



# LIVING WELL

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*Balancing Your Professional  
and Personal Growth*



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# Moving from Surviving to Thriving

by Jill O'Neil  
Executive Director, NHLAP

**H**ow can we begin to conceptualize emotionally thriving when most are still just surviving? First, let's acknowledge and validate that the distress you face is real. Distress occurs when stress is severe or prolonged, or both. The legal profession ordinarily contends with higher-than-average rates of depression, anxiety, burnout, addiction issues, and other related well-being challenges than most other professions. For the past few years, the stressors have been compounding. The pandemic upended our lives, the lives of our loved ones, and we grieved the loss of too many. Your workload has increased, your clients are experiencing more intense distress levels; with incivility on the rise and societal upheaval, can we really aim to be emotionally thriving?



results. Many deny their suffering because outwardly, their functioning remains unchanged or has even accelerated as to overcompensate or to avoid, while inwardly suffering in silence.

I've been in the mental health field for 19 years, yet I struggled at one point to identify my own experience with burnout. I sat in burnout for years, which progressed to Generalized Anxiety Disorder. On the exterior, I excelled at work and felt that I did a good job fulfilling my responsibilities at home. Inwardly, I met each day with emotional and physical fatigue, preoccupied with negative thoughts, convinced that "I'm just not strong enough." I had lost motivation. Instead of meeting my experience with self-compassion, I leaned hard into shame and feared being judged by another mental health professional in seeking out professional care. Thank goodness for my support because my trusted friends created a safe space for me to be honest, and they championed me to help myself get back on track. We all share this human experience. If you are struggling, know you are not alone.

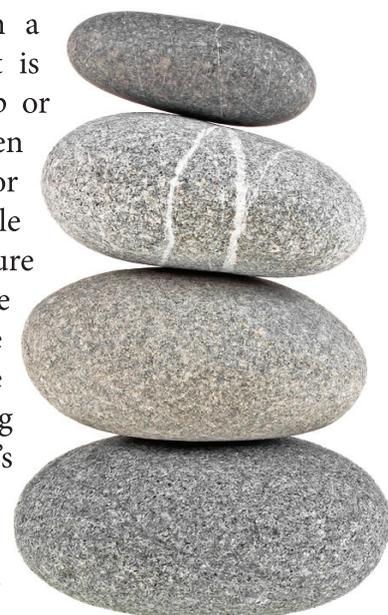
Consider the possibility that positive changes can occur even in the current environment. Consider taking a calculated risk in committing to self-improvement work. Self-improvement work is a continuous process; it is not static. Self-improvement work improves emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, as defined by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, is "the ability to monitor one's own and other's people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior." Research has shown that individuals with strong emotional intelligence exhibit more positive predictors of health, stronger academic performance, stronger job performance, and make better leaders.

All too often, we focus on the external influences of our distress, e.g., workload, time pressures, difficult people, the adversary system. We are constantly challenged to address external factors because of our limited ability to affect change at the macro-level. Less often, we focus on the internal influences of our distress, e.g., personality characteristics – perfectionism, emotional unawareness, being prone to negativity, people-pleasing. There is a greater ability to affect change at the micro-level. Realizing what we can and cannot control guides our focus towards achieving the desired outcomes.

I find that individuals who appear reluctant to re-engage in self-improvement work have previously attempted to improve their quality of life in some way and did not achieve the desired

To emotionally thrive is to be in a perpetual state of self-improvement; it is not to experience life void of hardship or struggle. It means seeking support when you first need it instead of waiting for things to erupt. It's about setting reasonable boundaries you can follow to nurture meaningful relationships and have personal time to create an identity outside of work. It requires getting comfortable with sometimes saying, "no." It's working to elevate your emotional intelligence. It's about living with purpose.

Consider the ways you can keep the dialogue open about the issues faced by legal professionals to create that safe space that allows for vulnerability. I've spent the last eight months talking with law students, lawyers, leaders, and key stakeholders. People have the desire to share their personal stories



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## Editor's Note:

As part of an ongoing partnership with the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program, the New Hampshire Bar Association is proud to offer this special Bar News supplement that educates and engages our members in the lifelong pursuit of wellness inside—and outside—the workplace.

