An Epidemic in the Legal Profession

- Substance Abuse
- Addiction
- Mental Illness
- Depression
- Cognitive Impairment
- Suicide
Problem Drinking for Attorneys

- General U.S. Population: 10%
- Attorneys 2 to 20 years: 18%
- Attorneys over 20 years: 25%
Tip of the Iceberg...
How TLAP

- Provides help
- Gives hope
- Saves lives
Spreading the word...

“Voices of Recovery” is a new podcast where Texas lawyers reveal how they reclaimed their lives from substance abuse and mental health issues.

TLAP brings you these podcasts — and these lawyers are coming forward with their stories — to let members of the State Bar of Texas know that help is available and recovery is possible.

Listen online: TexasBar.com/TLAP

Or on iTunes: Search for “TLAP”
Spreading the word...
How Drinking Affects Law Students

Percentage of Law Students Reporting a Problem with Alcohol

- Pre-Law: 8%
- First Year: 16%
- Third Year: 24%
Helping Law Students

- Annual Dean of Student Affairs Meeting
- Law School Liaisons
- Law School Librarians and Career Services Directors
- Co-present with Board of Law Examiners
- Presentations in Professional Responsibility classes
Spreading the word...

CONFIDENTIAL & FREE HELP FOR LAW STUDENTS

IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM:
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance Abuse Problems

WE DON'T KEEP RECORDS OR SHARE INFO YOU CAN CALL ANONYMOUSLY

(800)343-TLAP
(8527)

Texas Lawyer Assistance Program
Confidential. Respectful. Voluntary.
TexasBar.com/TLAP

All communication with TLAP is confidential pursuant to Texas Health & Safety Code 116.171.
**THE SENIOR LAWYER**
**TRANSITIONING WITH DIGNITY**

**ABC'S OF HELPING THE SENIOR LAWYER**

| IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM | • Deteriorating performance at work  
| (be alert for small changes to intervene early) | • Memory decline, consistently forgetful  
| | • Increasingly misplacing everyday objects  
| | • Perfunctory answers  
| | • Loss of control of emotions, crying at work  
| | • Grievances or suits for malpractice  
| • Denial of any problem |  
| • Cannot function without assistant present |  
| • Frequent irritability |  
| • Changes in work routine or behavior |  

| APPROACHING THE SENIOR LAWYER | • Get the lawyer to talk  
| | • Listen not lecture  
| | • While listening, add responsive and reflective comments  
| | • Express concern with gentleness and respect  
| | • Talk about what other people are saying  
| | • Review the lawyer's good qualities and happy memories  
| | • Respect the lawyer's dignity and privacy  
| | • Be yourself, not an authority figure  
| | • Suggest assessment by a specific professional  
| | | and receive contact information ready  
| | • Offer assistance and make recommendations for a plan that provides oversight (such as a buddy system or part-time practice with co-counsel)  
| | • Remember that this is a process, not a one-time event  
| • Consult TLAP at (800) 343-8527 |  
| • Meet in a non-confrontational manner |  
| • Partner with someone the lawyer trusts |  
| • Include a witness |  

Starters:

- I am concerned about you because...

- We have worked together a long time, so I hope you won't think I'm interfering when I tell you I am worried about you...

- I've noticed you haven't been out much lately, and I am wondering if you're okay...

| DO'S & DON'TS |  
| • Refer for evaluation, have resources at hand |  
| | • Suggest alternatives; inactive status, disability leave  
| | • Suggest the potential consequences, grievance investigation or disability proceedings  
| | • Ignore and do nothing  
| | • Include family, unless requested  
| | • Insist if lawyer says "back off" (attempt to discuss again at a later date)  
| • Be direct, specific, and identify the problem |  
| • Speak from personal experience, state your feelings |  
| • Report what you actually see |  
| • Be respectful and treat the lawyer with dignity |  
| • Act in a non-judgmental, non-labeling, non-acusatory manner |  
| • Offer to call the lawyer's doctor with observations |  

(800) 343-8527 | TexasBar.com/TLAP

*All communication with TLAP is confidential pursuant to Texas Health & Safety Code §662.*
LIFE ALERT: SAVE A LAWYER

Lawyers are three times as likely to suffer from depression as any other profession.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among lawyers.

The rate of death by suicide for lawyers is two to six times that of the general population.

Don’t take a chance … get prepared now and be ready to use your advocacy skills and take action.

Get training from suicide prevention organizations in your community. For a list of training programs, go to the Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention at www.sprc.org/bpr/index or call TLAP at 800-343-8527 for suggestions about training.

Action Step One

Know the signals alerting that a conversation about suicide may be needed.

- Verbal
  - “hopeless”
  - “end of my rope” or “trapped”
  - “tough time”
  - “no purpose or meaning to my life”

- Behavioral
  - isolation
  - dramatic mood change
  - unusual behavior or more reckless behavior
  - excessive irritability, anger, or rage
  - perceived public embarrassment/humiliation
  - increased or excessive use of drugs or alcohol
  - possession of or acquiring a weapon
  - increased anxiety, including panic, insomnia, and agitation

Consider the totality of the situation and trust your intuition.
Wellness

- Monthly wellness groups in three cities
- Free Wellness Video Series -
  - Anger and Boundaries
  - Dealing with Grief
  - Lawyer Happiness
  - Unstuck from Depression
  - The Neurobiology of Depression and Addictions
Results...

- Help
- Hope
- Saved lives