



**NEBRASKA**  
*State Bar Association*

# **Your Career Goals – Is Building Resiliency One of Them?**

**Chris Aupperle**

Director of the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program

TUESDAY

DECEMBER 4, 2018

WEBINAR

This page intentionally left blank.



**NEBRASKA**  
State Bar Association

# Your Career Goals – Is Building Resiliency One of Them?

**Tuesday,  
December 4, 2018  
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm**

**NE MCLE Accreditation  
1 CLE ethics hour  
Distance Learning #165474**

**www.nebar.com**

Recent studies and NLAP experience tell us that we need to do more to promote wellness and provide wellness resources to our young lawyers. This presentation will examine the specific challenges facing young lawyers, including managing stress, work-life balance, mental health conditions and substance use disorders. We will discuss the

warning signs and how to encourage others to seek help. Finally, we will also discuss the resources available to lawyers to overcome these challenges.

**Speaker:**  
**Chris Aupperle, Director,**  
*Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program*

## REGISTRATION FORM: Your Career Goals – Is Building Resiliency One of Them?

**December 4, 2018**

- \$65 - Regular Registration
- \$50 - NSBA dues-paying member
- Free - Young Lawyer Section Member
- Free - Law Students

Please let us know how you heard about this CLE event:

- Email (eCounsel, listserv, etc.)
- Nebraska Lawyer*
- NSBA print mailing
- Social Media
- Another NSBA CLE event
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bar # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT by CHECK {payable to NSBA}** Check enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Check amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT by CREDIT CARD:** AMEX \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be charged \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date (mo/yr) \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name on credit card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card billing address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return completed form to:** NSBA, 635 S 14th St. #200, Lincoln, NE 68508, or email to Karla Roscoe at kroscoe@nebar.com.

If you do not receive an email confirming your registration, please call (402) 475-7091.

If you need any special accommodation for attending this event, please contact the NSBA.

**NSBA CLE Cancellation Policy:** • A full refund will be granted only when a cancellation request is received at least 72 hours prior to the live or distance-learning CLE event. • A cancellation request made less than 72 hours of the live or distance learning CLE event or following the live or distance-learning CLE event will be refunded, less a \$30 processing fee. • You may send a substitute (e.g., someone from your firm) in lieu of cancelling. • The cancellation policy for a NSBA sponsored CLE event does not apply to independent third-party CLE providers, and attorneys are subject to their cancellation policy.

This page intentionally left blank.

**Chris Aupperle** *Director of the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program*

Chris Aupperle graduated Creighton University College of Business in 1989 and Creighton University School of Law in 1992. Chris began his law career in private practice in Omaha, NE and eventually transitioned to in-house counsel. Chris was appointed as the Director of the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program (NLAP) in May of 2017. As NLAP Director, Chris coordinates NLAP outreach and services to all Nebraska lawyers, judges and law students. Over the past fifteen years, Chris has presented continuing legal education programs to attorneys and judges on topics related to attorney, judge and law student wellness, including substance use disorders, mental health challenges within the legal profession, compassion fatigue and stress management. Chris has also been a frequent presenter at both Nebraska law schools. He has been a member of NLAP Committee since 2001 and served as chair of the Committee from 2015-2017. Chris also serves on the Advisory Committee for the Independence Center at Bryan Medical Center in Lincoln.

This page intentionally left blank.

# Building Resiliency

## ***BE PROACTIVE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH***

**re·sil·ien·cy** (*noun*): Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Source: American Psychological Association

## **Why do we need resiliency?**

### ➤ **Allows us to respond to stress appropriately**

You need resilience to effectively tackle everyday stress like managing your workload, dealing with difficult clients, meeting deadlines, balancing work with your non-work life and fulfilling your financial commitments.

### ➤ **Gives us strength to tackle problems**

If you develop resiliency, you are more likely to perceive stress as a challenge that can be solved with the resources you have available, rather than a threat that invokes survival-based emotions like impatience, defensiveness or hyper-criticality.

### ➤ **Provides the ability to overcome adversity**

Resiliency is more than surviving negative experiences, its learning what will allow you to thrive in the legal profession. To accept change and loss are part of life.

## **What does resiliency look like?**

### **Strong Resiliency**

Connected · Hopeful  
Sense of Purpose  
Sets Realistic Goals  
Flexible, Can Improve  
Change = Opportunity  
Decisive  
Focused on finding a Solution

### **Weak Resiliency**

Isolated · Discouraged  
Going through the motions  
No Goals or unrealistic goals  
Rigid  
Change = Threat  
Procrastination  
Focused on problem or blame

## ***BE PROACTIVE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH***

### **Can You Improve Your Resiliency?**

**Yes!** Below are some tips to improve your resiliency. This is not a complete list, but a starting point – tailored to the law practice. It takes intentionality and consistency to make sustained progress. Set weekly goals and hold yourself accountable. Start working on one or two things and build on it.

