



# LIVING WELL

in 2023

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NEW HAMPSHIRE LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Balancing Your Professional  
and Personal Growth*

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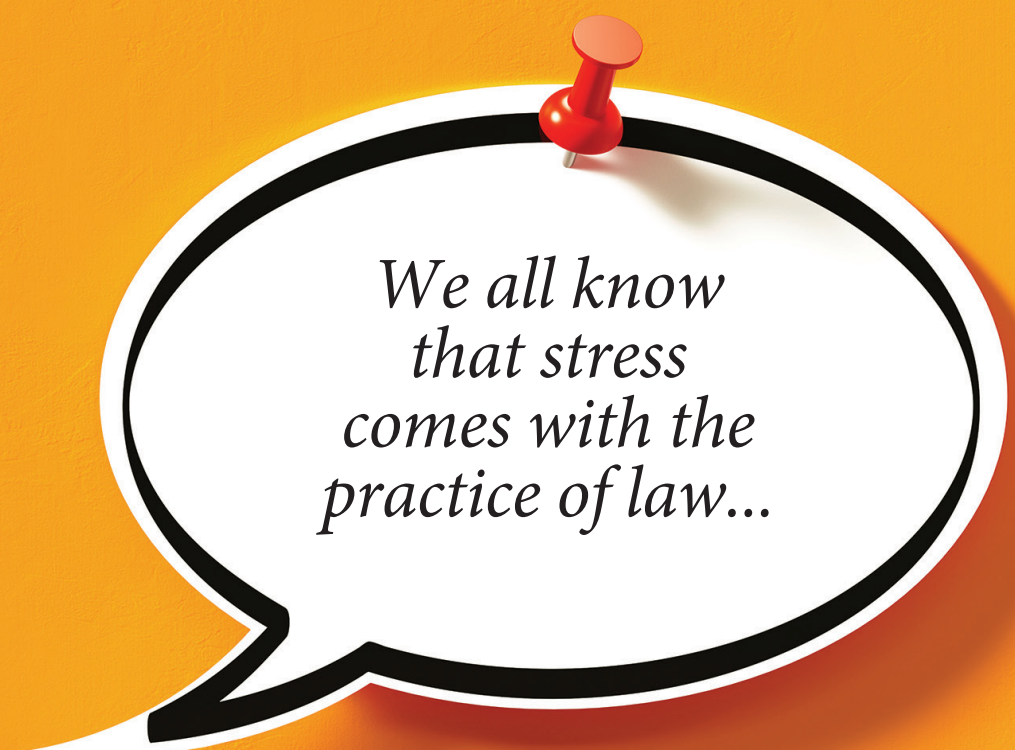
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# A Message from NH Supreme Court Chief Justice Gordon MacDonald



*We all know  
that stress  
comes with the  
practice of law...*

Fellow members of the New Hampshire Bar,

We all know the stress that comes with the practice of law: the long hours, the complex problems, the seemingly impossible caseloads, the desire to succeed. Our commitment to justice and to doing the right thing, drives our dedication. With that effort comes great satisfaction, and the knowledge that we can be enormously helpful to clients who need us. But, at the same time, our work can take a heavy toll on each of us, and on our families and loved ones. None of us, including those of us in the judiciary, are immune from those pressures.

The legal profession, slowly and over time, has come to recognize that struggles with mental health must be acknowledged, that lawyers need to feel safe sharing their concerns with their colleagues, and that the profession itself needs to offer support. The nationwide facts alone underscore the importance of addressing the mental health and well-being of our profession.

According to a 2016 study for the American Bar Association, attorneys experience significant levels of depression and anxiety. It found that fully 61 percent of the 13,000 attorneys participating in the study reported concerns with anxiety at some point in their career, 46 percent reported concerns with depression, and 11.5 percent reported having suicidal thoughts at some point in their career. As to alcohol use, the study found that attorneys “experience problematic drinking that is hazardous, harmful, or otherwise generally consistent with alcohol use disorders at a rate much higher than other populations.”

Another survey for the ABA of more than 3,300 law students had similar results. It found that 17 percent of the law students participating in the study experienced some level of depression, 37 percent screened positive for anxiety, and six percent reported serious suicidal thoughts in the past year. As to alcohol use, 43 percent of the respondents reported binge drinking at least once in the prior two weeks, and nearly one-quarter (22 percent) reported binge-drinking two or more times during that period.

The authors of that research, titled “Suffering in Silence,” cited the reluctance of law students to seek help for substance abuse or mental health concerns — no doubt also a worry of fellow lawyers. In 2020, acknowledging those concerns, our Supreme Court removed questions about mental health history, diagnosis, or treatment from forms used to determine if an applicant is fit to practice law in our state. That change, initiated by students at UNH Law, recognized the survey’s finding that a primary factor in law stu-



dents’ reluctance to seek help for their mental health was a perception that it would negatively impact admission to the Bar.

“We believe removing these questions will encourage law students and attorneys to stay healthy and seek treatment when needed,” then-chairman of the Court’s Character and Fitness Committee Joseph F. McDowell, III said at the time.

