**WELLNESS IN LAW: FINDING HARMONY BETWEEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Yellow highlight indicate polls and hypotheticals.

Purple highlight indicate videos and the wellness plan.

**SLIDE 1**

Introduction

The presenter will provide:

1. A brief introduction of themselves,
2. Title of the program,
3. Explain the program will qualify for the wellness competency credit, and
4. Address any housekeeping issues.

**SLIDE 2**

Welcome to today’s course on wellness and well-being for attorneys. As legal professionals, you often face significant demands and pressures that can take a toll on your mental and physical health. This course aims to provide you with strategies and tools to prioritize your well-being, which is essential for delivering competent legal services to your clients.

The presentation objectives are to:

* Explain the importance of attorney well-being as an integral aspect of fulfilling the duty of competence;
* Define the dimensions of well-being in law;
* Provide recommendations for positive change in attorney well-being;
* Analyze a case study of a law firm as one of the best places to work, and
* Promote resources available to attorneys.

**SLIDE 3, Poll #1**

On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate your current level of stress and burnout? (1-low, 5-high)

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5

Discuss responses. This question is asked so attendees will think about their mental health and determine if they believe they may be suffering from stress or burnout.

**SLIDE 4**

How do we define well-being? The ABA defined well-being in law as a continuous process in which we strive for thriving in each dimension of our lives. The dimensions for attorney well-being are: emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, spiritual, and social.

Imagine the story of Sarah, a successful attorney renowned for her legal expertise. Sarah's practice thrived, but behind the scenes, she was grappling with stress and burnout. Sarah's misconception was that her dedication to her clients justified neglecting her own well-being. This is a common misconception among legal professionals – the belief that excellence in law requires sacrificing personal wellness.

Well-being is a continuous process in which we strive for thriving in each dimension of our lives.

**SLIDE 5**

On the other hand, prioritizing wellness can bring numerous benefits. It can improve your focus, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. When you’re operating at your best, you can provide higher-quality legal services and better serve the needs of your clients.

Benefits of wellness for attorneys include:

* Enhanced cognitive function and decision-making abilities;
* Increased resilience and ability to handle stress;
* Improved client relations and communication, and
* Greater job satisfaction and work-life balance.

**SLIDE 6**

Impact of stress and burnout on competence and ethical obligations

Neglecting your well-being can have serious consequences for attorneys. High levels of stress and burnout can impair your cognitive abilities, decision-making skills, and overall competence. This can lead to ethical lapses, mistakes, and ultimately, harm to your clients and your careers.

The duty of competence requires:

1. Effective Representation: Attorneys need to be in good mental and physical health to provide competent legal representation. If an attorney is experiencing burnout, emotional distress, or other well-being issues, it can impede their ability to perform effectively on behalf of their clients.
2. Ethical obligations: The Rules of Professional Conduct require attorneys to provide competent representation. This includes having the mental, emotional, and physical abilities to handle cases effectively. Neglecting one’s own well-being could lead to ethical violations.
3. Avoiding malpractice and disciplinary complaints: Failure to maintain one’s own well-being can result in legal malpractice and/or violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct or the State Bar Act. Attorneys who are overwhelmed, stressed or suffering from Mental health and/or substance use issues may make errors that can harm the client.
4. Stress management: The legal profession can be highly stressful, with long hours, heavy workloads, and challenging cases. Attorneys must manage stress effectively to maintain their own well-being and avoid burnout, which could harm the client.
5. Long term sustainability: Ensuring the well-being of attorneys is important for the long-term sustainability of the legal profession. High levels of stress, burnout, and mental health issues can lead to attrition and negatively impact the profession’s ability to serve clients effectively.

**SLIDE 7**

Consequences of neglecting mental and physical well-being

Stress and burnout can manifest in various ways, such as:

* Difficulty concentrating or retaining information;
* Emotional exhaustion and cynicism; and
* Physical symptoms like headaches, stomach issues, or sleep disturbances.

