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# Competency



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Lawyers, Substance  
Use Disorders and  
Wellbeing

# Competency: SUD and Wellbeing

Lawyer Vulnerability

How problems arise

Solutions

Tools

Resources

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# The American Bar Association & Hazelden-Betty Ford Foundation Study

**Pool:** 12,825 licensed, employed attorneys & judges

- Males = 53.4% Females = 46.5%
- Transgender = .1%
- Asian 1.2%
- Black/African American 2.5%
- Caucasian/White 90.9%
- Latino/Hispanic 2.6%
- Native American .3%
- Other .7%

# Substance use in the past 12 months

- Alcohol 10,874 (84.1)
- Tobacco 2,163 (16.9)
- Sedatives 2,015 (15.7)
- Marijuana 1,307 (10.2)
- Opioids 722 (5.6)
- Stimulants 612 (4.8)
- Cocaine 107 (0.8)

**The Study** - the most comprehensive national research to date - reported that:

- **21%** of licensed, employed lawyers qualify as problem drinkers;
- **28%** struggle with some level of depression;
- **19%** demonstrate symptoms of anxiety.

**The Study also found:**

Attorneys in the first 10 years of practice exhibit the highest incidence of these problems (**31%**).

As longevity in the practice of law increases, dependency numbers go down.

## **Conclusions:**

Attorneys experience problematic drinking that is hazardous, harmful, or otherwise consistent with alcohol use disorders at a higher rate than other professional populations.



# **How Problems Arise:**

Sometimes Slowly, Sometimes Quickly

Personality Type

Unavoidable Stress

Too Much Time "At The Office"

Nature of the Job

Culture

# **Here are some signs and symptoms to watch for:**

- A person's behavior changes, they start coming in late to the office or leaving early;
- Work product changes; decreased production or the quality of work suffers;
- They isolate, stop attending work-related functions or communicating with colleagues;
- They have noticeable mood changes with irritability or apathy;



- Appearance changes; weight gain or loss;
- Lack of attention to clothing and hygiene needs;
- In later stages of problems with alcohol they may come to work smelling of alcohol;
- When asked if there are problems, they avoid the question or insist nothing has changed;

- Not prepared for hearings or trials;
- Always need continuances;
- Late for appointments;
- Calling in sick;
- Not returning phone calls;
- Lying about completing work;
- Client complaints;
- Bar complaints.



# Some Definitions:

**Alcoholism:** Continuing to drink alcohol despite adverse consequences around drinking.

**Drug Addiction:** Continuing to use drugs, prescription or street, despite adverse consequences around their use.

**Compulsive Gambling:** continuing to gamble despite adverse consequences around gambling.

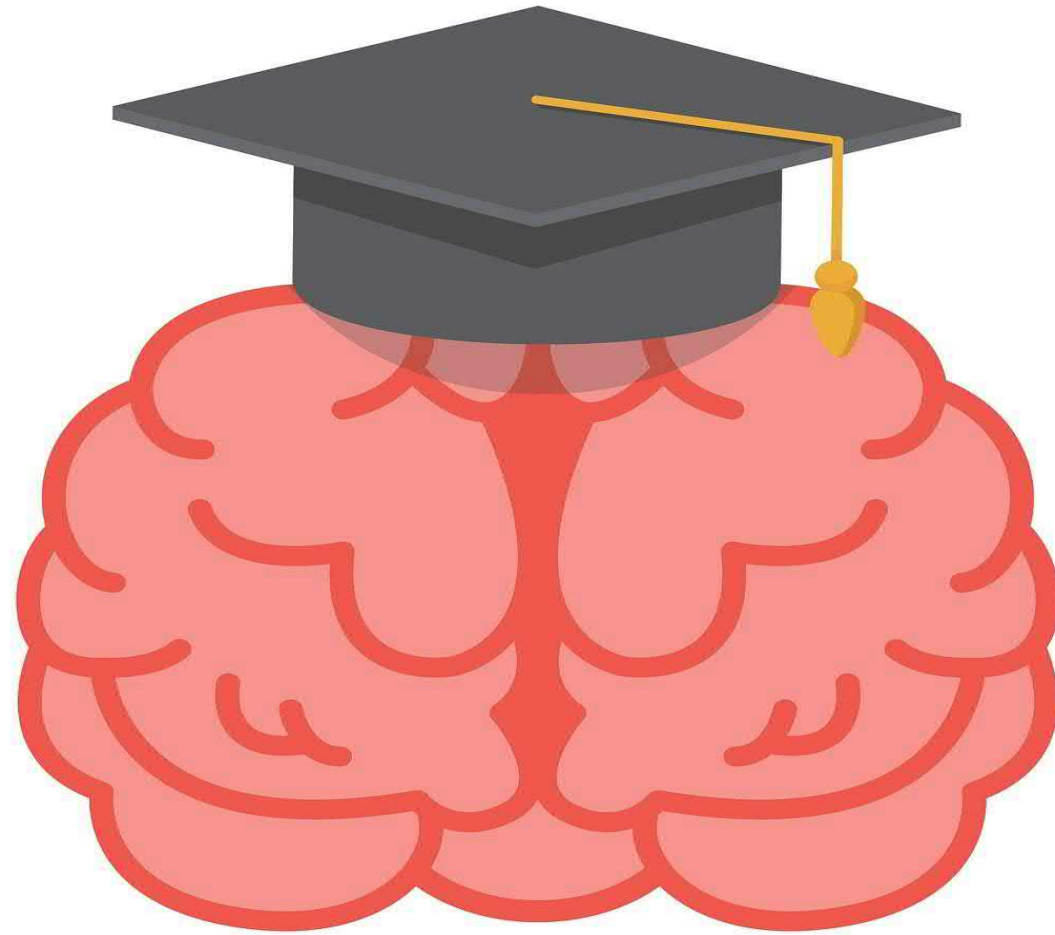
# Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Have you ever felt you needed to **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt **G**uilty about drinking?
4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning - **E**ye-opener- to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

