Professionalism:
Problems, Practices, Possibilities
2016

The numbers....
ABA/Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation Study

12,825 licensed, employed attorneys surveyed for alcohol and drug use, and symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.
Responses:

Lawyers—20.6% are problem drinkers

Compared to 11.8% among highly educated non-lawyers in the workplace
Frequency/quantity scale:

Lawyers—36.4%

Physicians and surgeons—15%
Mental distress:

Depression (28%)

Anxiety (19%)

Stress (23%)
Consequences:

Health

Relationships

Professional Competency
Ask for help
Confidential AND Privileged
R.S. 37:221(B)
2017

The path forward....
THE PATH TO LAWYER WELL-BEING:
Practical Recommendations For Positive Change

THE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LAWYER WELL-BEING

August 2017
Creating a Movement to Improve Well-Being in the Legal Profession
Central Themes

- Identify stakeholders
- End stigma of seeking help
- Emphasize link between well-being and professional competency
- Expand education on well-being
- Change how law is practiced to instill well-being
Attorney Well-Being

- Good for clients
- Good for business
- The right thing to do
Professionalism and Wellness
Lawyer Well-being

A continuous process in which lawyers strive for thriving in each dimension of their lives.
Six Dimensions

- Emotional
- Occupational
- Intellectual
- Social
- Physical
- Spiritual
Intellectual Wellness: a commitment to lifelong learning, engaging in creative activities, learning new things, expanding our knowledge.
Occupational Wellness:

personal fulfillment from our job or chosen career, while maintaining balance in our lives; financial stability
Physical Wellness: regular physical activity, healthy diet, getting sufficient rest and sleep—things that protect us from chronic diseases and improve quality of life.
Social Wellness: ability to relate to and connect with other people; ability to form close trusting relationships and have satisfying social interactions
Emotional Wellness: ability to manage emotions, have a realistic and mostly positive view of ourselves, others, and the circumstances of our life.
Spiritual Wellness: ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives; learning to be more forgiving, grateful, and compassionate; to be kinder and less judgmental
Begin Now
Acknowledge the problem; take responsibility
2018

The toolkit….
Designed for use by lawyers and legal employers to enhance individual and workplace well-being
Stress
Stress is not necessarily unhealthy. Mild to moderate levels of stress can present positive challenges, resulting in a sense of mastery and accomplishment.
Chronic Stress: Pervasive and persistent stress that prevents or hinders the body’s ability to return to a resting state.
Being on alert…
	oo often

for too long

without sufficient rest and 
recovery
Chronic Stress

- Impairs immune function
- Impairs ability to focus
- Impairs capacity for sustained attention
- Impairs consolidation of new information into memory
Chronic Stress

Increases irritability, anger, negative emotions

Reduces willpower and self-control

 Increases risk of depression and suicide

 Increases risk of alcohol and substance abuse
What’s in your toolkit?
Mindfulness
mindfulness
awareness
Stop
Breathe
Slow down
Pay attention
Spend time in nature
Play
Be grateful
Care for yourself
In All Dimensions

- Emotional
- Occupational
- Intellectual
- Social
- Physical
- Spiritual
A Peaceful World Begins With a Peaceful Heart