This year's supplement brings an eclectic mix of articles. In one article, NHBA's Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Tom Jarvis, writes about how playing or simply listening to music can enhance an individual's well-being. In another, he speaks to lawyers about their experiences with

mentors and finds that having a strong mentor can shape, and in some cases determine, an individual's career. Members of the Lawyer Depression Project, a grassroots movement to help break the stigma around discussing mental health and to provide peer support to each other, describe the work they do; and more.

It has certainly been an unprecedented year—to borrow a now well-worn expression—and we here at the New Hampshire Bar Association wish you a happy and healthy 2022!

~ Scott Merrill, Editor of Publications, New Hampshire Bar Association



# Music and Wellness: Serenade Your Health

by Tom Jarvis, NHBA Staff

**H**itting the gym is the obvious choice for toning your abs, but when you want to exercise your brain, music is a great choice. As a musician, that's the first thing that comes to mind when I ponder wellness. Let's take a look at some well-known facts.

The average person spends a third their life sleeping and a third working. Since being an attorney is a stressful and busy job, you likely work more than you sleep – but let's just say that work and sleep average out to two-thirds (or more) of your life. Add in the amount of time you spend commuting, showering, paying bills, doing chores, and eating, all that remains for you is considerably less than one-third of your life.

Needless to say (but I'm saying it anyway), there is not a lot of time in our lives for self-care. After all, the bills won't pay themselves and you certainly can't rely on your teenager to do that pile of dishes or clean the litter box!

Listening to music is an often-overlooked self-care activity that you can do whilst doing other things. It activates multiple areas of your brain and helps stimulate the pleasure center, and it contributes to your overall good mood and happiness. Unless you're listening to sad songs, then it's cathartic. After all, sad songs say so much.

## So, just how does music promote wellness?

"The answer is because music can activate almost all brain regions and networks," says Dr. Andrew Budson, Chief of Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology at the Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System and Chair of the Science of Learning Innovation Group at the Harvard Medical School Academy. "It can help to keep a myriad of brain pathways and networks strong, including those networks that are involved in well-being, learning, cognitive function, quality of life, and happiness."

He goes on to say that participating in social activities is the only other situation in which you can activate so many brain networks all at once.

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, "research has shown that listening to and playing music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain, as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and memory."

Studies also show listening to music diminishes stress by lowering the stress hormone, cortisol, while increasing the neurotransmitter, dopamine. Dopamine is involved in making us feel pleasure as part of the brain's reward system.

Music can even be used as therapy to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs.

The American Music Therapy Association, founded in 1998,

defines music therapy as "the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program."

Music therapy can benefit anyone from children to adults and is used to treat mental health issues, developmental and learning disabilities, substance abuse problems, brain injuries, physical disabilities, and acute and chronic pain.

Music therapist, Ryan Judd, has been at it for 22 years with his company, The Rhythm Tree. He possesses a master's degree in music therapy and psychology and uses clinical methods to apply music and musical activities to help people improve their health and well-being.

"I see music as a part of a well-being medicine cabinet," Judd said. "You open the cabinet and what kind of music do you reach for? Whether it's background or more focused listening, it can be really helpful and beneficial."

It has been particularly useful in recent years for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

"Usually in the late stages, Alzheimer's patients are unresponsive," Florida neuroscientist Kiminobu Sugaya says. "But once you put on the headphones that

play [their favorite] music, their eyes light up. They start moving and sometimes singing. The effect lasts maybe 10 minutes or so even after you turn off the music."

Throughout history, music has also been used to increase productivity. Railroad workers would croon in rhythm with the striking of their pickaxes to pass the time, sailors and pirates would belt out shanties as they navigated the high seas, and coal miners would bellow tunes from deep inside the earth. And who could forget the pervasive, "Whistle While You Work," from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*?

The ability to multitask is a highly advantageous thing about listening to music. You can listen to it while sitting in your office preparing for hearings, researching legal theories, or while even reading the *Bar News*!

