



24

*individuals responded to the statewide survey.*

- 9 private law firms
- 3 licensed legal aid societies
- 8 bar associations
- 2 law schools

14

*respondents reported implementing at least one wellness program.*

## Audiences Served by Responding Organizations



*18 respondents reported serving lawyers.*



*6 respondents reported serving judges.*



*6 respondents reported serving law students.*



*4 respondents reported serving other legal professionals.*



*4 respondents reported serving other groups.*

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*The Statewide Survey was an online survey distributed by email to 558 recipients. The distribution list included state, local, and specialty bar association leadership, law school wellness contacts, and law firm leaders.*

## Wellness Programs by the Numbers

9

*respondents put on a wellness education program or promoted awareness of the occupational risks of the profession.*

6

*respondents implemented healthy eating and/or exercise support.*

5

*respondents educated lawyers on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, or elimination of bias.*

2

*respondents implemented mentorship programs.*

2

*respondents offered wellness coaching or other one-on-one wellness support.*

2

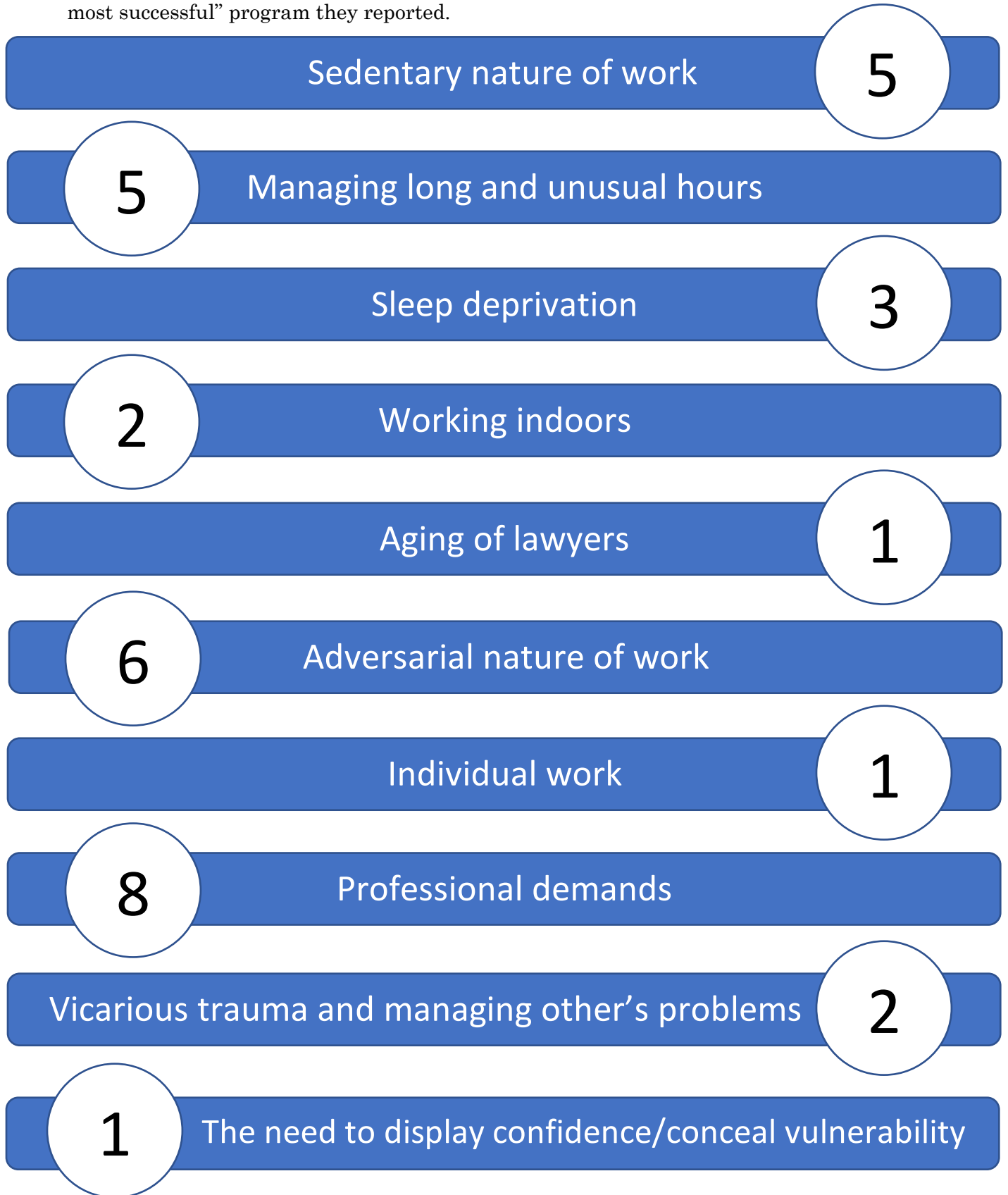
*respondents expanded workplace flexibility to reduce stress on staff.*