**SLIDE 8**

In 2018, the Rules of Professional Conduct were updated, and there were many changes to the rules. However, one thing that did not change was what constitutes attorney competence. In the current and prior versions, the duty of competence requires attorneys to maintain mental, emotional, and physical well-being in order to provide competent representation to their clients. This duty is based on the recognition that an attorney's well-being can impact their ability to provide effective representation, and that attorneys who are struggling with their own mental or physical health may not be able to provide the level of attention and care that their clients deserve. The rules also acknowledge that the legal profession can be stressful and demanding, and that taking care of oneself is necessary to maintain a sustainable practice.

**SLIDE 9**

The ABA through the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being issued a national report, *The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change*. The report seeks ways to improve the well-being of the legal profession and identified 3 reasons to take action to promote the multi-dimensional well-being of members of the legal profession:

1. Promoting lawyer well-being contributes to organizational success,
2. Promoting lawyer well-being improves lawyer ethics and professionalism, and
3. Promoting lawyer well-being is a humanitarian endeavor.

**SLIDE 10**

In May 2022, the Michigan Supreme Court and the State Bar of Michigan collaboratively launched the Michigan Task Force on Well-Being in the Law Report and Recommendations. It was published in August 2023 and cited the ABA’s Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP) and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation’s 2016 study of nearly 13,000 practicing attorneys revealed high rates of mental health and substance use concerns. Within the first 10 years of practice, those attorneys were found to experience the greatest rates of depression, anxiety, and problematic drinking.

The Survey of Law Student Well-Being, also published in 2016, revealed similar statistics for law students regarding depression, anxiety, and problematic drinking, and revealed concerningly high rates of suicidal ideation.

**SLIDE 11-Poll #2**

To what extent do you believe that burnout affects your professional competence?

1. Significantly
2. Moderately
3. Occasionally
4. Not at all

Discuss the responses with the audience and explain that those who experience burnout it significantly or moderately should utilize wellness strategies to combat these issues and/or seek help from a mental health professional.

Next, we will look at hypothetical challenges litigators face.

**SLIDE 12**

Mark, a litigator who realized the significance of emotional well-being after a challenging case. He had always approached his cases with relentless determination, but this often led to stress and emotional exhaustion.

When he attended a workshop on emotional well-being, he learned to recognize and manage his emotions effectively. Mark's newfound emotional resilience not only improved his relationships with clients but also enhanced his competence in the courtroom.

**SLIDE 13-Hypo #1**

Based on Mark’s experience dealing with stress and emotional exhaustion, which aspect of emotional well-being do you believe is most crucial for a litigator to maintain high performance and client satisfaction?

1. Recognizing Emotional Triggers
2. Developing Emotional Resilience
3. Enhancing Emotional Intelligence
4. Practicing Mindfulness and Stress Reduction

The correct answer is b. Developing Emotional Resilience

**Correct Answer Explanation:** All the options listed are important components of emotional well-being; but if you have to choose one that stands out, especially in the context of Mark's experience and the broader demands of the legal profession; **Developing Emotional Resilience** might be considered the most crucial.

**SLIDE 14**

**Developing Emotional Resilience:** This is key for litigators who face high-stress situations regularly. Emotional resilience enables them to recover quickly from setbacks, maintain steady performance under pressure, and adapt to changing circumstances with composure.

For Mark, building resilience would help him manage the inherent stresses of litigation, sustain his performance in the long term, and maintain a level of client service that is not compromised by personal stress or emotional fatigue.

While recognizing emotional triggers is the first step in managing one's emotional responses, and enhancing emotional intelligence is crucial for interpersonal interactions, it is the resilience that allows a professional to apply these skills consistently and effectively, even under duress.

Practicing mindfulness and stress reduction are also valuable, but they are part of the broader framework that contributes to developing resilience. Hence, while all aspects are important and interconnected, emotional resilience stands out as a foundational quality that enables a litigator like Mark to thrive both personally and professionally.

**SLIDE 15**

What are some practical strategies for managing emotions during negotiations or litigation?

* Setting boundaries is essential to avoid burnout. Learn to say no to unnecessary work and prioritize your workload. This will help you stay focused and avoid feeling overwhelmed.
* Surround yourself with people who understand the demands of your profession and can provide emotional support. This could include colleagues, friends, family, or a therapist.
* Identify healthy ways to cope with stress, such as taking breaks, going for a walk, or engaging in a hobby. These activities can help you recharge and manage your stress levels.

