

Staying on the Well-Being PATH During COVID-19

Resources for Legal Professionals from the Virginia Lawyers' Wellness Initiative

This is designed to be a self-help resource, which does not replace professional mental health or substance abuse assistance for individuals in crisis. The Virginia Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program remains ready to help 24/7 and is continuing support group meetings virtually. Visit VJLAP's blog, The Beacon, <https://vjlap.org/resources/the-beacon/> for up-to-the-minute support, or call their confidential, free help line at 1.877.545.4682.

Professional: as members of the legal profession, we have the unique opportunity to come together and use our positions to lead our communities through tumultuous times.

- Intentionally maintaining (and building) connections with other members of our profession through bar associations can guard against loneliness by bringing us together virtually while we socially distance. The Conference of Local and Specialty Bar Associations website has more information on how to connect with these useful groups through social media.
- Set better daily habits with Virginia attorney and author Justin Earley (and earn CLE credit!), presenting "The Role of Technology and Habit in the Legal Mental Health Crisis," a new online program from VA CLE and the VLWI provided at no cost through the Attorney Wellness Fund bar dues assessment, vacle.org/sem_wellness-pg237.aspx.

Active: lethargy is a natural response to the fatigue we feel now, and balancing rest with activity is essential for recharging. Finding new ways to stay moving can be key to our internal sense of agency.

- Sticking to a daily routine can help us help combat general uncertainty. If we're working from home, we can replace our "commute" time with a brisk walk outdoors, an indoor dance session, or anything else that gets our hearts pumping early in the day.
- Sharpening our brains through mindfulness can strengthen our resiliency and ability to recover from stress. Try out a variety of meditation and yoga practice videos in billable hour increments designed by Virginia attorney and yoga instructor Amy Pruet, @ABUNDITUDE.

Thoughtful: we will all need different things to get through this crisis. Figuring out what that looks like for each of us can be hard in such a novel, unsettling situation, and will require deep introspection.

- Limiting our exposure to news and social media can be crucial to guarding against panic spirals. Acknowledge the history of this moment and stay informed in manageable doses. Test out one of these 7 science-based strategies to help our brains deal with COVID-19, bit.ly/7strategy.
- Learn "How to Identify and Get Help Managing Stress and Anxiety" with VJLAP's new Deputy Clinical Director Barbara Mardigian in a new, no-cost online CLE from VA CLE and the VLWI, vacle.org/sem_wellness-pg237.aspx.

Helpful: many of us are struggling with new feelings of hopelessness stemming from lack of control over the pandemic situation. We cannot fix everything, but we can focus on problem-solving and addressing those issues that we can influence.

- Help ourselves first! Self-care is critical during a public health crisis, and we will not be able to assist others if we cannot tend to our own needs, which may be understandably different right now. Being flexible and forgiving with ourselves and others is imperative.
- Connecting to something greater than ourselves during times of tumult can be beneficial to our sense of stability and shared humanity. Pro bono service is a great way to do this, and remote opportunities exist through the VSB and VBA.

For more well-being resources, visit the VLWI website, <https://perma.cc/4NLA-X445>. Contact Margaret Hannapel Ogden, Wellness Coordinator, mogden@vacourts.gov, with any questions or if your organization would like to co-sponsor a CLE program.