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*Survey respondents were asked to describe the two most successful initiatives that the organization has undertaken to improve well-being in the legal profession.*

# Occupational Risks Targeted by the “Most Successful” Wellness Programs

Respondents reported targeting the following Occupational Risks in programs they perceived to be “the most successful.” The figures in the circles below represent the number of respondents that identified the associated Occupational Risk as being targeted by “the most successful” program they reported.





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*Each respondent was asked to report one program under the category of “the most successful,” but some reported more than one program under this heading. Respondents were not limited in the number of Occupational Risks they could select as being targeted by the program. The responses above reflect the number of risks targeted by 19 wellness programs. If an occupational risk identified in the 2019 report does not appear in the chart above that means none of the respondents identified it as a risk addressed by their “most successful” program.*

# Occupational Risks Targeted by Additional Wellness Programs

Respondents reported targeting the following Occupational Risks in the additional wellness programs they implemented and perceived to be “successful.” The figures in the circles below represent the number of respondents that identified the associated Occupational Risk as being targeted by the additional “successful” program they reported.



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*Each respondent was asked to report one additional program as another example of a “successful” wellness initiative, but the respondents were not limited in the number of Occupational Risks they could select as being targeted by the additional program. The responses above reflect the risks targeted by six wellness programs reported under this additional category. If an Occupational Risk identified in the 2019 report does not appear in the chart above that means none of the respondents identified it as a risk addressed by their “most successful” program.*

# Wellness Program Highlights

Of the respondents, 58% had implemented some form of wellness programming. The programming varied widely.

One bar association has implemented a wide-range of wellness programming including, (1) a monthly article on a topic from the Matrix of Occupational Risks to Lawyer Well-Being; (2) negotiating reduced membership rates at a local fitness center for members; (3) offering CLEs on time management; (4) offering mentoring programs; (5) actively promoting DEI programming; and (6) promoting bench-bar relations through networking, educational, and social events. Several other bar associations have taken advantage of the free CLE programming offered by VJLAP.

Law firm programs mentioned by respondents included (1) meditation and yoga classes; (2) firm-wide exercise challenges; (3) stand-up desks; and (4) mentoring programs.

Programming reported by Virginia law schools included: (1) a professional identity formation program that was mandatory for all first-year students; (2) a student organization focused on mindfulness, Mindfulness in Law Society; and (3) a part-time wellness coach on staff to support students.

A legal aid office hosted a speaker at an all-staff meeting on secondary trauma and healthy coping strategies. The same office also hosted a series of discussions on race, diversity, and inclusion.

## Barriers to Program Implementation

Of the organizations that responded, 41% had not implemented programming related to lawyer wellness or well-being. Of the 41% that reported not implementing programming related to lawyer wellness or well-being, several indicated either a lack of interest of individual attorneys and/or the entity in such programs. It is unclear from the survey whether the lack of interest is a lack of awareness about the importance of wellness in the profession, a lack of understanding of wellness initiatives, or whether the organizations have been so inundated with wellness information that they are losing interest.

Another commonly noted barrier to implementing wellness programs was time and financial constraints. At least one respondent noted they would be interested in learning about low- or no-cost wellness programs available for attorneys and staff. Additionally, lack of direction and knowledge was a noted barrier. The task of creating a wellness program can likely seem overwhelming in the beginning.

A respondent from a small firm indicated that lack of anonymity is a barrier for implementing wellness programs. It was noted that discussing many wellness issues in a small setting could be awkward for participants.

## Recommendations

With some level of support from the Virginia State Bar and the wellness coordinator at the Supreme Court of Virginia, and with the right resources, the Committee believes many of the 41% of respondents who have not implemented wellness programs could likely build successful

programs. A toolkit or handbook advising how to implement a program, including low- or no-cost options, could prove very helpful. Additionally, highlighting successful programs could provide motivation and inspiration to firms and bar associations.

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The 2021-22 Special Committee on Lawyer Well-Being distributed the statewide survey, compiled the results, and authored this summary report of the survey findings. The members of the Committee are as follows:

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