That is our goal.

In the New Hampshire Bar, we want our colleagues, and those who aspire to join us in the practice, to know that you can reach out when you need us, without concern that your professional future will be jeopardized. You are not alone. We can offer help. It is okay.

Keep the following resources in mind:

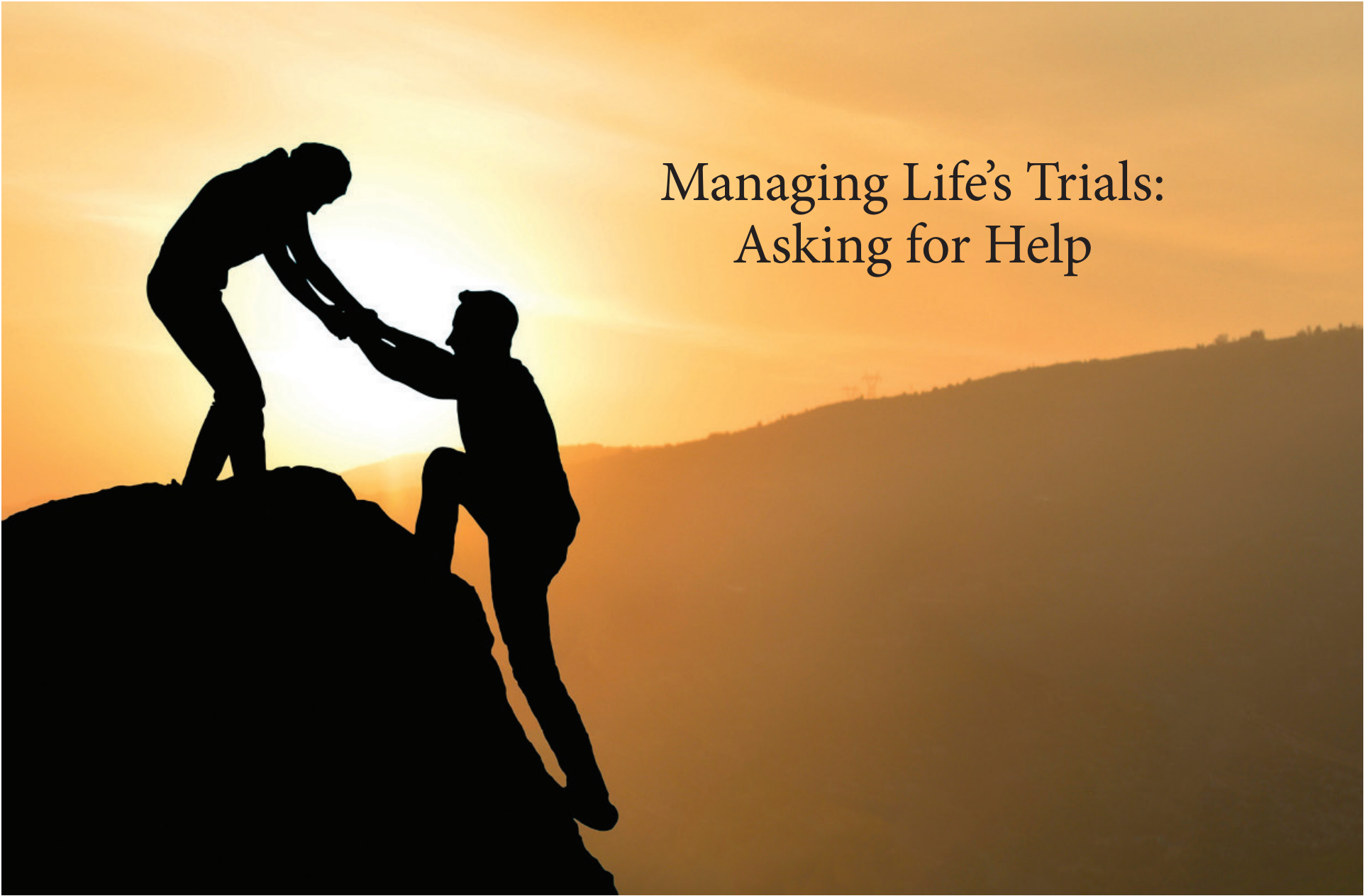
The New Hampshire Lawyers’ Assistance Program (NHLAP), provides confidential, meaningful assistance to lawyers, judges, law students, and their families to help them cope with all measure of problems. The NHLAP can help with anxiety, depression, grief, aging, cognitive decline, gambling addiction, eating disorders, drug addiction, burnout, compassion fatigue, and more. Help is just a phone call away at (603) 491-0282.

The Lawyers Depression Project (LDP) is a national grassroots program that hosts a confidential forum and bi-monthly, online peer-to-peer support group meetings, and offers members the option of anonymity. The LDP consists of legal professionals who have mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, and bipolar disorder. To contact the LDP, call (718) 517-0132 or email [joe@knowtime.com](mailto:joe@knowtime.com). Other resources are also available on the American Bar Association’s website: [americanbar.org/groups/lawyer\\_assistance/resources/covid-19--mental-health-resources](https://americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/covid-19--mental-health-resources).

