

Glum, Manic and Drunk: Not a Law Firm to Emulate or Hire

PRESENTERS

- **Bree Buchanan**

Senior Advisor, Krill Strategies, Inc.

Co-Chair, National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being

Chair, ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs

Texas Lawyers Assistance Program, retired

- **C. Stuart Mauney**

Partner at Gallivan, White and Boyd, P.A. Greenville, South Carolina

Tommy Thomason Award, Greenville County Bar's highest honor, 2019

Past Member, Advisory Board, ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs

Beginning of the Lawyer Well-Being Movement

- *The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys (the “Lawyer Study”)*
 - P.R. Krill, R. Johnson, & L. Albert
 - 10 J. Addiction Med. 46 (2016)
- *Suffering in Silence: The Survey of Law Student Well-Being and the Reluctance of Law Students to Seek Help for Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns (the “Law Student Survey”)*
 - J.M. Organ, D. Jaffe, K. Bender
 - 66 J. Legal Educ. 116 (2016)

Law Student Survey

- Conducted in 2014
- 15 diverse law schools
- 3,300 law students responded
- ***25% at risk for alcohol use disorder***
- ***17% screened positive for depression***
- ***36% screened positive for anxiety***

Law Student Survey

- Low rates of help-seeking:
 - 42% felt they needed mental health help in past year
 - Only half of those sought assistance
- Beliefs that discourage help-seeking:
 - Threat to job or academic status
 - Threat to bar admission
 - Social stigma
 - “I can handle it myself”

Law Students' Help-Seeking

- **Half of respondents report:**

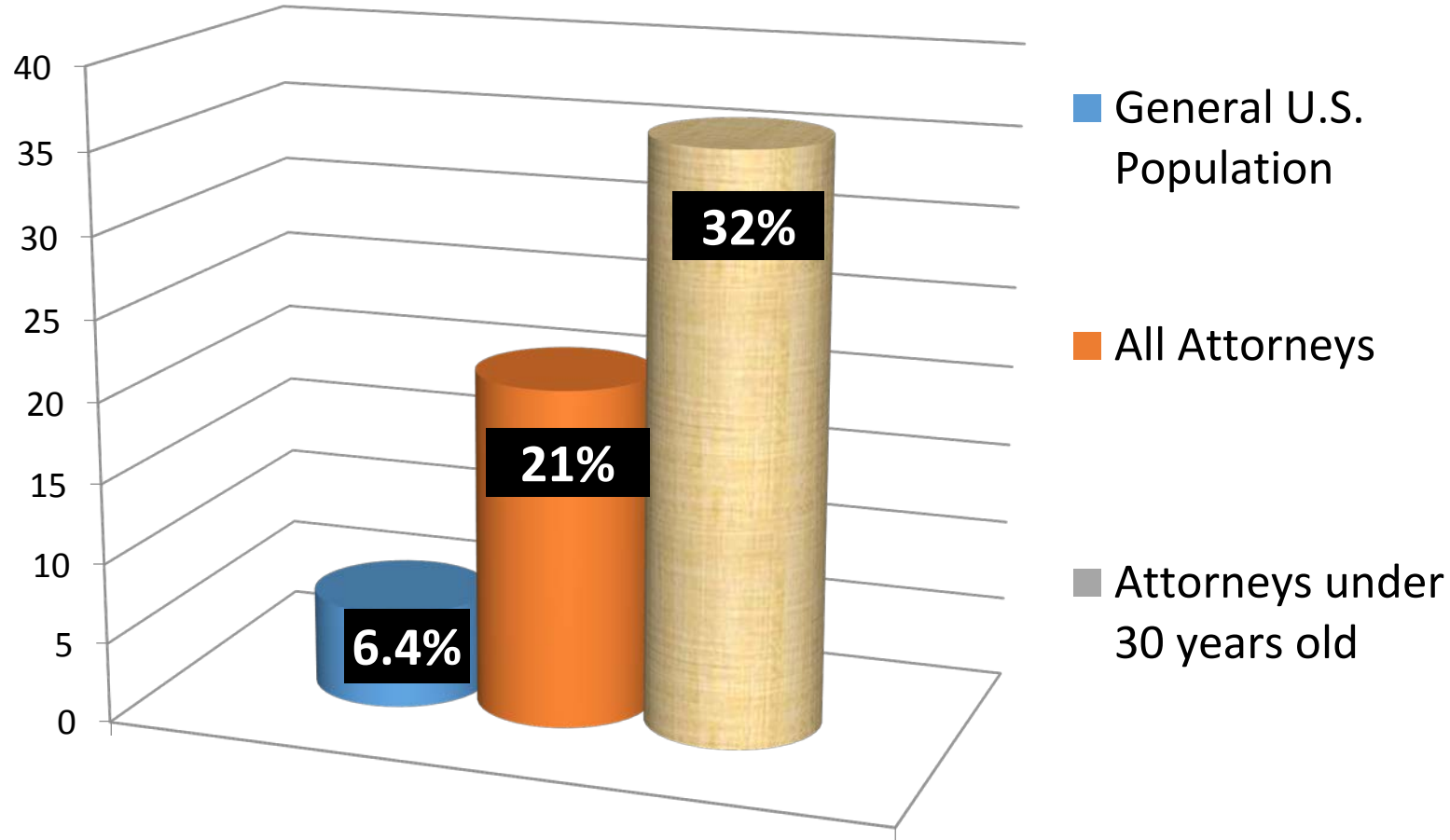
“better chance of getting admitted to the bar if a mental health or substance use problem is hidden”

[But these are progressive disorders...]

