drinkers
 - ▶ That's more than triple the rate for the general population (6%) and
 - ▶ nearly double the rate for other highly educated professionals (12%).
- ▶ 32% of attorneys under 30 years of age qualify as problem drinkers

“Problematic drinking” = hazardous, possible dependence

2015 ABA Survey of Almost 13,000 Attorneys



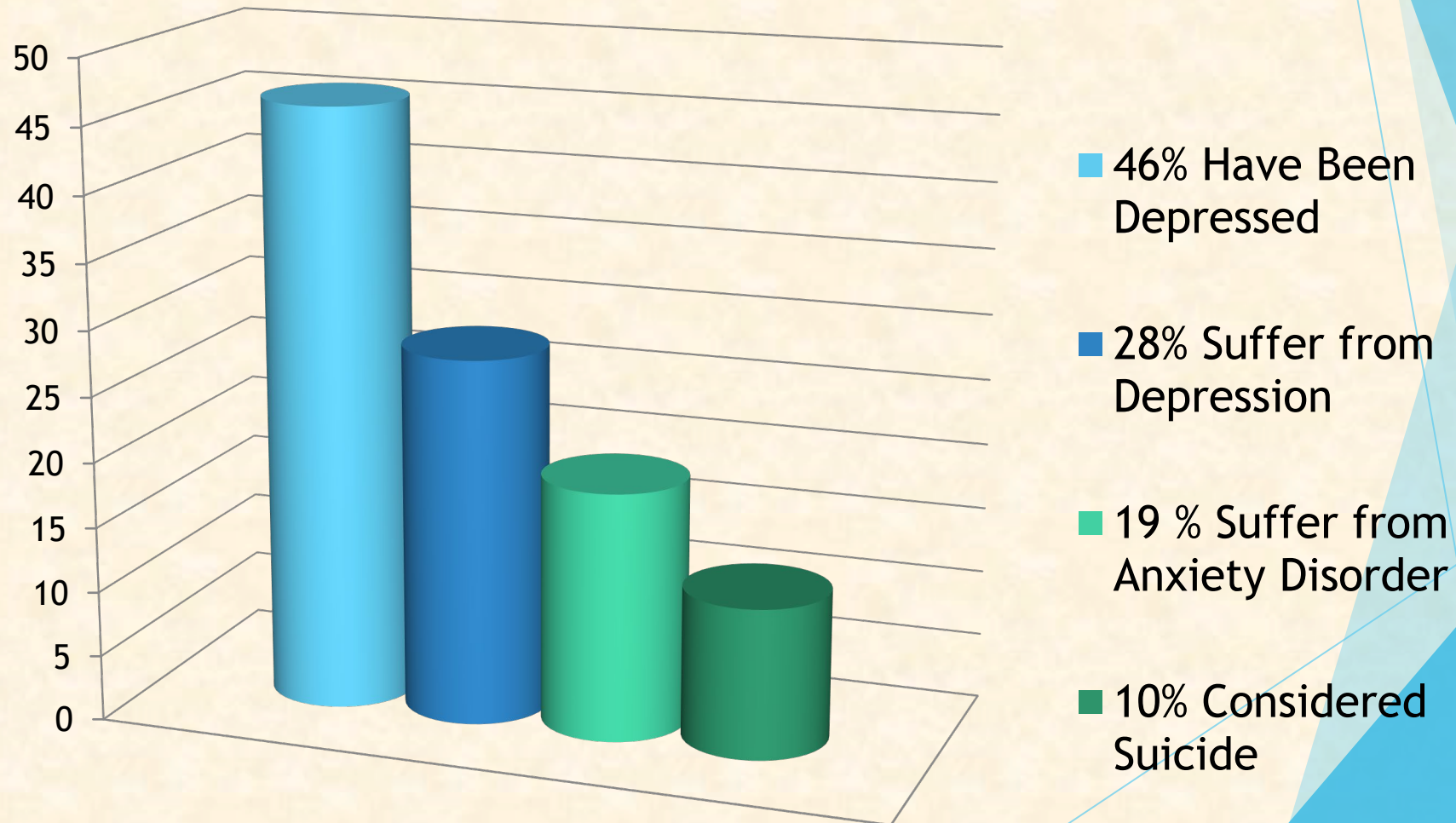
Lawyers and Addiction

- ▶ Lawyers have much higher rates of addiction than the general population:
- ▶ 20.6% of lawyers have a substance use disorder
- ▶ 9% of lawyers are addicted to prescription drugs
- ▶ Alcohol and prescription drugs most abused
- ▶ 75% skipped questions about illegal drug use

(Ford Foundation and ABA Study; Krill, et al, 2016)



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





Lawyer Mental health Concerns

The University of Chicago 2022 study of 4,450 lawyers

- ▶ 77% reported feeling burned out
- ▶ 26% reported high rates of anxiety
- ▶ 21% reported depression
- ▶ 42% reported unhealthy or hazardous substance use
- ▶ 7% reported suicidal thoughts

Legal Professionals: recognize common signposts of a Mental Health Challenge*



Behavior

Withdrawal
Absenteeism
Odd or erratic behavior



Appearance

Declining personal hygiene
Cuts or bruises in various stages of healing



Feelings

Increasing self-blame or self-criticism
Distorted body image
Thoughts racing or mind going blank



Thoughts

Increasing sadness
Hopelessness
Increasing worry
Anger or rage

*As defined by the National Council for Behavioral Health and taught in Mental Health First Aid Training.

Signs of depression in legal professionals

Depression can affect the way a lawyer thinks, feels, behaves, and appears.

Symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Loss of energy and drive