If you're unable to listen to music while you're working, even partaking during breaks or during your commute can help stimulate your brain and contribute toward productivity. For example, listening to "Eye of the Tiger" in the court parking lot before a trial might give you that extra push you need.

Another aspect of music for wellness is performing. As a performer myself, I can tell you that there is no better feeling than a crowd responding to your act. It's the largest and most fun group



Attorney Peter Imse of Sulloway & Hollis performing with The Freese Brothers Big Band. Photo Courtesy of Peter Imse.

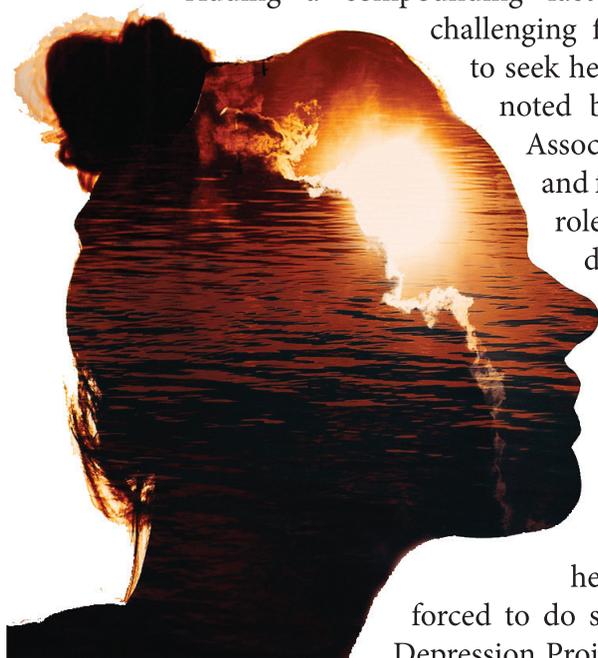
(continued on page V)

# The Lawyers Depression Project

## Using the Power of Community to Foster Connection and a Greater Sense of Well-being Among its Members<sup>1</sup>

by Julia Clayton, Joseph Milowic III, and Meredith Rimalower. Special research assistance by Sara R. Ellis of The Lawyers Depression Project

The normalization of perfectionism, long hours, and extreme stress in legal culture doesn't leave space for mental health concerns. In fact, the culture may be exacerbating those concerns. Pre-pandemic, survey responses from attorneys in the United States showed 28 percent self-reported experiencing symptoms of depression, 19 percent symptoms of anxiety, and 23 percent symptoms of stress.<sup>2</sup> These numbers not only underscore the prevalence of mental health concerns in the legal profession, but some also suggest that those in the legal profession experience these symptoms at rates higher than other adults in the United States.



Adding a compounding factor, it is often very challenging for legal professionals to seek help or support. And, as noted by the American Bar Association, stigma, shame, and fear often play “a major role in an individual’s decision not to seek help when suffering from mental health and substance use disorders.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, many of those in the legal industry who navigate mental health concerns are forced to do so alone. The Lawyers Depression Project (LDP) was created to address this very issue.

Kaufman, began a grassroots peer support network, and within the next year, volunteers Julia Clayton, Reid Murtaugh, Darin Wizenberg, and David Evan Markus joined him to start the non-profit Lawyers Depression Project. LDP’s mission is to help break the stigma around discussing mental health in the legal profession and to establish a community to foster connection and a greater sense of purpose for legal professionals.

### LDP’s Resources and Impact

LDP hosts a confidential web forum, where members can post anonymously on a number of topics related to mental health. LDP also offers free, anonymous, and confidential peer-to-peer support group meetings online.

“LDP provides unique support for legal professionals who can benefit from peer connections. Welcoming those who struggle with any mental health issue or their relationship with substances, we find and share our common strengths,” notes Lisa Smith, a writer, lawyer, and LDP Board member.

“I think one of the reasons that LDP has been so successful is in large part because it normalizes the experience of struggling with mental health issues by connecting legal professionals sharing similar concerns,” adds Colin Jamron, a psychotherapist and LDP board member.