Of the 886 respondents:

- 24% reported anxiety
- 25% reported depression
- 21% at heightened suicide risk
- 66% reported new mental health issues in law school

Lawyer Study - Problem Drinking



"Problematic Drinking" = hazardous, possible dependence

History of Mental Health Concerns During Legal Career

- 46% depression
- 61% anxiety
- 11.5% suicidal thoughts

Young Lawyers at Risk

- The younger the lawyer, the greater the likelihood of:
 - Substance use disorder (1:3 for alcohol)
 - Depression
- *“It is reasonable to surmise...that being in the early stages of one’s legal career is strongly correlated with a high risk of developing an alcohol use disorder.” Study authors at 51.*

Business Case for Improving Lawyer Well-Being

- Law firms lose over \$9 Billion annually due to turnover
- 17% is the annual attrition rate at law firms
- \$400k is the estimated turnover cost per lawyer
- Plus:
 - Lost productivity
 - Costs related to malpractice

Three Reasons to Take Action

1. Organizational effectiveness

- It's good for business (see previous slide)

2. Ethical integrity and professionalism

- It's good for clients and the profession
 - Rule 1.1 – competence
 - Rule 1.3 – diligence

3. Humanitarian reasons

- It's good for lawyers and their families

*Is the practice
of law a
hazardous
profession?*



Lawyer Traits

- Perfectionistic
- Inherently pessimistic
- Excessively self-reliant



Lawyer Expectations

- Warriors
- Invulnerable
- Reluctant to ask for help



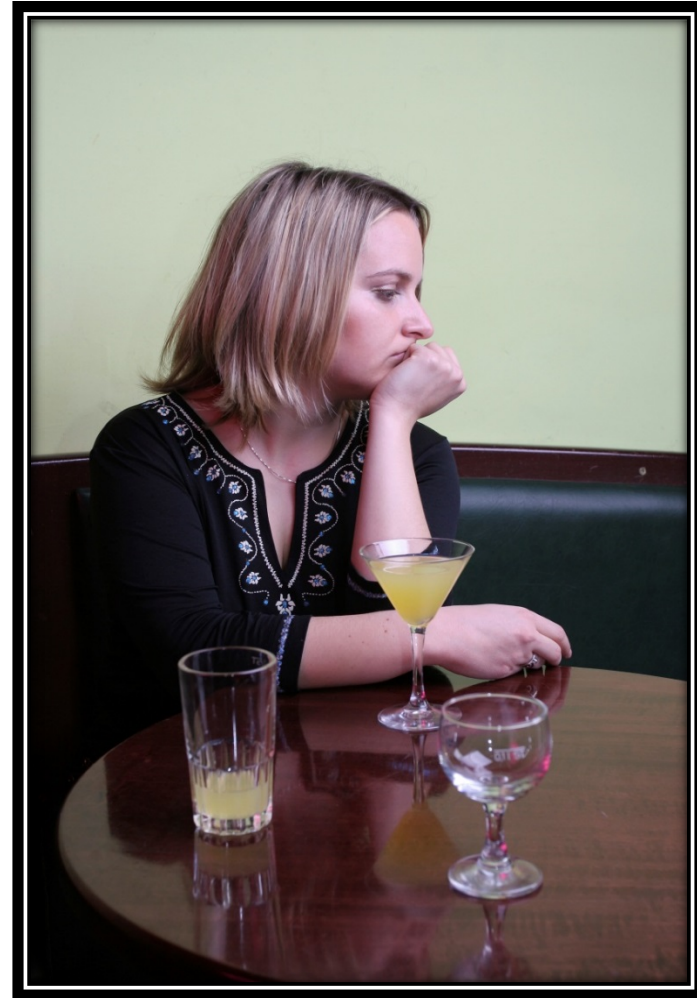
Practice of Law

- Competitive
- Combative
- High stress
- High stakes



Practice of Law

- Long Hours
- Always “on”
- Isolation
- Unhealthy Coping





Since you can't change the legal profession...

What can you change about ***your response*** ?



**How do YOU fill
back up?**



Resiliency...

re·sil·ien·cy

noun: the ability to persist
in the face of challenges and
to bounce back from adversity

Building Resilience

- Confidence that Grows Resilience
- Cross-examine Your Thinking
- Cultivate Relational Energy – stay connected
- Know the Difference Between Perfectionism and Striving for Excellence



Benefits of Meditation



Physical:

- lowers heart rate
- stress reduction

Cognitive:

- Improves memory

Emotional:

- Stabilizes emotions
- reduces anger

Mindfulness Resources

- Mindfulness in Law Society
- UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center
 - guided meditations
 - <https://marc.ucla.edu>
 - Downloadable from iTunes
- Headspace - App

Practice Good Time Management

- Avoid Time Wasters!
- Telephonic and Electronic Interruptions
- Drop-in Visitors
- Ineffective Delegation
- Inadequate Planning

**Protect your brain's
health:
Stop multi-tasking**



Grateful People...

- Stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure
- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More joy, optimism, and happiness
- Less likely to engage in self-blame
- Act with more generosity and compassion
- Feel less lonely and isolated



Back Into the Light...

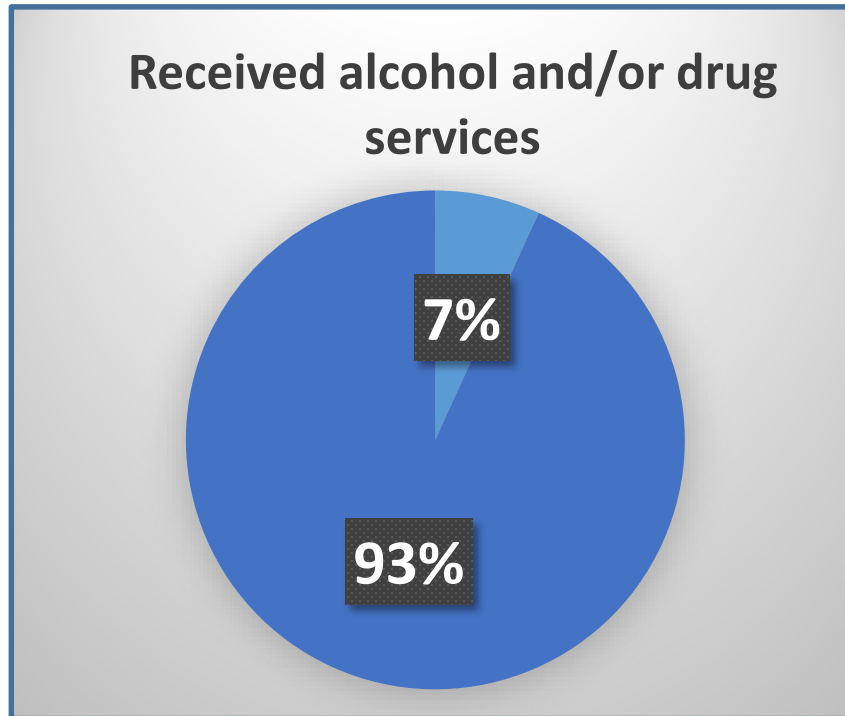
a personal story

Ask for Help

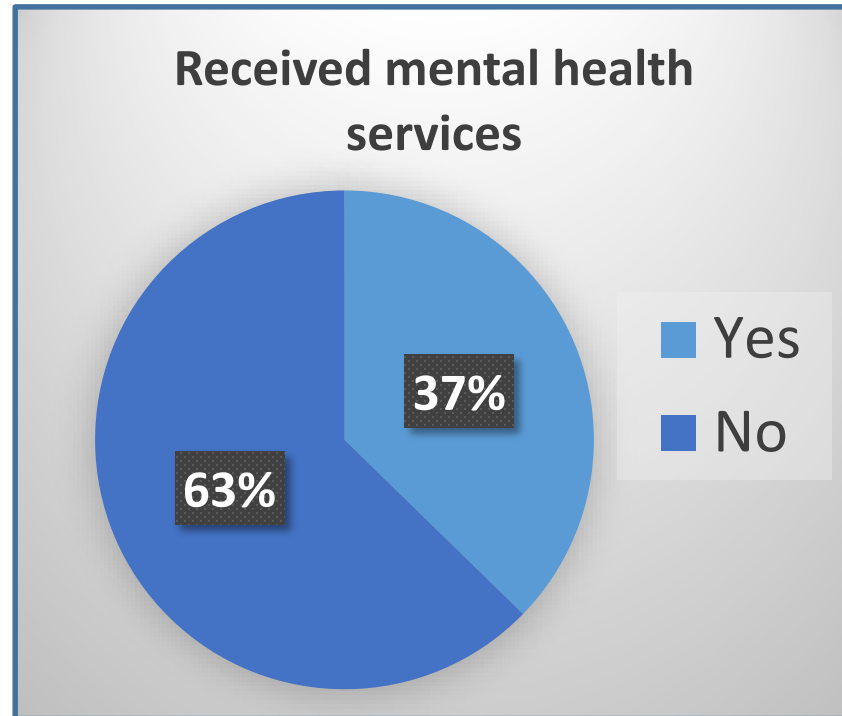


Lawyer Study

Of those with “problematic drinking”



Of those with depression or anxiety



Why Don't Lawyers Ask for Help

- Fear that others will find out they need help
 - Stigma
 - Shame
 - False belief that problem is a moral failing
- Concerns that services are not confidential
- Concern that it will affect law license

Getting Help

- Lawyers Assistance Programs
(https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/lap_programs_by_state/)
- Individual Therapist
- Employee Assistance Program
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1-800-273-TALK