- ▶ Inability to make decisions or to concentrate

Depression increases the risk of suicide.

Depression can be treated with:

- ▶ Talk Therapy
- ▶ Medication
- ▶ Wellness Practices



SUICIDE PREVENTION: Raising awareness in the legal profession

Ask

- Ask about suicide
 - Sometimes when people are sad, as you are, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?
 - Do you ever want to go to bed and never wake up?

Seek

- Seek information
 - Do you have a plan? A readily available means?
 - Who can help you? What has worked for you before?

Know

- Know resources
 - 911
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or 800-273-8255
 - Local crisis line- 211 (Texas)

Warning Signs of Suicide in legal professionals - suicide is the leading cause of death among lawyers!

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Mental health and/or addictive disorders
- Loss of job
- Financial problems
- Relationship problems, disruptions
- Easy access to lethal means

Verbalizations:

- No reason for living
- Feeling trapped
- Hopelessness
- Dramatic mood changes (high or low)
- Anxiety or agitation

Behavior:

- Increased substance abuse
- Withdrawal from friends, family, society
- Rage, anger, revenge
- Reckless or risky activities
- Unable to sleep or sleep all the time

LAWYER WELL-BEING

- ▶ Lawyer well-being is part of a lawyer's ethical duty of competence.
- ▶ It includes a lawyer's ability to make healthy, positive work/life choices to assure not only a quality of life within their families and communities, but also to help them make responsible decisions for and with their clients.
- ▶ It includes maintaining their own short-term and long-term well-being through self-care.



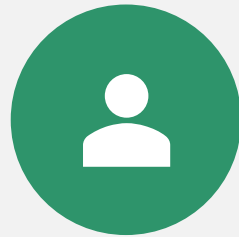
Evidenced-Based Strategies to Improve Lawyer Well-being