Another very important resource is all of us together. We uniquely understand and appreciate the pressures posed by the practice of law. We are also part of a special professional community. Our small Bar is distinctive for its high degree of professionalism and collegiality. In that same spirit, I hope we can be there for each other in prioritizing mental health and wellness and be available for a colleague in need. Thank you to everyone for the contributions you have made to this vitally important effort. I know that together, we can make improvements to benefit not just each other, but also those we serve.

Gordon J. MacDonald  
Chief Justice





# Managing Life's Trials: Asking for Help

By Jill O'Neill

Time and again, people share with me the difficulties they have in asking for help. However grateful I am that they have found their way to the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program, far too many waited too long before seeking support, and others continue to suffer in silence. The mere thought of asking for help can undermine our confidence, make us question our abilities, and even paralyze us with anxiety. Learning to ask for (and accept) help is the greatest skill you can develop. The more we understand why asking for help is so hard for us personally, the better we can address the barriers, and the sooner we can become “unstuck.”

## Why is Asking for Help So Hard?

The primary reason is fear. People fear being seen as “less than” or weak, or fear being “found out.” Although these fears are unusually unfounded, many legal professionals loathe asking for help because they perceive high social risks of rejection, vulnerability, diminished status, and relinquishing control. The legal professional is the “counselor at law,” the person to give advice, seek out the answers, and solve complex issues. Some equate being vulnerable as “weak,” but asking for help takes self-awareness and courage. Too many legal professionals are plagued by an unsustainable need to be the best at everything. Perfectionism drives the fear of being “found out.” In the face of these threats fear overrides reason and as, studies in neuroscience show, the risk of emotional pain activates the same regions of the brain as physical pain.

Another reason is avoidance. Legal work requires the compartmentalization of emotions to focus on the facts, applying logic and reason. “Compartmentalizing is like buying groceries with a credit card but then paying it off before it accrues interest. You go back and deal with the emotion in a healthy way before it builds up.” (Marschall, *Repressing Versus Compartmentalizing* 2020). Legal practitioners lack training in how to compartmentalize emotions in a healthy way. Without effective skills to process and manage emotions, many learn to emotionally suppress altogether, which can over time morph into a defensive mechanism called avoidance coping.

Avoidance coping involves trying to avoid stressors rather than dealing with them. A person arranges their life so their unmet needs and false messages are never triggered. They live as if the unmet need is not a need. They block out any thoughts or feelings that arise. When the message “you are defective,” is triggered, they distract themselves in order to avoid the message. They may avoid intimate relationships or situations that are likely to trigger their need for acceptance. The person avoids exposing anything about themselves or expressing true thoughts and feelings. They may drink excessively, use drugs, suffer from disordered eating, become work addicted, or exercise excessively. If you ignore emotions for a long period, they can lead to lifelong mental, emotional, and physical health issues. Confronting a problem or dealing with stress is the only way to effectively reduce the stress it causes.

## You Are Capable of Change

Learning to overcome shame and stigma is done by addressing both irrational and rational fears head-on. There are often layers of false beliefs and values that we must confront as part of a self-inventory. For instance, as a member of Generation X, I was raised with the “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” mentality where the perception was to “power through,” and self-indulgence was seen as a weakness. Though this helped drive my work ethic and professional achievements, my personal life satisfaction languished. I lost a sense of boundaries and balance; this led me to an unhealthy path of enmeshment where being the helper assumed my identity.

It took many years before I reached complete burnout. I experienced anxious, negative thoughts where I would ruminate about my incompetence despite the evidence to the contrary. I would overwork to compensate. I used the excuse, “I don’t have the time” for self-care. I maintained the status quo until my life became unmanageable. I had to confront the stigmas I held. I know how difficult this can be. I took a calculated risk and connected it to professional treatment. Logically, I knew it was the right step.

There have been so many whom I have spoken with that blame themselves for experiencing grief, health conditions, mental health conditions, substance misuse, and the aging process. Some remain stuck and struggle to make necessary life transitions, i.e., change jobs, move out of solo practice, or transition into retirement. In some instances, their professional reputations suffer because of their unwillingness to recognize and honor the need for change.

If the issue involves a substance such as alcohol or another drug, the very nature of that addiction will tell you that you don’t have to ask for help. Many people in recovery from an addiction describe addiction as the “disease that tells you that you don’t have a disease.” Think of the situation like any other ethical or work situation in which you must deal with a question you haven’t handled before – you would call someone who had encountered that issue before and ask them how they handled it. The New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program (NHLAP) has a network of attorneys who are available to talk to who have been right where you are and can help.

