

President's Message

By Lisa D. Harbour-Weibel



As many of you may know, Chief Justice Nancy Rice proclaimed January “Wellness Month” in recognition of the importance of self-care and wellness in the legal profession. If you receive the Colorado Lawyer, you may have noticed that each month, the Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program (COLAP) provides written various articles supporting the theme “Wellness: Your Job, Your Career, Your Life.” In September 2015, CBA President wrote a very thoughtful and powerful article for the Colorado Lawyer on the topic of lawyers and suicide. This article can be found at: http://www.cobar.org/tcl/tcl_articles.cfm?articleid=9010).

A career in the legal profession may be one of the most psychologically difficult of any of the professions. In an article written by Sarah Myers, she provides this quote by Laird Hamilton, “Make sure your worst enemy doesn’t live between your own two ears.” This is a clear and absolute truth. Many attorneys, on a daily basis, encounter numerous communications with difficult clients as well as adverse parties and opposing counsel, meeting numerous deadlines, pressure from partners or co-workers in their firm, managing a business, balancing taking a lunch or a break versus the infamous “let me send just one more email or one more quick phone call” -is there such a thing as a quick phone call, in addition to trying to leave the office in a timely manner to pick up children, sit down for dinner with their family, engage with their family, children and fur-babies and then later contemplating, “should I log back in because I could do one more thing before bed “ before settling down for some much needed “me time”. Then don’t forget, the quick wake-up at 3:00 am making a mental to-do list of all the items you would like to complete for the upcoming work day. It’s a constant internal battle that one goes through, but finding an appropriate coping mechanism for work-life balance is extremely important in any profession, but specifically, in the legal profession.

How one copes and handles the constant battle is based upon the individual. Many individuals dig deep into self-wellness and maintain an active healthy lifestyle while other’s craft or engage in something entirely different to minimize (sometimes hide and lose sight of for just a little while) the stressors at hand. Many engage in stress eating or may appear over-caffeinated (no judging here- I love donuts and I have two lattes so I love coffee) while others self-medicate at times.

When I have the opportunity to speak about Weld County to other attorneys outside our county, I often find myself speaking of the close, tight-knit legal community that we have. This legal community didn’t become this way automatically or randomly overnight. Rather, we have attorneys, judicial officers, court staff and other important members of the legal profession that truly care about their profession and the general well-being of those involved. How you handle the stressors is your choice- however, if you find yourself at a breaking point, I strongly encourage you to reach out to someone, either another colleague, family member, friend or COLAP for any assistance that they may be able to provide.

Please join us for a one hour CLE presented by Sarah Myers of COLAP on the issue of Addressing Burnout and Staying Sane in the Legal Profession on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 12:00 pm in Courts West Jury. This CLE has been approved for 1 ethics credit.