With LDP, legal professionals have an opportunity to engage in authentic, empathetic connection around a topic that carries so much stigma in their field. “Whenever I participate in a call, I am always so touched by the collective kindness of the group,” says Julia Clayton, an attorney and co-founder of LDP who has OCD. “The ability to talk openly about one’s struggles and hear them echoed by others is so tremendously validating.”

In addition to providing a space where members can find support, LDP hopes to create systemic change. “The time has long passed for the legal profession to fully acknowledge and address mental illness within our ranks. We do ourselves and clients an incredible disservice by continuing to pretend that the proverbial emperor is wearing clothes,” says Stephanie Mitchell Hughes, an attorney and LDP Board Member.

Jamron believes that LDP’s growing membership may facilitate this change: “As more people participate, there is an expectation that this awareness and call to action will spread to other areas such as law school programs and eventually lead to an increase in our community and a culture shift toward better mental health access and care overall.”

### The Pandemic has Increased Isolation

With the pandemic came tremendous disruptions to people’s lives, the health care system, the economy, and so much more, not to mention a “new normal” of immense uncertainty and loss. The mental health impacts of this crisis were almost immediately apparent: in March 2020, 32 percent of adults reported experiencing

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### The Legal Profession Will Benefit from Community

Mental health is complex, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. But evidence suggests that mental health issues can loom larger when we don’t have support, and may feel more manageable when in authentic, empathetic connection with others.<sup>4</sup> This is the principle underlying the Lawyers Depression Project (LDP), a community of nearly 800 legal professionals, including law students, with personal experience navigating depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, OCD, eating disorders, trauma, sexual abuse, addiction, and other mental health conditions, who have come together to provide and receive support.

### LDP’s Founding

In 2018, Joseph Milowic III, a partner at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP, wrote an article for the New York Law Journal about his journey with depression. The article resonated with so many people, and the response was overwhelming. It was clear that lawyers and legal professionals were keen to connect with those having similar experiences, fears, and challenges getting relief. And it was clear that some individuals were ready and willing to share their own mental health journeys to help normalize the conversation across the industry. Joe, along with his wife and his friend, Aaron

# Mentoring and Wellness: Advise Your Health

by Tom Jarvis, NHBA Staff

**W**ellness is the state of being in good health and is typically split into four types: physical, emotional, spiritual, and social. Emotional and social health are often overlooked in favor of the physical and spiritual, even though nearly every aspect of health and well-being depend on them.

Social connection is essential to human beings. And the need for sociality doesn't end once you arrive at work. Emotional health is just as important, as it helps you cope and maintain perspective and allows you to bounce back quicker from setbacks. A lack of either can lead to anxiety and depression. The World Health Organization estimates that anxiety and depression cost more than \$1 trillion per year in lost productivity worldwide and that 200 million workdays are lost each year due to depression alone.



One endeavor that can greatly assist with both of these commonly disregarded facets of mental health is mentoring. It offers opportunities for people to connect and interact on a deeper level, and the relationship between mentor and mentee creates an atmosphere of psychological safety by helping to normalize

workplace struggles and concerns.

The Mental Health Foundation recommends mentoring as an effective way to support mental health at work. They assert that “mentorship can be an important tool for fostering the kind of human interconnection that promotes employee well-being.”

Additionally, Mentalhealth.org lists mentoring as “a method of supporting mental health issues in the workplace, for both the mentor and the mentee.”

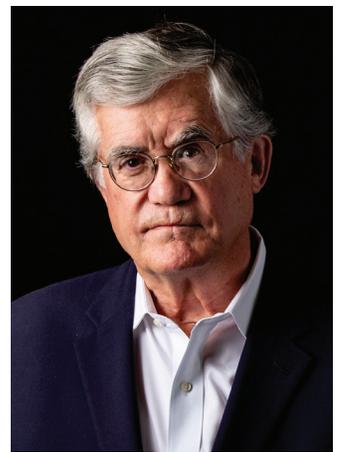
Former New Hampshire Supreme Court Justice John Broderick says he would not have grown in the roll of a trial lawyer without his mentors, Mike McDonough and Matt Reynolds.