## Navigating Care

I often hear from legal professionals about their past challenges in accessing treatment or self-help. Many have explained their struggle to find providers, unsure where to go. Most fear the risk of running into clients or other professionals. Often, folks are caught in phone tag when attempting to schedule their first appointment, eventually giving up because they don’t have the time. Others who successfully connected to treatment felt their providers did not understand them. Those who did not have positive experiences in treatment or found it too challenging to access services are less likely to re-engage in treatment.

The NHLAP offers legal community members (active, inactive, and retired members, and law students) free and confidential individual consultations. We learn about your con-

ASKING FOR HELP *continued on page VII*



# Mental Health in the Workplace: A Crucial Conversation for Leaders About Creating Safe Workplaces



By Kim LaMontagne

No profession is immune from experiencing mental health challenges, including the legal profession. In fact, the legal profession experiences higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, and alcohol misuse than other industries.

Legal professionals are exposed to high levels of stress. Some work in toxic cultures, are overworked and burned out, and don't take time to rest and recharge. The inability to disconnect from work, heavy workload/responsibilities, deadlines, competing priorities, financial or job instability, personal concerns, and continuous pressure can take a toll on a person. Left unaddressed, these stressors can cause depression, anxiety, despair, hopelessness, sleep disturbances, alcohol, and/or substance misuse.

Many legal professionals are struggling but fear asking for help because they don't want to sustain damage to their professional integrity or to be judged, shamed, or seen as weak, incapable, or incompetent.

I am here to tell you that you matter, and you are not alone. It's ok to not be okay and it's okay to ask for help. No shame.

## Lawyer Well-Being Statistics

A recent study done by the American Bar Association (ABA), in collaboration with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation revealed, "20.6 percent of licensed, employed attorneys showed signs of problematic drinking, compared to just 11.8 percent of the total workforce with the same level of educational attainment. Furthermore, the study showed that 28 percent reported experiencing "mild or higher levels of depression" and nearly half reported having concerns over their depression during their career. Anxiety is also a problem for lawyers, as 19 percent reported "mild or higher levels of anxiety" and 61 percent reported anxiety issues at some point in their career.

The ABA recognizes lawyer well-being as a top priority and launched the ABA Well-Being Campaign "to improve the substance use and mental health landscape of the legal profession, with an emphasis on helping legal employers support a healthy work environment."

The Pledge calls upon legal employers to:

(a) Recognize that substance use and mental health problems represent a significant challenge for the legal profession and acknowledge that more can and should be done to improve the health and well-being of lawyers.

(b) Pledge to support the Campaign and work to adopt and prioritize its framework for building a better future.

## Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace is Critical

We must be vigilant about the mental health of our employees and ourselves.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that "depression and anxiety are estimated to cost the global economy \$1 trillion each year," yet many leaders, across industries, feel unprepared to open the dialogue about mental health because they don't know what to say.

As a result, the conversation is often avoided, and the employee does not engage with resources or ask for accommodations. Lack of resources and accommodation can lead to intensified symptoms, decreased performance and attention to detail, errors, burnout, and

turnover.

Training leaders to know the signs of someone in distress and teaching them how to open a safe conversation is a solution. As leaders, we are not expected to be counselors, but are in a unique position to identify an employee in distress, open a safe conversation, and crosswalk them to services.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to create a safe culture for open dialog. Employees must be encouraged to speak their truth (without judgment) and feel safe to:

- Acknowledge the feeling,
- Identify what is causing it,
- Speak openly with leaders about the issue,
- Discuss solutions,
- Engage in professional help, if needed.

When an employee feels safe, seen, heard, and understood, they are more likely to ask for help and embrace the tools they have been given to help them in recovery.

## How to Create a Safe Culture in the Workplace

Culture change begins at the top. For a culture shift to occur, there must be a top-down commitment to normalize the conversation about mental health.

The following are steps to create a workplace culture where everyone feels safe speaking openly about mental health:

**Commit to mental health as a top priority.** This commitment must come from the top and include the why and the how.

**Embed the commitment to mental health in all communication.** Communicating the commitment to mental health and well-being must be continuous over years and not months. Embed messaging in emails, newsletters, town halls, and discuss it at leadership meetings, staff meetings, and wellness fairs.

**Train leaders on mental health, how to identify an employee in distress, and crosswalk that employee to services.** Many leaders avoid the conversation because they have not been trained and don't know what to say.

**Form a mental health task force/committee.** You can't create change alone. The mental health task force should have representation from every department, with clear goals and objectives on how to accomplish the steps below.

**Create a peer support network.** Sharing the lived experience brings the human connection to mental health. By creating a peer support network, you create "ambassadors" with the lived experience who can have open/honest conversations. Peer support illustrates we are not alone and can inspire someone to take the first step.

**Decrease stigma by shifting to person-centered language.** Stigma is the number one barrier for those who want to seek treatment. Unknowingly using stigmatizing words and phrases can create a barrier for those who need help. For example, instead of saying "John is an alcoholic, addict, or psycho," we decrease the stigma by shifting to "John is a person living with a mental health condition, a person living with alcohol misuse, or a person living with substance misuse." Words Matter.

