

FREE SERVICES— LAPS CAN HELP

**FOR A FREE, CONFIDENTIAL
CONSULTATION CALL:**

NEW YORK LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

LAPs

ASSESSMENTS & REFERRALS

Counselors perform assessments and make referrals to therapists or programs as needed.

INTERVENTIONS

Trained Lawyer Assistance Program volunteers, licensed professionals and concerned others will discuss and plan an intervention.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Volunteer lawyers lead support groups that focus on addiction and mental health recovery; fifteen committees are active throughout the state.

PEER ASSISTANCE

Connect one-on-one with Lawyer Assistance Program volunteer lawyers, who will offer support and guidance.

EDUCATION

Lawyer Assistance Programs offer educational programs for law students – and the profession-at-large.

HELPLINE – CRISIS RESPONSE

Licensed professional counselors are prepared to help.

LAP CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

Pursuant to Judiciary Law §499, communications between a lawyer assistance program staff member or volunteer and individuals who utilize LAP services are privileged.

Don't let embarrassment or fear of discovery stop you from getting the help that you need.

**New York State Bar Association
Lawyer Assistance Program
800.255.0569
www.nysba.org/lap**

**New York City Bar Association
Lawyer Assistance Program
212.302.5787
www.nycbar.org**

**Nassau County Bar Association
Lawyer Assistance Program
516-408-6222
www.nassaubar.org**

**Bar Association of Erie County
Lawyer Helping Lawyer Committee
716-852-8687**



Sponsored by the
**New York State
Lawyer Assistance Trust
518.285.4545
www.nylat.org**



FOR LAW STUDENTS

Free Confidential Help

**For alcoholism, drug abuse
and other mental health
problems, including
chronic stress, anxiety
and depression**

LAP services are available to all law students through a statewide network of professionals and volunteers provide.

CONSIDER THIS REGARDING LAW STUDENTS:

- 30% report they have abused alcohol
- 9% report use of illegal substances, including marijuana and cocaine
- 12% began abusing substances in law school
- nearly 4% feel they need help to control drugs and/or alcohol abuse
- 17%-40% of law students suffer from depression
- Self-reports of anxiety and depression are significantly higher than among the general population or medical students.*

THE CHALLENGES OF LAW SCHOOL

Although intellectually stimulating, law school involves:

- heavy workload, high expectations
- competition for top grades, outside pressures
- fear of failure
- mounting Law School debt and job searches

MAINTAIN YOUR BALANCE —

Become a Healthy Law Student Now & Avoid Becoming an Unhappy, Unhealthy Unprofessional Lawyer Later

It is not easy to achieve balance and perspective with the challenges of Law School. Maintaining a social life is important, but it is also easy to turn to heavy drinking, drug use and too much partying to relieve the tensions. Others may turn to a life of isolation or a life of all work and no play.

Depression, anxiety, and other stress-related illnesses are all too common among law students and lawyers. While moderate levels of stress have a positive impact, excessive and prolonged stress negatively impacts performance. The key is to recognize potentially harmful demands, eliminate those you can and moderate your response to those that are unavoidable.

Identify your core values, focus on achievable goals and Maintain a sense of balance between your personal and your professional life. Stay connected to those in your life who support you. Learn the difference between legal skills and life skills. Take care of yourself.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS

Consider your responses to the next series of questions; several affirmative answers suggest that you would benefit from lawyer assistance program services.

STRESS

Are you—

- Feeling nervous, irritable or moody?
- Feeling overwhelmed?
- Over-reacting to situations?
- Feeling fatigued or having trouble thinking clearly?
- Encountering conflict with classmates?
- Having tension/migraine headaches?
- Experiencing sleep disturbances?
- Increasingly tense, with back, shoulder or neck pain?
- Experiencing eczema, psoriasis or itching?

ANXIETY

Are you—

- Experiencing extended periods of constant, exaggerated, worrisome thoughts and tension?
- Feeling trapped in distressful consuming thought patterns or compulsive behaviors?
- Having nightmares, flashbacks, depressed feelings or irritability linked to a traumatic event?
- Easily distracted or startled?
- Having frequent, unexpected episodes of intense fear that strike without warning?
- Having chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness or abdominal distress?

DEPRESSION

Are you—

- Feeling sad, empty or irritable?
- Losing interest or pleasure in sex and other activity?
- Experiencing changes in weight or appetite?
- Having difficulty sleeping, or sleeping more?
- Feeling restless or less active?
- Feeling more fatigued or less energized?
- Having difficulty concentrating, remembering or deciding?
- Feeling overwhelming guilt, hopelessness or worthlessness?
- Thinking of suicide or death?

ALCOHOLISM & ADDICTIONS

Are you—

- Trying to control your drinking or drugging but not succeeding?
- Hearing criticism about your conduct from others?
- Feeling guilty about your behaviors?
- Drinking first thing in the morning to get going?
- Gambling to escape worry or trouble?
- Affecting your home life or finances by your behaviors?

CHARACTER & FITNESS ISSUES

Having received treatment for alcoholism, drug addiction or mental health concerns, is not a ground for denial of admission to the bar; nor is a being a recovering alcoholic or recovering addict.

Instead, the focus of inquiry in New York is on whether chemical abuse, addiction or a mental health condition impairs the applicant's current ability to practice law. The bar application asks whether the applicant has "any mental or emotional condition or substance abuse problem that could adversely affect" the "capability to practice law", and whether the applicant is "currently using any illegal drugs." While honesty in disclosing past conduct (e.g. arrests and convictions) is essential, disclosure of past treatment is not required.

The Committees on Character and Fitness encourage law students who are experiencing, drug, alcohol or other addiction or mental health issues to address those issues as soon as possible, regardless of when the student plans to seek admission to the bar.

For questions on bar admission requirements, visit www.nybarexam.org. Your law school's counseling service and dean of students are other sources for information.

* See report of the AALS Special Committee on Problems of Substance Abuse in the Law Schools (1993) and "The Prevalence of Depression, Alcohol Abuse and Cocaine Abuse Among U.S. Lawyers" International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, Vol. 13, p.234, by G. Benjamin, E. Darling and B. Sales (1990)