HELP HELPS



CONNECT WELL



DEVELOP
AWARENESS OF
SELF-TALK



LEARN TO RELAX



PRACTICE
GRATITUDE

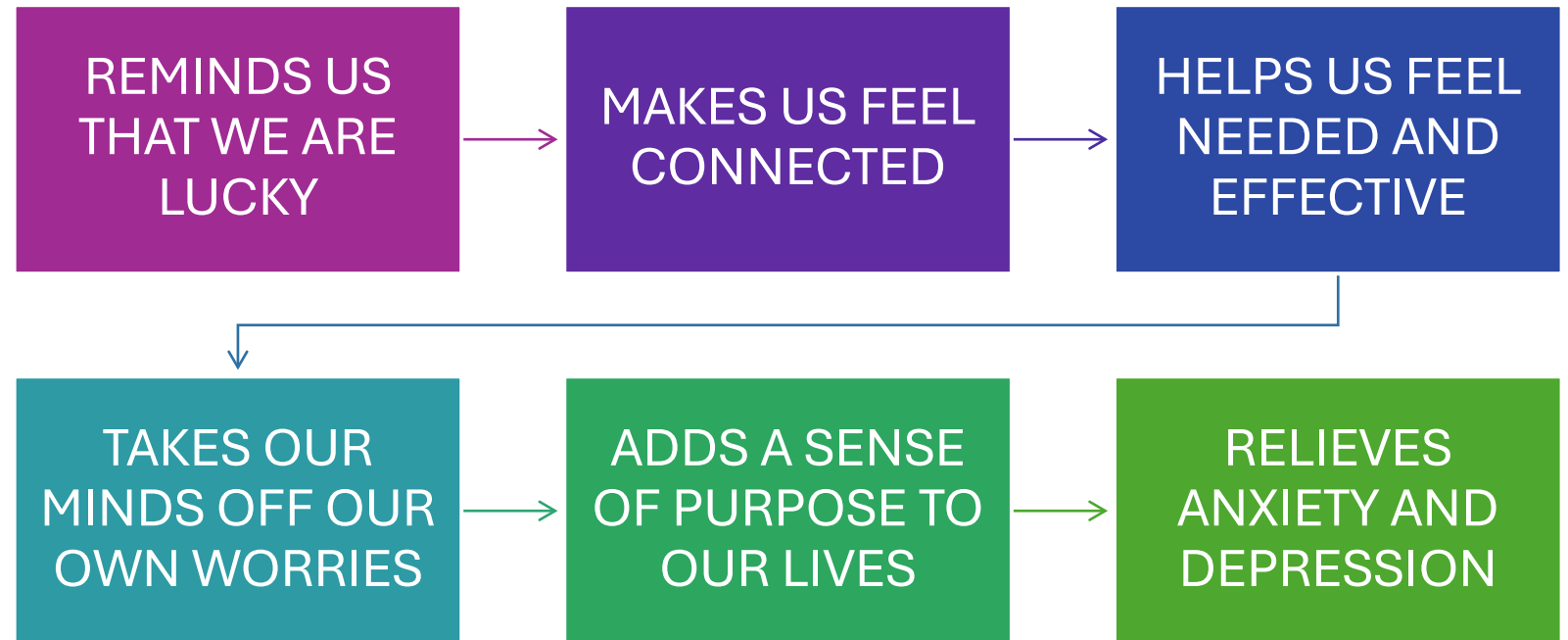


1. Help for lawyers Helps!

- ▶ DON'T be afraid to ask for help.
- ▶ If stress and anxiety for any reason are getting in the way of law practice or other daily activities, seek help.
- ▶ 80% of people suffering from depression get remission within 6-8 sessions of talk therapy. The other 20% feel better.
- ▶ Primary care physicians or providers are trained to help identify mental health issues, render care and/or refer to specialized providers, including free and confidential resources.
- ▶ TLAP can help with resources.

Help others:

Volunteering
helps our legal
mindset and
well-being



2. Connect WELL



Create opportunities to connect with friends and loved ones.



Process- communicate with someone about what has happened, or go over an experience or set of actions, to achieve some sort of order or meaning concerning them.





**HAMPTON
ALUMNI**

SAN ANTONIO-AUSTIN CHAPTER, INC.