**SLIDE 16**

Jane, a corporate attorney who, like many of her peers, often found herself trapped in a legal bubble. She assumed that her competence solely depended on her knowledge of statutes and case law.

Jane attended a CLE event that encouraged intellectual exploration and changed her perspective. Jane began reading books outside her field, attending seminars on innovation, and engaging with diverse thinkers. This intellectual diversity allowed her to approach legal challenges with fresh perspectives, ultimately enhancing her competence as a corporate lawyer.

**SLIDE 17-Hypo #2**

Jane, a corporate attorney, initially believed that her legal competence depended only on her knowledge of statutes and case law. After attending a CLE event that promoted intellectual exploration, she started reading books outside her field and engaging with diverse thinkers. How did this change in approach impact her effectiveness as a lawyer?

A) It had no impact, as legal competence is strictly based on knowledge of the law.  
B) It led to confusion and a decline in her legal performance due to information overload.  
C) It enhanced her ability to solve legal problems by introducing her to new perspectives and ideas.  
D) It distracted her from her legal duties and decreased her overall effectiveness.

Correct Answer: C) It enhanced her ability to solve legal problems by introducing her to new perspectives and ideas.

Explanation: Jane's engagement with intellectual diversity and varied sources of knowledge enabled her to think more creatively and solve problems more effectively. This broadened perspective is crucial in law, where innovative and well-rounded thinking can provide better solutions and enhance professional competence.

**SLIDE 18**

How can attorneys find time to explore intellectual interests outside of law?  
  
Schedule Time: Schedule specific time slots in your calendar to pursue your intellectual interests. Treat this time as you would any other appointment or meeting and stick to it. It could be a few hours every week or once a month. This will help you prioritize and make time for your interests.

Combine Activities: Look for ways to combine your intellectual interests with other activities. For example, you can listen to audiobooks or podcasts related to your interests while commuting or during your lunch break.

Take Advantage of Technology: Use technology to your advantage. You can use apps or online platforms to learn new skills or attend virtual events related to your interests.

Join a Group: Join a group or community that shares your interests. This will help you stay motivated and provide opportunities to learn from others.

Be Flexible: Be open to adjusting your schedule and routine to make time for your intellectual pursuits. Consider delegating some tasks or outsourcing certain responsibilities to free up more time.

**SLIDE 19**

David, a seasoned attorney known for his meticulous attention to detail. However, David was on the brink of burnout due to the constant pressure of his work.

David attended a CLE session on occupational well-being, which introduced him to the idea of strategic avoidance. David learned that taking short breaks and delegating tasks strategically could help him manage stress and avoid burnout without compromising the quality of his work. This paradigm shift not only saved his well-being but also improved his competence as an attorney.

**SLIDE 20**

Occupational well-being is essential for all professions, including law. Taking strategic breaks and delegating tasks can help prevent burnout, which can ultimately improve the quality of work and lead to personal satisfaction and growth.

**SLIDE 21**

How can attorneys effectively manage stress without compromising their caseload?  
Working for the right employer: Find the right employer in which you are able to incorporate both your personal and professional life into your well-being.

Alternative schedules: Having a schedule that fits into your work-life balance. In a hybrid workplace, you have the flexibility to split your work time between the office, your home, or even a coffee shop. This new way of working can be great for boosting productivity and decreasing stress levels. Research has shown that giving attorneys more autonomy and flexibility in their work schedules can improve an attorney’s well-being.

Set realistic expectations: Make sure you are realistic about what you can accomplish in a day or week, and don't overload your schedule with too many tasks. This can help you avoid feeling overwhelmed and stressed.

Delegate tasks: If possible, delegate tasks to other members of your team such as investigators, law clerks, paralegals, researchers, etc. This can help you focus on high-priority tasks and reduce your workload.

Take breaks: Make sure you take regular breaks throughout the day to stretch, walk around, or simply take a few deep breaths. This can help you recharge, refocus, and reduce stress.

Seek support: If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, don't hesitate to seek support from a therapist, counselor, or support group. Talking to someone can help you gain perspective and develop coping strategies.

**SLIDE 22**

Alex, a criminal defense attorney who was always on the move, rushing from one courtroom to another believed that his demanding schedule left no room for physical wellness.