MENTAL HEALTH continued on page VII



# Languishing to Flourishing: The State of Feeling Blah vs. the State of Feeling Ah

By Tom Jarvis  
NHBA Staff

You're getting through your days. Not with any zest or zeal, but you're managing. You don't feel hopeless, and you're not feeling burnt out. You have just enough energy to complete your tasks but find little enjoyment in doing so. You're just feeling blah, stagnant, unmotivated. Does this sound familiar? You may be experiencing what mental health experts are calling languishing.

The term was coined in 2002 by Emory University sociologist Corey Keyes, who described it as "the absence of feeling good about your life." Keyes' aim was to bring awareness to the group of people trapped in the middle of the mental health spectrum and suffering from symptoms of invisible illnesses.

The American Psychological Association (APA) refers to it as "the absence of mental health, characterized by dissatisfaction, lack of engagement, and apathy."

Languishing can also be exemplified by pervasive feelings of exasperation, monotony, defeat, regret, and/or disappointment. According to Keyes, it "can lead to a high risk of developing depression and anxiety, as well as elevated risks of suicide attempts and premature mortality."

The phenomenon was not widely spoken of until recently when psychologist Adam Grant wrote a 2021 op-ed piece for the New York Times called: *There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing*. The article calls languishing the dominant emotion of 2021, caused by dealing with fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting feelings of aimlessness and stagnation.

In his article, Grant describes languishing as "the neglected middle child of mental health."

"It's the void between depression and flourishing – the absence of well-being," Grant writes. "You don't have symptoms of mental illness, but you're not the picture of mental health, either. You're not functioning at full capacity. Languishing dulls your motivation, disrupts your ability to focus, and triples the odds that you'll cut back on work. It appears to be more common than major depression – and in some ways it may be a bigger risk factor for mental illness."

Harvey Danger may well have been describing languishing in his 1997 song, "Flagpole Sitta," when he sang the line, "I'm not sick, but I'm not well."

New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program (NHLAP) Executive Director Jill O'Neill says her experience with languishing clients is common since the pandemic.

"There is often a connection between languishing and unmet emotional needs like connection, play, physical well-being, honesty, meaning, peace, and autonomy," O'Neill says. "Understanding the emotional responses to unmet needs is usually the starting point. How does this show up? What maladaptive ways is one exhibiting to compensate for their unmet emotional needs? Therapy is a great tool, specifically Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. The goal is behavior activation."<sup>1</sup>

The opposite of languishing, and what is sometimes called the antidote to languishing, is flourishing. The APA defines flourishing as "a condition denoting good mental health and physical health: the state of being free from illness and distress but, more important, of being filled with vitality and functioning well in one's personal and social life."

Renowned psychologist and life coach, Dr. Maïke Neuhaus (aka the Flourishing Doc), says that "people generally think of mental health as either having a mental illness or not having a mental illness." According to Neuhaus, flourishing is not just the absence of mental illness, but also the presence of mental well-being.

"Flourishing is finding fulfillment in our lives, accomplishing meaningful and worthwhile tasks, and connecting with others at a deeper level – in essence, living the good life," says Dr. Martin Seligman, Director of the Positive Psychology Center at University of Pennsylvania.

So, how do we go from languishing to flourishing?

Seligman, who is known as the "father of positive psychology," believes the best way to move from languishing to flourishing is the PERMA model, which is an acronym he developed to explain the elements of what leads to flourishing. It stands for:

Positive emotions  
Engagement  
Relationships  
Meaning  
Accomplishments

Seligman says that carefully cultivating each of these five areas leads to greater life satisfaction.

"If you are consciously experiencing more positive emotions, feeling present and engaged, cultivating healthy relationships, finding meaning in what you do, and celebrating, you are doing more than just getting by. You are thriving," Seligman says.

Clinical psychologist Jacquelyn Johnson suggests that mindfulness-based approaches and self-care may be the most effective ways to combat emotions such as languishing.

According to Johnson, focusing on physical well-being, journaling, exploring creativity, maintaining relationships, making environmental changes, volunteering for community service, and learning new skills are all efficient methods to reduce languishing and start flourishing.

Emotion Matters, a team of highly esteemed UK-based psychotherapists and counselors offer up three simple ways to climb out of languishing:

*Focus on a small goal.* To transcend languishing, start creating small goals for yourself. Creating and working towards your goals can engage your brain in finding purpose and motivation. There is no purpose or goal too small. In fact, often the more realistic and achievable your goal, the more engaged you will be to achieve it.

*Give yourself uninterrupted time.* To combat restlessness and apathy, try blocking out some time each day to be dedicated and focused on something – an interesting project, a worthwhile goal, a meaningful conversation, or maybe just uninterrupted time to do work. Whatever it is you choose to spend your time doing, you need to set some boundaries for yourself. Don't let small tasks distract you or pull you away – commit to spending this time on what it is you need it for.