“Mike McDonough was more in the order of a confessor,” Broderick says. “Almost any time of day, Mike would always make time for me. It could be a simple question, or it could be more complex but [he] always made time and he always made you feel comfortable.”

Of his other mentor, Broderick says, “Matt Reynolds was the best strategic lawyer I ever knew. [He] could take an eight-inch file and he would tell you the four exhibits that mattered, the three witnesses that were going to decide the case, and then if there was some testimony at the trial, he'd tell you how important that would be for closing argument. He was gifted in that way.”

As his career progressed, Broderick eventually became a mentor himself.

“I followed the Matt Reynolds model,” he says of his mentoring



Former NH Supreme Court  
Justice John Broderick

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## Music and Wellness *(continued from page III)*

therapy session you could ever attend.

Attorney Peter Imse from Sulloway & Hollis has been playing saxophone in The Freese Brothers Big Band for 40 years. In addition, he and other musicians in the firm get together as The Sounds of Sulloway for an office Christmas concert each year.

“It's cheaper than therapy,” Imse says of the feeling he gets from playing music. “To me, [music] was a huge balance to my legal career. It definitely uses a different part of your brain than what you use all day sitting at your desk or arguing in the courtroom. The value of switching one side of the brain off and using the other side can't be overstated. And on top of that, it's fun!”

While you (arguably) can't exclusively count on music to change your life or make you healthier, don't underestimate its power to augment your wellness. The benefits are just too great to ignore. Surely, music has changed my life dramatically, and for the better. But maybe I'm just preaching to the choir.



# Emotional Sobriety Means Not Being Addicted to Our Thoughts

by Scott Merrill, NHBA Staff

For attorneys, and everyone struggling with addiction, confronting the thought of shame may be one of the most difficult obstacles on the road to recovery.

Doctor Allen Berger, a psychologist, recovering addict, public speaker, and author of numerous books about emotional sobriety, said to break this spell people must learn to stand on their own two feet.

“This doesn’t mean we don’t need others. But it means we can turn to others and ask for help. Emotional sobriety is synonymous with emotional autonomy and emotional freedom, which is synonymous with self-support.”

But supporting ourselves, and asking for help, especially if we’ve never learned how, can be difficult because of our developmental experiences as human beings, as Berger has witnessed throughout his life and career.

Early in our development as human beings, we are completely dependent on our environment. As we grow older, a process of differentiation takes place that is shaped by parents, friends, and our culture. How this process plays out shapes our attachments, as well as many of our dependencies and addictions.

In 1953, Bill Wilson (known as Bill W.), who alongside Doctor Bob, was one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), wrote a letter that was published in the AA journal, “Grapevine,” speaking about the ways human beings become “victimized by false dependencies.”

“For my dependence meant demand,

a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me,” Wilson wrote. “If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependence and its consequent demand. Let us, with God’s help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love: we may then be able to gain emotional sobriety.”

Berger says the idea of emotional sobriety didn’t catch on right away because of a “spiritual bypass” that took place at the time that led many people to “turn everything over to god.”

Throughout his career, Berger says he has had the opportunity to treat many attorneys and other professionals and he has noticed a number of themes. One of them is the public persona and the fear of shame.

For a lot of attorneys, it’s shame that makes it very difficult to go to a general AA meeting, he says.

“In California we have what’s called the Other Bar,” he says. “Meetings for attorneys to meet and talk. Some of them were taking retainer fees and spending them on drugs, all kinds of things, such as poor representation of their clients. It can be very difficult for attorneys to share and talk about because the shame is so great.”

For Brendan Cahalin, a former Merrimack County Attorney who is now with NH Public Defender, shame, combined with alcohol, nearly cost him his life and his job.

Cahalin, 33, turned to alcohol at a



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## The Lawyers Depression Project (continued from page V)

mental health concerns due to the pandemic; more recently, that number has increased to 53 percent.<sup>5</sup> Young attorneys (those with less than 10 years of practice) increasingly voiced how the shift to remote work, with blurring of work-life boundaries and disconnection from colleagues and in-office conversations, compounded feelings of isolation as the pandemic stretched over time.<sup>6</sup> Social engagement is known to have profound impacts on individual well-being,<sup>7</sup> and feelings of connectedness are even more important now as patterns of work and office life remain unsettled.

