

Signs of Law Student Impairment

Even just one of these signs may indicate a problem:

Attendance:

- Regularly arrives late and/or leaves class early
- Fails to keep scheduled appointments
- Has frequent absences

Academic Performance:

- Procrastinates, regularly misses deadlines
- Exhibits decline in productivity/number of hours studying or preparing for class
- Exhibits decline (often gradual) in overall quality of work
- Overreacts to criticism, shifts blame to others
- Is unable to get along with and/or withdraws from fellow students
- Performs progressively less well as the day goes on
- Is subject of classmate complaints about performance, and poor communication
- Appears under the influence and/or smells of alcohol in the classroom or for study groups

Personal Behavior:

- Displays gradual deterioration of personal appearance, hygiene and/or health
- Loses control at social gatherings, even where professional decorum is expected
- Manages finances poorly
- Is arrested for driving under the influence, drunk in public, or possession of illegal substances
- Displays pattern of family/interpersonal crises and withdrawals from friends and classmates
- Displays pattern of mood swings or unpredictable emotional reactions

You are not alone, LHL can help law students who are dealing with:

- Alcohol/Substance Abuse
- Addiction
- Stress
- Depression
- Compulsive Behaviors

Our Services Include:

- Assessment
- Referral to professional therapists
- Referral to treatment programs
- Support groups
- Peer support from trained LHL volunteers
- Intervention services

Help is...

Confidential...

Non-Disciplinary...

Free.

Answers for Law Students



Lawyers Helping Lawyers

Contact Us:

600 E. Main Street, Suite 2035
Richmond, VA 23219

804-644-3212
Fax: 804-644-5510

Jim Leffler
Executive Director
Jim@valhl.org

www.valhl.org

24 Hour Helpline
1-877-545-4682



Lawyers Helping Lawyers (LHL) is Virginia's lawyer assistance program. With funding from the State bar, the Virginia Bar Association, and other bar-related sources, LHL provides confidential assistance to law students, lawyers and judges confronting problems with alcoholism, substance abuse or other mental health issues.

Why should I care?

There may come a day when you or a colleague need LHL's help.

- . Lawyers are two times more likely than the general population to encounter problems with substance abuse.
- . 33% of lawyers suffer from significant mental health issues at some point in their careers.
- . 37% of lawyers suffer from depression at some point while practicing law.

Can LHL help me gain admission to the bar?

Many law students feel concerned that problems in their past may be of concern when they seek admission to the bar upon graduation from law school. Students worry that having received counseling or treatment for mental-health issues may impact their bar admission situation. Similarly, students who have ever been criminally sanctioned for things like driving under the influence understandably feel concerned about how they will fare before the Board of Bar Examiners Character and Fitness Committee. Lawyers Helping Lawyers can be of assistance. In fact, seeking help from LHL, whether for a current substance abuse or mental health issue or for assistance in dealing with a past legal infraction, can help the law student create a positive record of mature and responsibility behavior in the face of situations that might otherwise seem to create obstacles to bar admissions.

How does LHL help law students and others in Virginia?

- . **CONFIDENTIALLY** assists attorneys, judges, law students, and other legal professionals who may be impaired in their ability to function in a legal setting.
- . Provides free evaluation, assessment and referral services, peer support, and monitoring services.
- . Provides preventive services through educational outreach programs to the judiciary, law schools, law firms, bar associations, bar seminars, and other professional entities.
- . Maintains a listing of resources, programs, and health care providers competent to work with law students and other legal professionals.

What if I am going to practice in a state other than Virginia?

All states have lawyer assistance programs. Call your state's bar.

How can I find help for myself or a friend during law school?

If you would like to be put in touch with a student who has personal experience with LHL-type issues, contact Jim Leffler 804-644-3212. For example, an LHL student representative can meet with you to discuss stress or help you find a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or another relevant organization.

Important Resources:

- . www.abanet.org/legalservices/colap
- . www.valhl.org
- . www.aa.org
- . www.al-anon-alateen.org
- . www.lawyerswithdepression.com
- . www.sa.org
- . www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

“Remember, you are not your grades. In fact, you are many things (good things!) in addition to being a law student. Do not lose sight of your multidimensional self.”

*~Susan Grover
William & Mary Law Professor*