*Explore variety.* Languishing can come from experiencing too much sameness. Reintro-

LANGUISHING continued on page VII



# Lawyer to Lawyer Wellness Advice: How Do You Create Work-life Balance?



By Misty Griffith  
NHBA Staff

The wisdom of peers can provide helpful insight from someone who understands the demands of the legal profession. It is important to realize that you are not alone. Our new wellness series shares advice from attorneys for attorneys.

## Kathleen A. Davidson, *Pastori |Krans, Concord, NH*

I think lawyers must avoid the urge to work just to work. Our work is never done. But unless you have a deadline, cases that all need something at once, a client with an urgent priority, or need to make up some missed hours, there's no need to regularly work on nights and weekends. I think we default to "I should get some work done" whenever we have free time, but we all need to pause and question whether we really need to be doing work outside of work hours, absent special circumstances. Work outside of work hours (whatever those hours may be for you) should be the exception, not the rule. So, the next time you find yourself reaching for your laptop after dinner, stop and ask yourself if it can wait until the morning. If it can, go walk your dog, read a book, watch a movie, plan a hike, call your mom – whatever makes you happy.



## Martha L. Davidson, *Braucher & Associates, Manchester, NH*

Compartmentalize. Work, clients, and co-workers all stay in their own compartment. I do not "friend" co-workers, and especially clients, on social media, and clients do not have my cell phone number. They can regale me with tales of their weekend shenanigans on Monday at the office – and vice versa. My evenings and weekends belong to my family and friends. I will read the *NH Bar News* at home but do almost no other legal reading or learning at home. I make office time for that. I'm older – in my 50s – and have learned to recognize when I'm worn out and not working optimally. And even if that is in the middle of the day, I take a break. Do something restful or just completely off-task. For me, getting fresh air and sunshine on my face is rejuvenating – at least for a while.

If family or friends/neighbors want to talk law with me, I assess whether I can quickly move them along, or whether we need to talk at length, and if that's the case, tell them we can talk later and do so during office hours. If they are not available during office hours for some reason, then I will schedule time for them, of course, but on my timeline, not in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner, or a grandchild's baseball game.

Even with all that, it can be tough. The strain from a long hard day does follow me out the door. Music helps me transition – quiet does not! I think everyone needs to find what works for them, and that might need to change over time. Don't get into a rut and stay there if it's not working anymore!



## Janine Gawryl, *Gawryl & MacAllister, Nashua, NH*

Work only during designated hours and stick to the priority items on your "to do" list for the day. When it is your "off" time let it be your "off" time.



A daily/weekly "to do list" reduces stress and unnecessary worry. Work-life balance is looking forward to Monday mornings. It is having fun accomplishing your work tasks and goals. And it means leaving the office, on time, at the end of the day, to focus on enjoying your personal life and family.

## Susanne L. Gilliam, *Gilliam Legal, Sudbury, MA*

You struggle. You always have, and you always will. If you try to absorb this fact, it will be easier not to panic when you feel like you are doing it all wrong. There is no one answer that will solve this problem because it is inherently unsolvable. So, change your focus and ask yourself two questions.

First, ask yourself what would improve the situation if you had a magic wand. If childcare is weighing you down, a magic wand might bring you a live-in nanny that shares your views on child rearing. If mental health is weighing you down, a magic wand might bring you confidence, or a therapist, or a medication without side effects. If you feel intensely guilty about your diet, a personal chef would be wonderful. At work, more advanced skills, or better support staff, or more flexibility to set your hours might be the magic you need.

Second, ask yourself what one step you believe you can and will take today or tomorrow that will nibble away at your feelings of being overwhelmed. It might be taking time for a bath or washing the dirty dishes or some sleep or a solid hour to finish that brief.

If you take the action that was your second answer, you will take a small step to righting your ship as well as towards taking a little bit of control over the chaos. It will remind you that tiny choices can have an outsized impact, but even if they don't, they are still better than drowning. But if you think about your first answer, you will have a really strong clue as to the bigger picture and what is truly stressing you the most.



## Linda A. O'Connell, *Law Office of Linda O'Connell, Andover, MA*

Schedule your wellness activities during the day and then treat them as if they were a client meeting. Put them on your calendar, prepare, and then "just do it!" It might mean working later that night or earlier the next day, but I found it's the only way to make it happen.

If I treat going to the gym or meditating with a group online as if it were a client meeting – marking it in my calendar, setting alarms and reminders, etc.—it is more likely to happen. If I say, well when I am done with my work today then I'll go to the gym, guess what happens? I never go to the gym, as I always have more work to do!

It is like when you are on an airplane traveling with kids – you must put the oxygen mask on yourself first or you will not be able to care for your child or children. If we don't take care of ourselves, mind, and body, then we will not be able to care for our families, clients, and staff.

It is no coincidence that the ABA is now requiring that wellness be a mandatory part of the curriculum at law schools. I struggled with feeling guilty at first, but now I realize it is the only way to preserve my sanity and make me a better litigator (and person, dare I say it).