After experiencing constant fatigue and lack of focus, Alex decided to make a change. He integrated short, effective workouts and mindful eating habits into his routine. This physical wellness not only boosted his energy levels but also sharpened his mental clarity, making him a more effective advocate for his clients.

**SLIDE 23**

Exercise can boost your mental health, lower blood pressure, reduce fatigue, sharpen memory, and lower the rate of anxiety/depression.

Ways to incorporate exercise into a busy schedule:

1. Schedule exercise into your day: Treat exercise like an important appointment and schedule it into your day. This will help ensure that you make time for it and don't skip it.
2. Take breaks throughout the day: Take breaks throughout the day to stretch, walk around, or do some light exercises. This can help improve your circulation, reduce stress, and increase your energy levels.
3. Join a gym near your workplace: Joining a gym near your workplace can be a convenient way to exercise during your lunch break or after work.
4. Consider online workouts: If you don't have time to go to the gym, consider doing online workouts or yoga classes from home. This can be a great way to fit in exercise when you have a busy schedule.
5. Have walking meetings, walk and talk!

**SLIDE 24**

Nutrition plays an important role in our physical dimension of well-being.

1. Meal prep: Dedicate a few hours on the weekend to meal prep for the week ahead. You can prepare healthy meals and snacks in advance, so they're ready to grab and go during the week. You will also save money making your own meals.
2. Keep healthy snacks on hand: Stock your office with healthy snacks like fresh fruit, nuts, and veggies. This will help you make healthier choices throughout the day.
3. Opt for healthy takeout options: If you don't have time to cook, choose healthy takeout options like grilled chicken, salads, or veggie-based dishes.
4. Use a meal delivery service: Consider using a meal delivery service that provides healthy, pre-made meals that you can heat up in the microwave or oven.
5. Prioritize protein and veggies: When choosing meals, prioritize protein and veggies. This will help you feel full and satisfied and provide your body with the nutrients it needs.

Remember, small changes can make a big difference. So, try to incorporate healthy meals and snacks into your daily routine, even if it's just one meal or snack at a time.

**SLIDE 25**

Sleep is very important. You need at least 7 hours of sleep. It helps to boost your immune system, prevent weight gain, reduce stress, improve mood, increase productivity, and improve memory.

1. Stick to a sleep schedule: Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends. This will help regulate your body's internal clock and improve the quality of your sleep.
2. Create a sleep-friendly environment: Make sure your bedroom is cool, dark, and quiet. Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask to block out any light, and use earplugs or white noise to block out any noise.
3. Limit screen time before bed: The blue light emitted from electronic devices can interfere with your body's production of melatonin, making it harder to fall asleep. Try to limit screen time at least an hour before bed.
4. Avoid caffeine and alcohol: Caffeine and alcohol can interfere with your sleep quality, so try to avoid them before bed.
5. Practice relaxation techniques: Try practicing relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga before bed. This can help calm your mind and prepare your body for sleep.

Remember, getting enough sleep is essential for your overall health and well-being. By prioritizing your sleep and creating a sleep-friendly environment, you can improve the quality of your sleep and feel more rested and energized throughout the day.

**SLIDE 26-Video (2:39 minutes)**

The next dimension in defining well-being in law is Spiritual. Spiritual is developing a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in all aspects of life.

Meditation can help people relieve stress, anxiety, depression, and pain by utilizing breathing techniques.

Let’s take a look at this video that explains why meditation for lawyers can help lawyers develop a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in all aspects of life. It is relevant for lawyers because it helps lawyers define their spiritual well-being in law.

[Meditation for Lawyers-Lesson from a Military Study](https://youtu.be/O2rCTVAU1Qg?si=x3D3vxPFt3cGmfIa), State Bar of Wisconsin.

Summary: Attorney Mark Metzger spoke on the power of meditation. He discusses how the legal profession can be stressful and how meditation can help. He highlights a study of active-duty combat Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan war zones that demonstrated how meditation can help practitioners under the most stressful situations. The study revealed that the Marines in Group 3 who had 12 minutes of meditation in addition to reliving their stress also had cognitive gain.

**SLIDE 27**

The last dimension in defining well-being in law is Social. Social is developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support network while also contributing to our groups and communities.