**HAMPTON & TUSKEGEE
ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT**
MAY 8TH, 2023 | TEXAS

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Unconditional regard: Important for legal professionals' Mental Health

“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.”

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma; Dr. Shah-Medical

Director of Detox at River Oaks Hospital



3. Legal professionals: Develop awareness of self-talk

Negative self-talk is a bad habit, and it can heavily influence stress and anxiety levels in lawyers.

"Being kind to yourself" simply means changing the way you talk to yourself in your head by practicing *positive* self-talk. Not only can it help you become less stressed and anxious, but it can also help you build the courage to do things that'll bring you greater rewards.

Perfectionism feeds into imposter syndrome and burnout. When you feel like a fraud, it's often because you are comparing yourself to an unrealistic or impossible outcome.

4. LEARN TO RELAX



The Effective Practice of Law Relies on the Healthy Functioning of our Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic System

- Heart and blood pressure increases
- Respiration accelerates, blood sugar is released from the liver
- Adrenalin, noradrenalin are released from the adrenal glands
- Fight or flight response

Parasympathetic System

- Heartbeat slows
- Blood pressure reduces
- Respiration slows
- Your body experiences visceral responses typical of periods of rest and relaxation
- Rest and digest; experience safety and connection
- “Freeze” response



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Lawyers can cultivate the "rest and digest" state of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS).

Amidst the high stressors of law, lawyers need to access the PNS for calm & focus in support of our clients and effective case resolution.



Running/Hiking/
Walking



Swimming/Lazy
River



Dancing/Aerobics



Yoga/Meditation/
Sitting in Stillness



Playing a Musical
Instrument/
Listening to Music



Painting /
Creating Art



Gardening /
Working with
Hands



Cooking/Mindful
Eating

Legal professionals: Take time for Breaks

Move

- your body

Schedule

- time to unwind

Place

- your worries on a cloud

Leave

- electronic devices behind

Activate

- your senses



LAWYERS LEARN TO DANCE

- Swing into action . . .



Legal Professionals: be sure to Schedule Self-Care Time

4% of your life is 1 hour per day, make that the minimum for self-care.

Use your calendar to remind you to unplug.

By scheduling events that are away from screens, it can free you from technology.

5. Lawyers: Practice Gratitude

Research has established an overwhelming connection between gratitude and good health.

Keeping a gratitude journal causes less stress, improves the quality of sleep, and builds emotional awareness.





6. LEARN TO SLEEP!

WHY SLEEP?

Cytokines- a type of protein that targets infection and inflammation, effectively creating an immune response -not released until you have been asleep for hours.

Chronic sleep loss even make vaccines less effective by reducing your body's ability to respond.

CONSISTENCY MATTERS

People with a regular weekday sleep schedules are about 1.5 times more likely to report feeling well-rested.

52 to 56% of Americans reporting regular sleep schedules wake up feeling well-rested on weekdays. In comparison, only 34 to 38% of those with the most varied sleep times report the same.

Strategies for effective resilience are different for each person



- **What is one self-care strategy that you will incorporate into your daily, weekly, or monthly routine?**



ACRONYMS FOR LAWYERS

- 
- Q.T.I.P.
 - H.A.L.T.
 - H.O.P.E.
 - N.U.T.S.
 - G.O.D.
 - (Y.G.A.F. – wait for it!)



ACRONYMS FOR LAWYERS

- 
- **Q**uit **T**aking **I**t **P**ersonally
 - **H**ungry **A**ngry **L**onely **T**ired
 - **H**appy **O**ur **P**rogram **E**xists
 - **N**ot **U**sing **T**he **S**teps
 - **G**ood **O**rderly **D**irection



**THERE IS NO PROFESSIONAL CONSEQUENCE FOR
CALLING TLAP**

**BUT THERE WILL BE A PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE
FOR FAILING TO DO SO IF YOU NEED HELP!**



TEXAS LAWYERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1-800-343-TLAP



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