Thank you to those attorneys who took the time to share their advice. For March, members are invited to share their words of wisdom in response to the following question: **What strategies do you use to manage job-related stress?** Please email your response to NHBA Member Services Coordinator Misty Griffith [mgriffith@nhbar.org](mailto:mgriffith@nhbar.org) by February 24.



## Asking for Help from page III

cerns, current needs, and past experiences in treatment, and we devise a plan of support uniquely tailored to you. We stay current on the latest treatments and available support addressing holistically mind and body. NHLAP can help you navigate into professional care. NHLAP has a network of vetted providers to assist you with your personal or professional needs. We address any issue negatively impacting your well-being from stress and burnout, mental health, addiction recovery and substance use, cognitive decline and aging, life transitions, and wellness strategies. We have a network of volunteers from all legal practice areas with lived experiences ready to offer peer support. NHLAP offers peer support groups. Having someone to relate to who has walked a similar walk provides some of the best therapeutic support. We at the NHLAP hold no judgment; we are here to offer support, resources, and connection.

The NHLAP has a no-wrong-door approach. Your confidentiality is guaranteed. There is no risk to your law license or ability to practice by reaching out to NHLAP. Under New Hampshire, Supreme Court Rule 58.8, any contact with NHLAP is guaranteed confidential. Further protections, under Rule 8.3, provide NHLAP relief from reporting attorney misconduct.

The stark reality is that we all need help at one point or another. The practice of law requires a lot from you. You must, in turn, make it a priority for self-care. "Self-care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." — Eleanor Brown.

For more information, or to contact the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program confidentially, call 603-491-0282 or visit [lapnh.org](http://lapnh.org).

*Jill O'Neill is the executive director of the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program. To learn more about Jill, see her profile included in this issue of the Bar News.*



## Mental Health from page IV

**Create a culture of safety in the workplace.** A culture of safety is one where everyone feels safe speaking openly about mental health and substance misuse without fear of judgment, retribution, or job loss.

In summary, an increased number of legal professionals experience mental health challenges, yet many still fear speaking openly about it. Fear, shame, and stigma are all contributing factors. Open dialogue about mental health results in increased use of employer sponsored mental health services, leading to increased employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction.

Training leaders on mental health in the workplace is critical if we want to normalize the conversation about mental health. Leaders have the power to transform the workplace and create a culture where everyone feels safe speaking openly about mental health. You and your leaders are not expected to be counselors, but you are closest to the employees, can identify the signs, open a safe dialog, and crosswalk the employee to services.

Together, we can make a difference. I leave you with two questions:

Do your employees feel safe speaking openly about mental health?

Are your leaders prepared to identify the signs and open a safe dialog with an employee?

*Kim LaMontagne, MBA, is President/CEO of Kim LaMontagne, LLC. She is a corporate trainer on mental health in the workplace, an international speaker, and an author. She is also the Well-being Director for HR Florida State Council, a member of NH Lawyers Assistance Program Strategic Planning Committee, and State Trainer, Speaker, and Teacher for the NH Chapter of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-NH). Her mission is to share her lived experience and teach leaders how to create a culture where everyone feels safe speaking openly about mental health. Lives depend on it. She can be reached at (603) 320-0155 or [kim@kimlamontagne.net](mailto:kim@kimlamontagne.net).*



## Languishing from page V

ducing some variety in your day can work wonders. Novel experiences do not always have to be grand and epic. Learning something new, seeing something from a different perspective, or simply trying one new thing can reengage your creativity and interest in the world around you.

If these approaches don't improve your mood, consider reaching out to a mental health professional. As it has been said many times before, it's okay to not be okay.

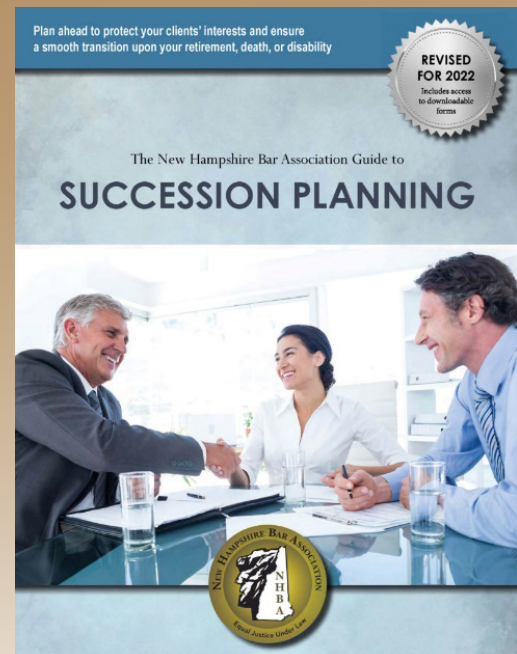
Contacting NHLAP is a great start to find the resources you need to help you. NHLAP is an independent, non-NH Bar affiliated, confidential resource established by the NH Supreme Court. They provide free, 100 percent confidential assistance to NH lawyers, judges, and law students who experience substance abuse, depression, stress, or other distress — such as languishing — that affect well-being and impair an individual's ability to function and practice law. Help starts with just one phone call to NHLAP at (603) 491-0282.

