EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY LAWYERING: HOW TO DISAGREE WITHOUT BEING DISAGREEABLE

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Being a Lawyer is Not Easy…

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CAREERS

Law is the most stressful profession, newspaper's analysis finds

BY DEBRA CASSENS WEISS

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The most stressful occupation in the United States is being a lawyer, according to an analysis by the Washington Post of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Washington Post looked at a subset of well-being data collected in four American Time Use Surveys between 2010 and 2021. The surveys asked respondents how meaningful their activities were or how happy, sad, stressed, pained and tired they felt on a six-point scale.

Lawyers were the most stressed,

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STRESSORS

- We live and work in a culture that generates STRESS AND MORE STRESS.
- These include:
  - The adversarial system
  - Client disputes
  - The fear of malpractice
  - Unrealistic client expectations
  - Inconsistent judges
  - Abusive opposing counsel
  - Family problems
  - Debt
  - WHAT ELSE ?

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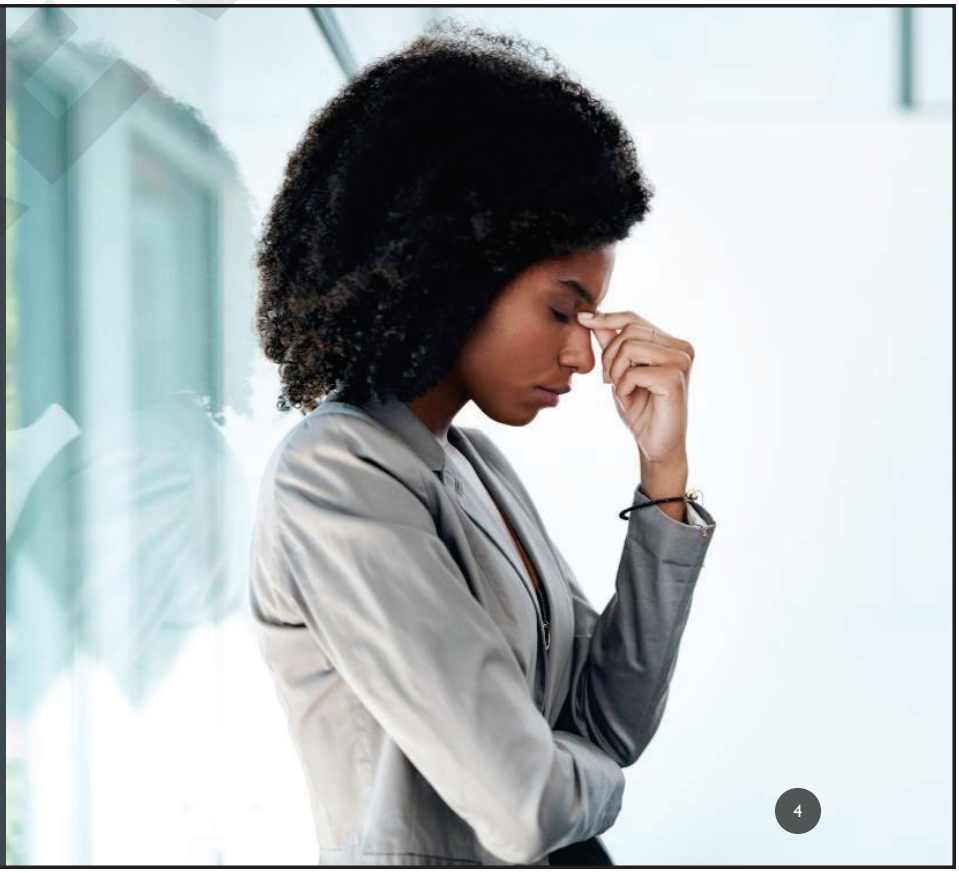
UNDER HIGH STRESS LEGAL PROFESSIONALS LOSE:

- Flexibility in thinking
  - Challenge all-or-nothing thoughts
  - Think about alternatives
- Empathy for others; ability to attune to another person
- Ability to let go of fears or interrupt worry thoughts



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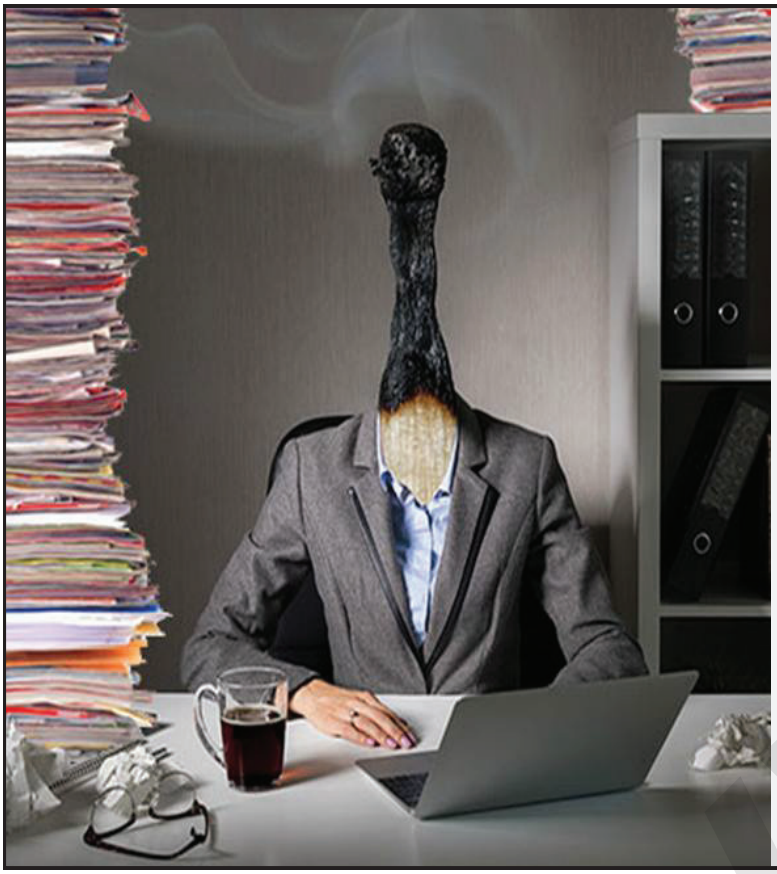

A PROBLEM FOR LAWYERS

- Lawyer Depression – 4X More than General Population
- One of the Highest Suicide Rates of any Profession
- Third Major Cause of Death for Lawyers- Suicide

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LAWYER WELL-BEING

Lawyers have much high rates of addiction and mental health issues:

- 20.6% of lawyers have a substance use disorder
- 9% of lawyers are addicted to prescription drugs
- 28% of lawyers struggle with mild to severe depression
- Alcohol and prescription drugs most abused
- 75% skipped questions about illegal drug use

(Ford Foundation and ABA Study; Krill, et al, 2016)

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Title search: Emotionally Healthy Lawyering: How to Disagree without being Disagreeable

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