### How To Get Involved

LDP welcomes new members into the community. Any legal professionals, including law students, who are interested can read more and sign up at LDP’s website: <https://www.lawyersdepressionproject.org/>. As Clayton notes, “We want to keep LDP growing so that more people know they are not alone.”

1. LDP wishes to thank Meredith Rimalower and Sara R. Ellis for their assistance with the citations referenced in this article.
2. (2016 ABA–Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation)
3. [https://americanbar.org/groups/lawyer\\_assistance/profession\\_wide\\_anti\\_stigma\\_campaign/](https://americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/profession_wide_anti_stigma_campaign/)
4. <https://americanmentalwellness.org/prevention/risk-and-protective-factors/>
5. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>
6. <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/corporate-counsel/articles/2021/fall2021-young-attorneys-takeaways-remote-in-person-work-post-covid-19/>
7. <https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/effects-of-social-isolation-on-mental-health/>

# Mentoring and Wellness (continued from page V)

days. “Matt taught me by bringing me with him and I learned from some gifted people who had nothing to do with my law firm. These are bright people, they graduated from law school. The difference is that I’m older and I have more experience, and I wanted them to see other lawyers. Every lawyer has their own style. The best way to mentor people is to expose them to other really good lawyers.”

Broderick was fortunate to have good mentors within his own firm, but how do you find or become a mentor if your firm doesn’t have its own program or if you’re looking for outside perspective?

The NHBA’s Mentor Advice Program (MAP) is a great member service that’s available to help. Celebrating its one-year anniversary this month, the MAP has successfully paired over 50 mentees and mentors to date.



Attorney Michael Salas,  
recent advisee of the  
Mentor Advice Program

It’s a voluntary six-month program (with the option of extending) wherein mentors and mentees are matched based on a variety of factors, including areas of practice, size and type of firm or other legal employer, specific preferences/concerns, and geographical location – keeping in mind that geographic location should not be a barrier for an otherwise excellent match.

Being paired with an experienced attorney that has no personal stake in your career can eliminate the fear of repercussion and help foster growth.

“Stupid questions stick with you,” Attorney Michael Salas says. “If you’re asking a question of a senior partner or a senior associate, it sticks with you if they think it’s a stupid question. If you’re wondering, ‘where am I going to be in five years’ or ‘do I want to continue on this trajectory,’ they don’t assign you files. They take it as though you’re not committed to being there.”

After a year into his new legal career, Salas began to have some doubts and concerns regarding his current path. Wanting to get perspective from an attorney outside his firm, he contacted the MAP and was successfully paired with a mentor.

“Starting out, anyone would expect there would be challenges,” Salas says. “Some people [even] love trial by fire, but you start to think, ‘when does this end? How long does this last? Are they supposed to be training me more? Or is this just how it is?’ It’s always good to have a neutral third party with no concern about what you’re going to ask or discuss. It’s invaluable. You develop a sense of trust. And it helped to have some of those feelings validated.”

Throughout his discussions with his mentor, Salas was able to gain perspective and reduce his anxiety about the path he was on. It helped him to make some decisions to improve his career and,

*“Stupid questions stick with you. If you’re asking a question of a senior partner or a senior associate, it sticks with you if they think it’s a stupid question. If you’re wondering, ‘where am I going to be in five years’ or ‘do I want to continue on this trajectory,’ they don’t assign you files. They take it as though you’re not committed to being there.”*

by extension, his outlook.

“After my recent employment transition, I am happy and excited to go to work. I love my job now,” Salas says. “I credit [my mentor] with encouraging me to take the leap. He helped me make the best decision I’ve made in the past few years.”

If you have the experience, becoming a mentor can really contribute to your overall mental health. It’s a way to gain a sense

of fulfillment in helping others, as well as the satisfaction of contributing to their success and development. It’s also an opportunity to expand your repertoire of professional knowledge and skill through your instruction and facilitation.