### Endnote

1. Behavioral activation is "a structured, brief psychotherapeutic approach that aims to (a) increase engagement in adaptive activities (which often are those associated with the experience of pleasure or mastery), (b) decrease engagement in activities that maintain depression or increase the risk for depression, and (c) solve problems that limit access to reward, or that maintain or increase aversive control" (Dimidjian et al., 2011)

## NHBA Succession Planning Guide

Planning ahead ensures a smooth transition upon your retirement, death, or disability and protects your clients' interests. Having a designated successor attorney gives you one less thing to worry about if an emergency arises. **The NHBA Guide to Succession Planning** offers step-by-step directions to help you plan and give you peace of mind. Newly updated in 2022, this award-winning guide, written by George Moore, NHBA Executive Director, includes checklists for thoughtful planning and customizable forms to allow smooth transition of your clients to your successors. Visit our website to download your free copy!



## SOLACE IS WHERE YOU FIND IT... WITH OUR MEMBERS



Through the SOLACE program, NHBA members can help others in the NH legal community (including employees and families) who have suffered a significant loss, illness or injury and who need immediate assistance.

Details and submission form at [nhbar.org/solace/](http://nhbar.org/solace/)





# Wellness Resources for Attorneys



## Websites

New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program  
[lapnh.org](http://lapnh.org)

Lawyers Depression Project  
[lawyersdepressionproject.org](http://lawyersdepressionproject.org)

American Bar Association Well-Being in the Legal Profession  
[americanbar.org/groups/lawyer\\_assistance/well-being-in-the-legal-profession/](http://americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/well-being-in-the-legal-profession/)

Institute for Well-Being in Law  
[lawyerwellbeing.net](http://lawyerwellbeing.net)

National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) New Hampshire  
[naminh.org](http://naminh.org)

The Happy Lawyer Project  
[thehappylawyerproject.com](http://thehappylawyerproject.com)



## Podcasts

The Path to Well-Being in Law with Bree Buchanan and Chris Newbold

The Resilient Lawyer with Jeena Cho

The Happy Lawyer Project

The Lawyer Stress Solution with Kara Loewentheil

Lawyers Living Well

The Less Stressed Lawyer with Olivia Vizacero

Life & Law with Heather Moulder

The Mindful Lawyer with Scott Rogers

Law to Zen with Bertha Burruezo

## Be the Change: Four Pillars to Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace Culture

Learn how you can positively influence the culture of legal practice and drive culture change around mental health. Kim LaMontagne, President and CEO of Kim LaMontagne, LLC, International Speaker, Corporate Trainer, and Author shares her powerful story of recovery. Kim was a high-performing executive who suffered in silence in the workplace, with alcohol misuse, major depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. She feared judgement, retribution, losing her seat at the table, and job loss if she asked for help. As a result, she remained silent and almost lost her life. At 12 years sober and healthy, she has learned that her story is not unique. What is unique is that she is willing to be vulnerable, share her story and teach leaders how to create a ‘culture of safety’ where everyone feels safe speaking openly about mental health without fear of judgment, retribution, or job loss. Kim’s recovery was positively impacted by a safe conversation with her former director who saw the subtle signs her top performer was struggling and opened the dialog that changed and saved Kim’s life.

During this training session, the presenters address mental health and well-being in the workplace through understanding the impact of unaddressed mental health in the workplace and well-being as it correlates to ethical responsibilities. You will learn the key ingredients to creating a mentally healthy workplace culture and walk away with actionable steps to embracing a culture of safety. You will also learn about the untapped resources of the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program, which can nourish positive workplace culture. This training session is open to all members of the legal profession. Legal employers and leaders are encouraged to attend.

<b>Credit(s):</b>	90 NHCLE Live Minutes; all of which may be applied towards NH Live Ethics Minutes
<b>Course Number:</b>	L@L42022o
<b>Original Program Date:</b>	May 20, 2022

**ALL CREDIT MINUTES FOR NHBA CLE PROGRAMS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE NHCLE ART SYSTEM FOR YOU TYPICALLY WITHIN TWO BUSINESS DAYS.**

For more information or to register, visit: <https://nhbar.inreachce.com>



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JUDGES, LAW  
STUDENTS,  
CONCERNED  
COLLEAGUES, AND  
LEGAL EMPLOYERS

**CALL**  
**603-491-0282**  
**OR VISIT**  
**[WWW.LAPNH.ORG](http://WWW.LAPNH.ORG)**

### CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE GUARANTEED

WE ARE HERE TO HELP  
WITH PERSONAL OR  
PROFESSIONAL ISSUES:

ADDICTION RECOVERY  
& SUBSTANCE USE

MENTAL HEALTH

STRESS & BURNOUT

COGNITIVE DECLINE &  
AGING

LIFE TRANSITIONS

WELLNESS RESOURCES

EMPLOYER SUPPORT

EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAMMING  
ON WELLNESS TOPICS