1. Join professional organizations: Joining professional organizations related to your legal practice area can help you network with other attorneys and professionals, stay up-to-date on industry news and trends, and contribute to the legal community.
2. Attend CLEs, conferences and events: Attend CLEs, conferences, and events to meet other attorneys and professionals, learn new skills and knowledge, and gain exposure to different perspectives and viewpoints.
3. Participate in mentoring programs: If you are a newly licensed attorney or new to an area of practice, participating in mentoring programs can help you connect with other attorneys, build relationships, and gain valuable insights and advice from experienced professionals.
4. Join online groups and forums: Joining online groups and forums related to your legal practice area can help you connect with other attorneys and professionals, share ideas and resources, and gain support and advice.
5. Volunteer your time: For those of you that have the time, volunteering your time with legal aid organizations or pro bono clinics can help you give back to the community, build relationships with other attorneys and legal professionals, and gain valuable experience.

**SLIDE 28-Poll #3**

Which aspect of well-being do you find most challenging?

1. Physical wellness: nutrition, exercise, sleep hygiene
2. Mental wellness: mindfulness, cognitive strategies, seeking support
3. Work-life integration: setting boundaries, time management

This question is asked to determine which aspect of the well-being dimension is the most challenging to attorneys.

**SLIDE 29-Wellness Plan Handouts**

Thinking back to the hypotheticals you answered, there are a lot of strategies provided to help you develop the dimensions of well-being in law. However, it may be challenging to remember all of the strategies we discussed. A wellness plan is a great resource to help you implement the well-being strategies.

Attorneys, like professionals in many other demanding fields, can greatly benefit from having a wellness plan. A wellness plan can provide attorneys with the tools and strategies to manage stress, support mental health, achieve work-life balance, promote physical well-being, enhance productivity, and prevent burnout. It is an investment in your overall well-being and can contribute to long-term success and satisfaction in the legal profession.

Now, let’s discuss how you can prepare a Wellness Plan to achieve your specific needs.

**SLIDE 30-Wellness Plan handouts**

Have the attendees get the Sample Wellness Plan handout and the Attorney Wellness Plan Template handout.

Let’s review the Sample Wellness Plan which is one of your handouts. It is broken up into 6 categories, but you can create your wellness plan as you see fit. The 6 categories here are the 6 dimensions that we just discussed on how to define attorney well-being: emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, spiritual, and social. Each section is divided into 2 parts, goals and action steps. Let’s look at the first section, Emotional Wellness.

Under goals, it is a broad overview of what you can do for your emotional wellness:

1. Take breaks during the workday to recharge and refocus.
2. Set realistic goals and prioritize tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
3. Set boundaries to avoid burnout.
4. Seek support from colleagues, friends, or a mental health professional if needed.

For the action steps, this will be specific to your personal and professional needs and what you need to do to accomplish the goals listed above.

1. Each hour stop working for a few minutes to rest my eyes, stretch my body, and drink water to rehydrate.
2. Complete a prioritized “to do” list each night for my personal and professional life.
3. Do not work past 8 pm.
4. Talk to colleagues on my team to discuss how to handle the large caseload.

As you can see each section is broken down in the same format.

**SLIDE 31**

Now take the next few minutes to think about your own personalized Wellness Plan. As one of your handouts, there is a Wellness Plan Template. You can use this one, another wellness plan, a goal tracking app, notebook, or whatever works best for you. Let’s start the journey of you preparing your wellness plan. Take the next 2 minutes to come up with just one goal and one action plan that you can start this week.

Give the attendees about 2 minutes to write down one goal and one action plan.

After you have incorporated your first goal and action plan into your schedule, then create another goal and action plan. If you already know what you would like to work on, when you have the time, you can create your Wellness Plan. Keep your Wellness Plan somewhere that is readily accessible to you, so that you can remind yourself of these goals. It’s recommended to update the plan at least every quarter or sooner as you see fit.

**SLIDE 32**

The Path to Lawyer Well-Being is an excellent toolkit with recommendations for legal professionals with respect to substance use disorder, mental health issues, and wellness strategies. Now that we have discussed the well-being challenges in the legal profession, and we discussed the 6 dimensions of well-being-emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, spiritual, and social-let’s discuss the recommendations to reach our potential in the area of well-being.

