

Depression and Addiction in Lawyers - Sobering Information

Estimates of the frequency of substance abuse problems, including alcoholism, among lawyers range from three to thirty times that of the general population. About nine to ten percent of the general population in the United States is alcoholic, while empirical studies consistently show that about eighteen percent of lawyers and law students are alcoholic. Similarly, while three to nine percent in the general population in the United States is clinically depressed, as much as nineteen to twenty percent of practicing attorneys is [sic]? depressed. A 1986 study found that only about ten percent of entering law students exhibited significant symptoms of psychological problems including depression, anxiety, hostility, paranoia, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms, but this percentage jumped dramatically to thirty-two percent by the end of the first year of law school. By the end of the third year of law school it was forty percent, and two years after graduation it was 17.9%. A 1995 study replicated these findings and found that problems did not significantly abate after the individual entered the practice of law. Depression, anxiety, social isolation and alienation, hostility, paranoid ideation, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms were more frequent in attorneys than in the general population. Thus, a greater than average percentage of attorneys (as a group) is [sic] psychologically impaired in some way. Further, it appears that while the problems often do not appear until the first year of law school, lawyers do not return to their pre-law school level of psychological health after graduation.

Daicoff, Susan the Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics, Spring 1998

Because of this research and our own experience in Indiana, JLAP was created to provide all law students, lawyers and judges with the information, education, and resources they need to obtain assistance for themselves or a colleague. Please to not hesitate to call JLAP for assistance or education for yourself or a colleague.

All calls are confidential.