

Judicial Wellness Committee Purpose

The Judicial Wellness Committee seeks to foster a sense of community and care among the New York State judiciary and to provide confidential assistance to impaired judges. Committee membership is limited to judges only. Recognizing that all judges are affected by the day to day stress of their work, the Committee shall encourage and assist regional groups of judges to develop education and outreach programs for their colleagues. These groups will seek to foster mutual support among its members and to promote the concept of judicial wellness.

In furtherance of its purpose, the Committee shall also, among other things, formulate and recommend policies and procedures to assist judges in dealing with treatable mental illnesses such as addiction and depression. Through its programs and conferences, it will assist judges in the identification of these impairments in themselves and others, and promote the rehabilitation of themselves and their colleagues in an environment of care and concern.

• Wellness

Using a roundtable format, the purpose of wellness meetings is to create opportunities for judges to discuss and improve their life through sharing their experience and coming together to provide support and connect with each other. The belief is that "judges helping judges" is essential.

• Assistance

In addition to general "wellness" efforts we also provide specialized help for members of the judiciary. As an important component of the Judicial Wellness Committee, judicial assistance is available to judges who are affected by alcoholism, drug abuse, stress, depression or other mental health issues. Available services include:

- > Assessment, evaluation and development of an appropriate treatment plan
- > Referrals for appropriate treatment and support
- > Access to supportive judges who have faced and persisted through their own difficulties
- > Information and consultation for those concerned about a judge
- > Educational programs on recognizing, preventing, and dealing with mental health issues

For Confidential Assistance Contact:

NYSBA Lawyer Assistance and
Judicial Wellness Program
1.800.255.0569

Eileen Travis, Director 212.302.5787
New York City Bar Association LAP

Elizabeth Eckhardt, Director 888.408.6222
Nassau County Bar Association LAP

Judges who practice wellness are rewarded with a better professional and personal quality of life.



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Free, Confidential Help for the Problems Judges Face

*drinking problems
gambling
stress
drug abuse
mental health issues
depression*



JUDICIAL WELLNESS
AND ASSISTANCE

1.800.255.0569



Personal Inventory

Personal problems such as addiction and mental health concerns affect a judge's ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the bench.

Review the following questions. If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, you may benefit by calling us.

1. Are others saying that my behavior has changed or that I seem different?
2. Is it difficult for me to maintain a routine and stay on top of responsibilities?
3. Have I experienced memory problems or an inability to concentrate?
4. Am I having difficulty managing emotions such as anger and sadness?
5. Have I missed time on the bench or am I unable to meet my work obligations?
6. Have my sleeping and/or eating habits changed?
7. Am I experiencing a pattern of relationship problems?
8. Does my family have a history of addiction or mental health problems?
9. Do I drink or take drugs to deal with my problems?
10. Recently, have I had more drinks/drugs than planned, or felt that I should stop, but couldn't?
11. Is gambling making me careless of my financial responsibilities?
12. Do I feel so stressed, burned out or depressed that I have thoughts of suicide?

Stress:

- Causes fatigue, changes in appetite, headaches and sleep problems.
- Can lead to serious physical and psychological problems.
- Is linked to alcoholism, substance abuse, and depression.
- There are many positive ways to deal with stress.

Addiction and Alcoholism:

- Alcoholism and drug abuse are treatable.
- Addiction is a progressive disease; without treatment it gets worse.
- Prescription drug abuse happens whenever drugs are used in ways other than prescribed.

Depression:

- Is a serious illness that interferes with one's ability to function normally.
- Symptoms include sadness, irritability, loss of concentration, physical problems and an inability to enjoy life.
- Depression is treatable.

Suicide:

- Stress and mental health problems are among the many reasons one may have thoughts of suicide. Call **1.800.273.8255** if you or someone you know is suicidal.

Doing Nothing is Not an Option:

The high demands of meeting judicial obligations may put judges at risk for mental health problems. The signs of addiction, depression, and other illnesses can often be overlooked by busy judges. If left untreated, these mental health issues can lead to devastating professional and personal consequences leaving careers hanging in the balance.

It isn't easy asking for help but the Judicial Wellness and Assistance Program is dedicated to offering guidance when concerns arise. Experienced mental health professionals provide assessment, referrals and support. For over 25 years we've helped judges with issues related to addiction and mental illness with compassion and competence. Above all, we've made confidentiality our first priority. Doing nothing is not an option for judges; the risks are simply too great. Call for a consult today 800.255.0569.

*resources
referrals hope
support help
compassion*