



# Competency: Reaching Out When Times Get Tough

Lawyers, Substance Use  
Disorders and Wellbeing

# Competency

## Getting Help Before Getting Out of Control

The Problem

Self-Knowledge

Desire to Change

Solutions

Resources

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# Stigma Prevents Attorneys From Accessing Help

Stigma can be defined as:

A label with an associated stereotype that elicits a negative response.

*(National Institute on Drug Abuse)*

# Self Knowledge: Burnout

Psychologist Christina Maslach of the University of California, Berkeley has been studying job-related burnout since the 1970s. She says burnout is more than the exhaustion that people think defines the experience. Further, **Burnout** is a gateway to alcohol use disorder (AUD), substance use disorder (SUD) and depression.

In fact, burnout has three components:

**Exhaustion** – physical and emotional — like you feel when you've been too stressed at work for too long.

**Feeling of cynicism about work.** You know, it's ... 'take this job and shove it' sort of thing," says Maslach. And you begin to switch from trying to do your very best all the time to do the bare minimum. Moreover, you find that you have negative attitudes about co-workers and clients.

**You start to blame yourself for it.** Thinking, 'What has gone wrong with me?' 'Why am I not good at this?' 'Why can't I handle it?' There is reduced personal accomplishment also described as reduced productivity or capability, low morale, and an inability to cope.

# The American Bar Association & Hazelden-Betty Ford Foundation Study (2016)

## Conclusions:

Attorneys experience problematic drinking (**21%**) that is hazardous, harmful, or otherwise consistent with alcohol use disorders at a higher rate than other professional populations.

Depression (**28%**) and Anxiety (**19%**) are significant issues amongst practicing lawyers

# Self Knowledge: Let's be Honest

- Are you always thinking about “It”?
- Once you start you cannot stop?
- Do you continue to drink despite adverse consequences in your life due to drinking?
  - Health problems
  - Relationship problems
  - Legal troubles

## Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Have you ever felt you needed to **Cut down** on your drinking?
2. Have people **Annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt **Guilty** about drinking?
4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning - **Eye-opener**- to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?



# **Covid 19 Collateral Damage**

- **It changed the way we work and live**
  - Health Risks
  - Stress
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Alcohol/Drug Abuse
  - Loneliness
  - Suicide

# Question:

Is it okay with you if your life gets better?

Planting a seed of change-it is as simple as making a confidential telephone call.

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## **Some Definitions:**

**Alcohol Use Disorder:** Continuing to drink alcohol despite adverse consequences around drinking.

**Substance Use Disorder:** Continuing to use drugs, prescription or street, despite adverse consequences around their use.

**Gambling Disorder:** continuing to gamble despite adverse consequences around gambling.

# Recovery is:

- Physical
- Emotional/Psychological
- Social
- Spiritual



# Do Some Research

CLA Health and Wellness Committee

<https://calawyers.org/health-and-wellness/>

The Mississippi Bar Health and Wellness

<https://www.msbar.org/for-attorneys/health-and-wellness/>

# Lawyer Assistance Program Services:

The State Bar of California

**Assessment**

**Monitoring**

**Support**

**Contact:**     Want to know more? Your call or email is confidential.

Michelle Harmon

Lawyer Assistance Program

877-LAP-4HELP / 877-527-4435

Email: [LAP@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:LAP@calbar.ca.gov)

# Resources

- [www.otherbar.org/resources/](http://www.otherbar.org/resources/)
  - click on resources
- <https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Attorney-Regulation/Lawyer-Assistance-Program>
- [www.publichealth.org/resources/addiction/](http://www.publichealth.org/resources/addiction/)
- [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)
- [www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment)
- [www.drugabuse.gov/](http://www.drugabuse.gov/)
- [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)