**SLIDE 33**

The first recommendations are the practical recommendations for all stakeholders:

Facilitate, destigmatize, and encourage help seeking behaviors:

The 2 most common barriers to seeking treatment were not wanting others to find out they needed help and concerns regarding privacy or confidentiality. Removing these barriers requires education, skill building, and stigma-reduction strategies. Having contact with someone who has personally experienced these issues can help.

Foster collegiality and respectful engagement throughout the profession:

Promote civility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), creating mentoring and sponsorship programs. This relates back to social well-being.

Guide and support the transition of older lawyers:

Provide education to detect cognitive decline, develop succession plans, create transition programs to respectfully aid retiring professionals plan for their next chapter. This relates back to intellectual well-being.

De-emphasize alcohol at social events:

Provide a variety of alternative non-alcoholic beverages and consider other types of activities to promote socialization and networking. Have mocktails instead of cocktails, limit drinks to only 2 drinks served by having drink tickets, or do not serve alcohol at all.

A sense of autonomy is considered a basic psychological need that is foundational to well-being and optimal functioning. Research shows that high job demands and a lack of a sense of control breeds depression and other psychological disorders. A few examples of types of practices to review include:

* Excessive workload and controlling management
* Tight deadlines not based on business needs
* Managers making key decisions without consulting other members of the team,
* Managers’ poor time-management habits that result in repeated emergencies and weekend work for junior lawyers and staff,
* Expectations of 24/7 work schedules and prompt response to messages at all times, and
* Extent of discretion that lawyers have in deciding where, when, and how to perform their work.

**SLIDE 34**

Practical recommendations for legal employers include:

* Establish organizational infrastructure to promote well-being-Legal employers should launch a well-being committee or establish a well-being officer and continually assess the state of well-being among attorneys and staff.
* Establish policies & practices to support lawyer well-being.
* Provide training & education on well-being, including during new lawyer orientation. This relates back to occupational well-being.

**SLIDE 35**

Practical recommendations for bar associations include:

Encourage education on well-being topics in coordination and in association with Lawyer Assistance Programs (LAP)

Create educational materials to support individual well-being and “Best Practices” for legal organizations; train staff to be aware of LAP resources and refer members. This relates to occupational well-being.

Sponsor empirical research on lawyer well-being as part of annual member surveys:

Many bar associations conduct member surveys and this is an opportunity for additional research on lawyer well-being and awareness of resources. Bar associations can survey members on well-being topics they would like to see addressed in bar journal articles, bar association events, or Continuing Legal Education (CLE).

Establish a Well-Being committee:

Establish a well-being committee and encourage diverse committee members to get different perspectives on attorney well-being. This relates to social well-being.

**SLIDE 36**

Another recommendation for all stakeholders is to support a lawyer well-being index to measure the profession’s progress. As a foundation for building the well-being index, stakeholders could look to the criteria used in the “Best Places to Work” survey.

Let’s look at a law firm that ranked 18 in *Fortune’s 2023 100 Best Companies to Work For*. This law firm was engaged in many of the activities that are recommended in the ABA’s Practical Recommendations to improve lawyer well-being.

**SLIDE 37**

This law firm is headquartered in San Francisco and as of April 2, 2023 has over 2,300 employees.

* It ranked 18 out of the top 100 companies;
* It celebrated its 10th year as one of the “best places to work”;
* Encouraged employees to unplug for 40 hours each year; and
* Established a Racial Justice Fellowship Program in 2021 where five lawyers can work for a year at full pay within a civil rights, criminal justice reform, or economic equity organization.

**SLIDE 38**

The firm also provided:

* New associates with one-on-one coaching and the mentoring program materials have been revised to support hybrid employees
* 16 affinity groups, including women’s group and LGBTQ+ groups
* Access to mental health services through a third party, where employees and their families can receive 10 sessions a year for free along with premium access to an app for mindfulness and stress management practices.

As you can see, this law firm utilized many of the recommendations from the Path to Lawyer Well-Being that we just discussed. It established organizational infrastructure to promote well-being, established practices to support lawyer well-being, and provided training and education on well-being, including during new employee orientation.