***Addiction is a complex but treatable disease that affects brain function and behavior.***



# Introducing your Brain



# Brain Chemistry

- We have the ability to feel good naturally via our brain's pleasure center
- Down-Regulation
- Over time the brain will up-regulate and create new pathways for what we want to experience

# Recovery from Addiction is:

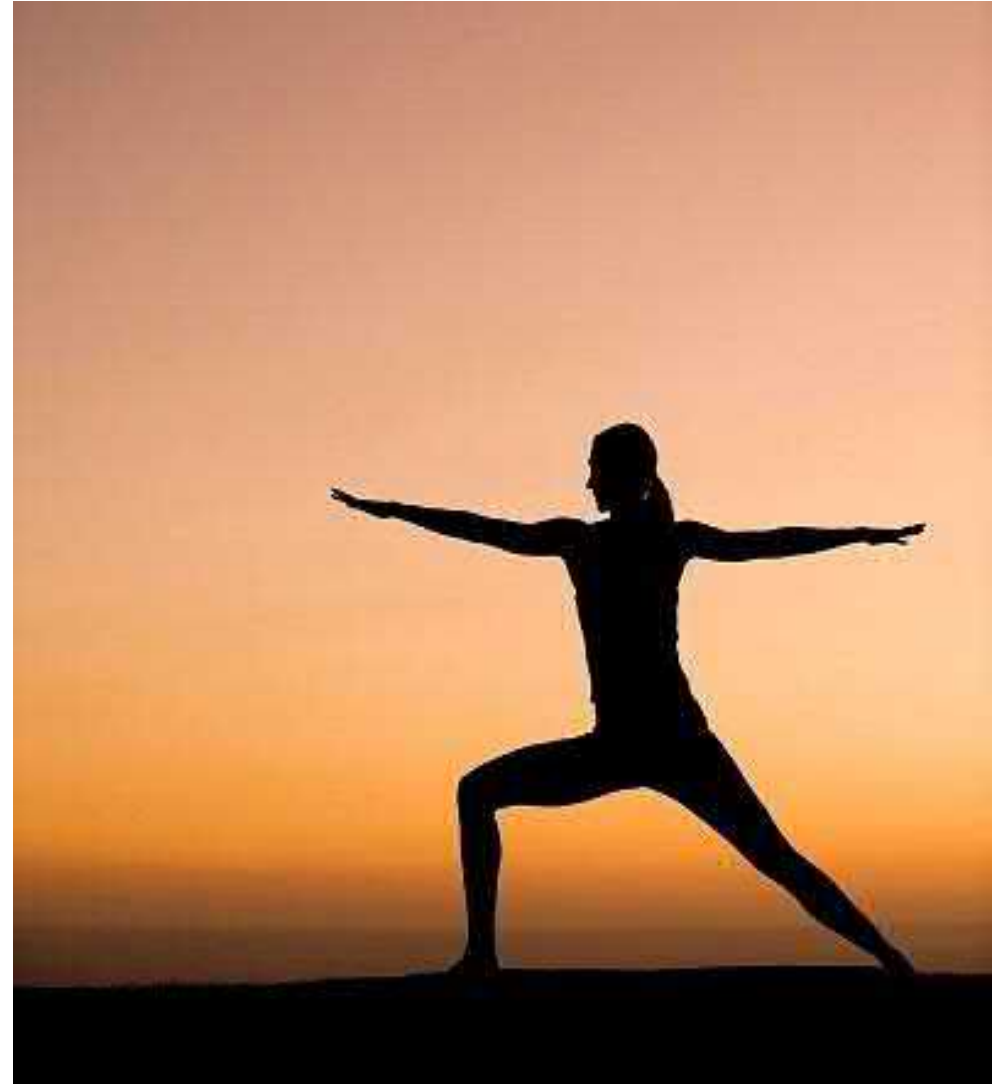
- Physical
- Emotional/Psychological
- Social
- Spiritual





# Physical Healing

- Medically Supervised Withdrawal
- Brain Health
- Attention to diet and exercise



# Emotional/Psychological Healing

*Treating Cause - Adjusting Thinking*

12-Step Model

Therapeutic Approach

- Behavioral therapy
- Cognitive therapy
- Humanistic therapy
- Integrative or holistic therapy



# Changing Socialization Techniques

Where you spend your time

With whom you spend your time

Relationships

Community

Accountability



# Spiritual Practice

Do what you are supposed to do

Be where you are supposed to be

Be honest

Have an open mind

Be willing

Meditation, visualization, mindfulness



# Creating Community

- The Other Bar
- Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous
- Rational Recovery
- Religious Institutions
- Meet Ups



# Lawyer Assistance Program Services:

The State Bar of California

**Assessment**

**Monitoring**

**Support**

**Contact:**      Want to know more? Your call or email is confidential.

Michelle Harmon

Lawyer Assistance Program

877-LAP-4HELP / 877-527-4435

Email: [LAP@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:LAP@calbar.ca.gov)

# Resources

- [www.otherbar.org/resources/](http://www.otherbar.org/resources/)
  - click on resources
- <https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Attorney-Regulation/Lawyer-Assistance-Program>
- [www.publichealth.org/resources/addiction/](http://www.publichealth.org/resources/addiction/)
- [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)
- [www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment)
- [www.drugabuse.gov/](http://www.drugabuse.gov/)
- [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)