### **1. Stay Socially Connected**

One of the most important factors in building resiliency is staying connected. Maintain social connections within and outside of the legal profession. Focus on the positive social connections in your life. Socially connected people are more likely to ask for help when they need it and to have a more positive outlook.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Stay connected to their peers, get involved in professional and civic organizations and also have social connections unrelated to work.

**Warning Sign:** Isolating from family, friends or colleagues, often self-justified. Little or no social connection because of perceived time constraints. Social connections are dominated by impersonal electronic communication.

### **2. Set and Keep Boundaries**

You will have a lot of demands for your time, compassion and energy – set realistic limits and expectations. This is particularly difficult for young lawyers. Boundaries are not only needed with clients and staff, but also in our personal relationships.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Are responsive to clients but avoid an “24/7” approach to client service. They establish an expectation of timely (not instantaneous) responses to clients – then they meet those expectations, even if to say “I received your message and I will get you an answer to your question by next Tuesday.” They put limits on electronic connection that violate those boundaries.

**Warning Signs:** You feel you must respond to everyone instantly. You cannot shut off “work” thoughts during non-work time. Running from task to task without feeling like you are accomplishing anything. You start to lose understanding, patience and compassion for clients or other people in your life.

## ***BE PROACTIVE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH***

### **3. Avoid Perfectionism**

Know the difference between perfectionism and striving for excellence. Great lawyers keep their focus on what they need to accomplish to achieve client outcomes, not being perfect. Perfectionists are not perfect but rather fear imperfection.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Are focused on effectively and efficiently meeting client needs and achieving client outcomes, not perfection or self-image.

**Warning Signs:** Are you being overly self-critical. Perfectionist may be less able to cope with their self-perceived inability to meet the high standards they set for themselves. They are often very inefficient in the way they work and procrastinate because they fear imperfection.

### **4. Take Decisive Action**

When facing a difficult situation, decide on a solution and take decisive action. Allowing stressful situations to linger will only increase your level of stress and anxiety.

**Healthy Lawyers:** When faced with a difficult situation, they don't procrastinate or ignore the difficult situation. They take on the situation that is causing them the most stress (i.e. that file on the bottom of the stack or delivering bad news to a client) and take decisive action.

**Warning Signs:** You are procrastinating, ignoring the problems that are causing you the most stress, or just wishing they would go away.

### **5. Maintain Perspective**

Avoid blowing an event out of proportion or always going to the "worst case scenario" when problem solving. When struggling with having the right perspective about something, talk to someone else and get an objective view of the situation.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Look for broader context and long-term perspective. They don't make everything personal and seek the best solution under the circumstances.

**Warning Signs:** You always seem to focus on the negative ("glass half full"). You frequently find yourself living in fear of negative consequences.

## **BE PROACTIVE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH**

### **6. Take Mental Breaks**

Take periodic mental breaks during the day. Just like your body cannot work at peak physical performance without rest breaks, your mind cannot either. Use exercise, meditation or other mental breaks that can have stress-reducing benefits and refocus your mind on the task in front of you. Take “non-working” vacations to refuel.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Realize that their value is not just clocking hours. Eat lunch away from their desk. Take a walk around the block to “reset” their focus. Lawyers are also able to use mindfulness exercises (e.g. forms of meditation) to give their brain a rest.

**Warning Signs:** Being unable to disconnect and focus on the moment rather than your mental “to do” list even when away from work. Feeling mentally drained.

### **7. Self-Care**

It may seem obvious, but your physical and mental health are linked. Getting adequate sleep, exercising and good diet will boost your mental health. Make stress-reducing activities a part of your daily routine.

**Healthy Lawyers:** Make self-care a priority in their lives.

**Warning Signs:** Changes in sleep (not enough, too much), loss of appetite or eating to cope with stress. Unexplained aches and pains that persist.

### **8. Consider Mental Health When Making Career Decisions**

Will this decision (job, location, area of law, clients, hours, firm or organization culture) benefit or hinder your mental health? Will you feel inspired? Will you have a sense of purpose? Will you be able to achieve the level of balance you want in your life?

### **9. Ask for Help When Struggling**

Sometimes despite our best efforts we get off track and can't seem to rebound. That's when it's time to ask for help. Ask a friend, family member or mentor. When that is not enough, seek professional help. Call NLAP and we will work with you to find the appropriate resources.