By the same token, if you are still in the first few years of your career, seeking out a mentor can improve your emotional well-being. Gaining practical knowledge and insight from a seasoned colleague who has achieved a level of expertise you aspire to attain can empower personal development. Finding a neutral mentor can also help motivate and reduce anxiety.

Either way, both parties can benefit their social health through mentoring. Each can gain new insights, increase their confidence, and experience helpful self-reflection. And, perhaps most importantly, each can feel more connected – which can be a great help during these times of isolation through the ongoing pandemic.

## Surviving to Thriving

(continued from page II)

if they feel safe. The more we can add to this dialogue by hearing from the experiences of others, we can bring down the walls of shame and strengthen our purpose.

As we forge ahead, I envision the opportunities whereby the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program can help support you in your journey to optimize your personal and professional performance because it’s due time to move from surviving to thriving.

The New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program offers free and guaranteed confidential services to law students, lawyers, and judges for any well-being challenge or legal employers seeking strategies to enhance employee well-being.

For more information or to send a confidential message, please visit us at [www.lapnh.org](http://www.lapnh.org). To speak with NHLAP staff confidentially, please call (603) 491-0282.

# Emotional Sobriety (continued from page VI)

young age, and later in life he used it to avoid difficult feelings. This avoidance led him in and out of numerous psychiatric wards, detox and recovery facilities, and sober houses.

The best description of the way emotional sobriety works, Cahalin says, comes from an experience he had with his former boss, former Merrimack County Attorney Robin Davis.

He received an email from Davis while at work one day that said she wanted to see him.

“And what went through my mind immediately was, ‘what did I do wrong.’ I went through the last 24 hours in my head of the hearings I had. I figured I must have messed something up, that I’m bad at my job; I’m going to get fired. And then I’m probably going to relapse and I’m just going to die. And that’s what went through my mind within minutes of receiving that email.”

As it turned out, Davis only wanted to commend him on the work he was doing.

He attributes his initial response to the “stories” we all have in our minds that often have no basis in reality.

He eventually told Davis his story that he’d “made up” prior to their meeting and that it aligned with his own story about himself.

“We have such a deep trench in our neuro pathways that I wasn’t aware of it,” Cahalin says. “Starting to do things differently has changed the way my brain works and the way I think. Having a conversation with Robin turned into a two- or three-hour conversation. Doing that new action, I think that got me out of the rut I was in. And I think it has changed the way my brain circuitry operates. It still happens, but when it does it’s not as strong.”

Emergency Medical Specialist, Dr. Andrew Seefeld, in Plymouth, NH, says he became interested in emotional sobriety during his recovery from alcohol use disorder.

He describes his journey similarly to how Cahalin does, referring to his thinking patterns as “emotional thought addictions” that he says everyone has, to one degree or another.

“We are addicted to our thoughts, which begets being addicted to our emotions, and we don’t always know that because it’s subconscious,” he says. “What’s interesting, when you stop focusing on the things like substances, or the gambling addiction, we often end up cross-addicting and the gambler becomes a porn addict, or the alcoholic becomes the opiate addict.”

Seefeld, who holds weekly emotional sobriety meetings, says the question to be asking is why people choose these behaviors to begin with.