**SLIDE 39**

Although this is an example of what a big law firm has done for its employees, a small to mid-size law firm can also incorporate some of the strategies or similar strategies for its employees.

A small firm practitioner can offer remote or hybrid work schedules to promote work life balance.

For those days that employees have to come into the office, encourage a weekly or monthly healthy potluck lunch gathering.

Let employees know about the well-being resources that are available to them such as the LAP and other resources we will discuss later.

Remind employees to set their boundaries and take time off when needed.

**SLIDE 40**

Now we will discuss the resources available to legal professionals.

**SLIDE 41**

The Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP) helps California attorneys (active, inactive, or disbarred), State Bar applicants, and law students who have issues with substance use and/or mental health, or personal and career concerns. The program enhances public protection and maintains the integrity of the legal profession.

**SLIDE 42**

Confidentiality is absolute unless waived by the participant or it is a mandated reporting by a health care professional such as someone who is a danger to themselves, danger to others, child abuse issues, or elder abuse issues.

The information cannot be disclosed as part of a civil proceeding, disciplinary proceeding, or public records request.

Under the new Rule 8.3 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, there are exceptions to the reporting obligation. Rule 8.3 does not apply to information gained by an attorney while participating in a substance use or mental health program, or information that is protected by confidentiality rules or laws.

**SLIDE 43**

In our short-term services, law students, bar applicants, and attorneys are eligible for:

Two free individual counseling sessions with counselors who specialize in stress, relationship challenges, burnout, grief, and other mental health issues.

Two free career counseling sessions with a counselor for participants who have difficulty finding meaningful work, find their current employment unsatisfying, or who want to better utilize their law degree.

There is no evidence of participation in the short-term programs and all of the sessions are conducted online.

**SLIDE 44**

We also offer a free one-hour online MCLE presentation on competency that satisfies either the prevention and detection competency credit or the wellness competency credit. The presentations are available to law firms, bar associations, organizations, and government agencies, as well as, presentations for law students, bar applicants, and law schools. We also have a toolkit of this presentation if you would like to conduct the presentation yourself.

If you would like to schedule a presentation, there is an online fillable form on the State Bar website for your convenience.

**SLIDE 45**

With the support of licensed clinicians, Monitored LAP will assist participants find online weekly group support sessions, and if needed a therapist and drug testing facilities. The Monitored LAP program will satisfy monitoring or verification requirements related to admission to practice law or discipline. The evidence of the participant’s participation will be documented with the authorization of the participant.

**SLIDE 46**

In the Monitored LAP program, there are licensed mental health clinicians that will assist participants in:

* Conducting a free mental health assessment;
* Sourcing a therapist/counselor that specializes in the participant’s specific needs;
* Finding online weekly group sessions that are convenient and relevant for the participant; and
* Finding lab testing facilities, if needed.

**SLIDE 47**

This is the list of the resources available to legal professionals that deal with substance use disorders, mental health issues, and wellness strategies and it is provided to you as a handout.

[Lawyer Assistance Program Brochure](https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Portals/0/documents/ConsumerInformation/Lawyer-Assistance-Program-Pamphlet.pdf)

[Lawyer Assistance Program Flyer](https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Portals/0/documents/ConsumerInformation/Lawyer-Assistance-Program-Flyer.pdf)

[ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP)](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/compassion_fatigue/)

[The Other Bar](https://otherbar.org/): Recovery program for California law students, bar applicants, attorneys, and judges, hotline: 800-222-0767

[Lawyer Depression Project](https://www.lawyersdepressionproject.org/): Free resource for attorneys, law students, paralegals, and administrative professionals

[988 Suicide and Crisis Prevention Hotline](https://988lifeline.org/)-call or text 988

Your employer may have an Employee Assistance Program you can utilize.

As a member of a bar association or an alumnus of your law school, they may also have resources that deal with these issues.

**SLIDE 48**

The presentation:

* Explained the importance of attorney well-being as an integral aspect of fulfilling the duty of competence;
* Defined the dimensions of well-being in law;
* Provided recommendations for positive change in attorney well-being;
* Discussed and began a wellness plan;
* Analyzed a case study of a law firm as one of the best places to work; and
* Discussed resources available to legal professionals.

**SLIDE 49**

Thank you. Questions?