

WHY CONNECT WITH LAP?

BECAUSE WE GET IT

The pressures of law school are difficult for those outside the process to understand. When those pressures lead to feelings of deep sadness, anxiety, or the increasing need to unwind with alcohol or drugs, we are here to help.

If you feel overwhelmed, we have strategies to help you both survive and thrive.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

LAP volunteers have experienced the exact difficulties you face. We are your peers – current and former law students, attorneys, and judges – and we can provide support while you are in law school and as you enter and continue in the profession.

We have learned that there is no weakness in asking for help; there is only courage.



“ I had already been in recovery a couple of years before starting law school, and an older attorney from my hometown recommended that I contact LAP right away. I discovered a rich network of sober lawyers and judges who were there to help me through the challenges of both law school and life. Contacting LAP my 1L year was one of the best decisions I've made, and I continue to be amazed by the support I get from members of this organization. ”

EVER FIND YOURSELF:

Worried about your Bar application?

Too tired or stressed to keep up?

Having problems with sleep or concentration?

Using stimulants just to function?

Drinking more to relax and unwind?

The NC Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP) is a free and confidential service available to law students in North Carolina. [We do not report to the school or the Board of Law Examiners.](#) LAP can provide help with issues that many law students face, including:

- ◆ Alcohol or Drug Problems
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Anxiety and Stress
- ◆ Family Issues (Divorce/Grief/Loss)
- ◆ Other issues as needed (there is nothing we have not seen, experienced ourselves or helped with)

It's free. It's confidential.

It doesn't take a lawyer to see that's a good deal.



919-719-9269



info@NCLAP.org

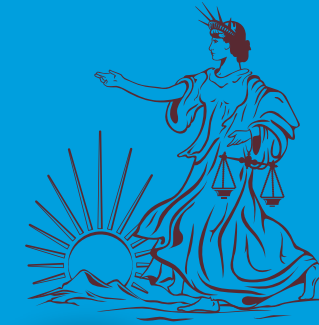


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ANXIETY & DEPRESSION IN LAW SCHOOL

Anxiety is a normal response to the abnormal experience of law school. Any psychological stressor can cause anxiety – and law school is one of the more extreme versions. It is vital for students to get help early in order to develop balance and healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with the inherent demands of not only law school, but later, the legal profession. The practice of law can be just as stressful, but with the added pressures of financial obligations, client expectations, and the very real fear and consequences of making mistakes.

How are you coping with anxiety?

Studies show that law students (and later, lawyers) often “self-medicate” with food, alcohol, drugs (prescription or not), shopping, gaming, gambling, internet porn, or other addictive-type behavior. Our experience at the LAP shows that this is true.

DID YOU KNOW?

Upon enrolling in law school, prospective law students have the same rates of depression (10%) and problems with alcohol and drugs (8-10%) as the general population, but by the time we graduate those numbers have shot up to 28% and 32% respectively. Thoughts of suicide jump from 2% to almost 10%. Something profound happens to us in law school, but we are too busy trying to succeed and survive to notice.

Sometimes, regardless of our performance, we may become quietly disillusioned because our law school experience is not what we hoped it would be – or because we are not becoming who we thought we would become in the process. We may be highly successful at school, yet for some inexplicable reason we find inner dissatisfaction with our outward accomplishments. These thoughts and reactions are, once again, a normal response to an abnormal situation. Left unexamined or unacknowledged, however, they can lead us into depression.

THE BAR APPLICATION: CHARACTER AND FITNESS

The specter of the bar application’s character and fitness portion looms large over law students who have dealt with mental health, drug, or alcohol problems. What is fair game? How much do you need to disclose? If you have any questions at all, contact LAP now - the sooner the better. LAP can guide students in what must be disclosed and how to best document your efforts to get help.

Did you know? Mere participation in twelve-step groups, mental health treatment (including proper use of prescription medications), and counseling are no longer required to be self-disclosed in the application process.

Be advised, however, that some conduct will often result in the Board of Law Examiners putting an application on hold and referring the applicant to LAP for evaluation, especially when one has not sought adequate help or treatment for the underlying issues that resulted in situations, such as:

- ◆ Alcohol or drug related charges or arrests (even if dismissed)
- ◆ Involuntary hospitalizations, including suicide attempts
- ◆ Assault or other criminal charges (even if dismissed)
- ◆ Discrepancies between law school application and bar application involving character issues

“ I didn't get sober until my final semester of law school, after things had gotten pretty bad. I wish I had known sooner about LAP and the resources they could provide. I was afraid to admit I had a problem and concerned about how such an admission would impact my eligibility for licensure with the Bar. LAP helped me navigate that and other issues. ”

DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOUR INTERVIEW IS SCHEDULED TO SEEK GUIDANCE. THESE ISSUES DON'T HAVE TO DELAY YOUR LICENSING PROCESS.

“ Recovery gave me the strength and clarity to apply and gain acceptance into law school. During law school, however, it was difficult to focus on sobriety and stay active in my recovery. I was introduced to LAP shortly after graduation. LAP gave me a vehicle to actively reengage in my recovery. For the first time, I was surrounded by lawyers modeling happy and successful professional lives in recovery. ”

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