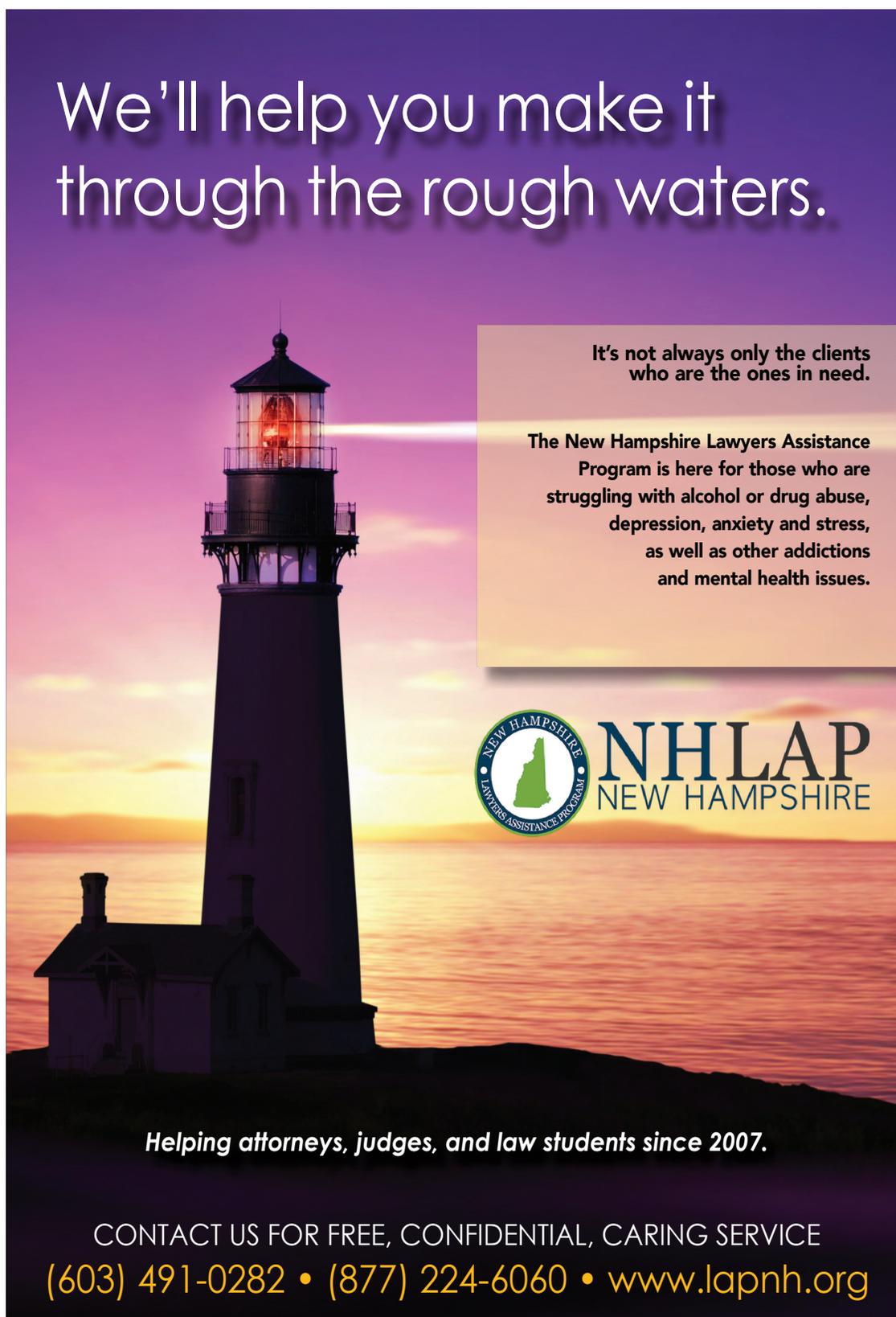
“This is what my emotional sobriety is all about. We have thoughts as humans. We have emotions that come with thoughts, and then we have behaviors associated with the emotion,” he says. “With addiction, that becomes maladaptive, and you see that with alcoholics because it’s right

there in your face. Less so with people addicted to gaming or social media. Most people don’t see those things like that, but social media is like fentanyl. The brain doesn’t see it any differently.”

Berger, who continues to publish and speak publicly about emotional sobriety, says behavioral change is possible but it begins when with the first step of admitting powerlessness.

“The paradoxical theory of change operates you admit you’re powerless to find power, you admit your life is unmanageable, to learn how to manage your life better,” he says. “Being an addict is like Miracle Grow.”

“No one’s a half-assed alcoholic. And that’s true of our false self, too. Once we’ve decided that we need to be someone we’re not, we grow that. Just like we grow our alcoholism. So now, we want to switch that...the consciousness that created the problem can’t solve it. Bill W. calls it developing the best possible attitude we can have towards life.”



**We'll help you make it through the rough waters.**

**It's not always only the clients who are the ones in need.**

**The New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program is here for those who are struggling with alcohol or drug abuse, depression, anxiety and stress, as well as other addictions and mental health issues.**

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