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## OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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## OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

# *IN SIGHT* for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## Welcome, Kyra!

The OAAP is pleased to announce that Kyra Hazilla, JD, MSW, is joining the OAAP as an attorney counselor beginning May 1, 2014.

Kyra earned her law degree and master's in social work from the University of Michigan in 2006. She has extensive experience in both arenas, including over five years at Metropolitan Public Defender Services, Inc. and many years volunteering then working at West Women's and Children's Shelter. Her legal and social work experience also include Federal Public Defender, Juvenile Rights Project, The Family Assessment Clinic, and the Portland Children's Intervention Project. She is the 2009 recipient of the Oregon State Bar Juvenile Section Advocacy Award.

Kyra was raised by a family member in recovery. She enjoys her family, friendships, hiking, cooking, and competitive obedience and agility training for dogs.

Kyra will join our three OAAP attorney counselors, Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD; Mike Long JD, MSW, CEAP; and Douglas S. Querin, JD, LPC, CADC I, assisting lawyers, judges, law firms, and law-related organizations throughout the state with issues related to mental health, recovery, stress management, career satisfaction, and resilience building.



## Open House – Save the Date!

Please join us on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, at the OAAP,  
520 SW Yamhill Street, Suite 1050, Portland, Oregon, 97204, from  
4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to meet our new attorney counselor and celebrate  
the OAAP's more than 30 years of providing free and completely  
confidential assistance to the legal community of Oregon.

## Practice Management Advisor Position Available

See page 2 for details.

## A PREVENTABLE TRAGEDY

Suicide is hard to talk about. It's hard to even think about. If someone we know tells us that he or she has suicidal thoughts, ideas, or intentions, we may feel overwhelmed. We often don't know what to do or say. Much of our personal reluctance to talk about this topic, as well as the challenges we face when confronted with the potential crisis of another person, is in large part because of the silence that often surrounds suicide.

### Suicide and the Legal Profession

As lawyers, we are at markedly greater risk of suicide than most people; we rank high on the list of at-risk professions. Some of the primary risk factors for suicide include depression, anxiety, chronic stress, and substance abuse – all conditions that lawyers tend to experience at a higher rate than the general population. Additionally, we are more likely to be perfectionists and competitive – personality characteristics that can make us less likely to seek the help we need. The good news, however, is that those same traits make us good at what we do and can also serve as invaluable resources in treating the conditions that tend to contribute to suicide.

As a profession with an elevated risk of suicide, we must become willing to openly discuss the topic, acknowledging the vulnerability of our profession and the availability of effective treatments for depression and other mental health and substance abuse conditions that put us at risk. Only by open discussions can we reduce the stigma and shame often associated with

## Practice Management Advisor Position Available

The Professional Liability Fund (PLF) is hiring a fourth practice management advisor to join our PMA team of Beverly Michaelis, Dee Crocker and Sheila Blackford. For information about the position, go to [www.osbplf.org](http://www.osbplf.org) and click on News under the News and Information section on the home page. More information about PLF Practice Management services is also available on the website.

these conditions, especially if we are to encourage those needing assistance to seek it.

### Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors

Thoughts of suicide often occur during times of personal crisis, unrelenting stress, depression, or when we are confronted with a fear of failure or the prospect of what appears to be an unacceptable loss. Generally, the longer these conditions exist, the greater the risk that suicide may seem a viable option.

While a suicide attempt may occasionally be an impulsive act, most often people will have thought about it for days, weeks, months, or even years before they finally resolve to take action. They have gradually come to a point of helplessness and hopelessness, where suicide seems the only solution. Although the clues might be subtle, most people do, in fact, communicate their intentions before they act. These clues can be verbal or behavioral, direct, or indirect. Becoming aware of the primary risk factors and warning signs is crucial to identifying and helping a colleague in crisis.

### Risk Factors

Many factors, and combinations of factors, contribute to the risk of suicide. They include:

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Depression and anxiety
- Alcohol or other substance abuse
- History of trauma or abuse
- Feelings of helplessness/hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Isolation/lack of social support
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- Major physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods (e.g., firearms, prescription medications)

Lawyers in crisis can be reluctant to seek the help they need. We often consider ourselves to be the helper and the expert; the one others turn to for assistance.

Along with the tendency of many in our profession to isolate, particularly when distressed, we try to go it alone. To seek support can feel like a weakness; those who could be of most help – our families, partners, colleagues, and health professionals – are frequently not considered resources to whom we can turn when in crisis. In truth, asking for help and accessing needed treatment are really acts of courage; admitting one's struggle to another person is really a sign of strength.

### Warning Signs

The emotional crisis that usually precedes suicide is often recognizable. The warning signs include:

#### Thinking or talking about things like:

- Wanting to die
- Feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Feeling like a burden to others and/or that others would be better off without them

#### Behaviors suggestive of suicidal intent:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Being anxious, agitated, or reckless
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing from usual activities
- Isolation from others
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

*The following warning signs demand immediate attention:*

- Threats to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Talking or writing about suicide or death, especially when these actions are out of character for the person
- Obtaining or looking for ways to kill oneself
- Giving away prized possessions and other personal belongings or putting affairs in order

### Resources

OAAP Attorney Counselors – 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-OAAP (6227)

Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges – 503-226-7150

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Lawyers with Depression –  
[www.lawyerswithdepression.com](http://www.lawyerswithdepression.com)

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education –  
[www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

Dave Nee Foundation –  
[www.daveneefoundation.com](http://www.daveneefoundation.com)

Suicide.org – [www.suicide.org](http://www.suicide.org)

QPR Institute for Suicide Prevention –  
<https://www.qprinstitute.com/>

Oregon County Crisis Lines & Mental Health Resources – <http://public.health.oregon.gov/preventionwellness/safeliving/suicideprevention/pages/cntymap.aspx>

Lines for Life - Formerly Oregon Partnership –  
<http://www.linesforlife.org/>

### How You Can Help

When worried about a colleague's depression or other conditions that increase the risk of suicide, it is important to realize that he or she may need to talk with someone, but is paralyzed by inertia, exhaustion, or confused thinking and cannot reach out for assistance. This is the time to set aside social niceties and calmly, compassionately, and firmly show concern and offer help.

#### Things to Do:

- Start by expressing your concern for the person.
- Be direct and ask if he or she is depressed.
- Ask if the person is thinking of harming himself/herself.
- If so, ask if the person has formulated a particular suicide plan or method.

*(Continued on page 4)*

- Be willing to listen, without judgment.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help; you may need to make the call for the person or take him or her to a professional.
- Continue to support the person after the initial contact.
- Seek support. Call the OAAP or a suicide life-line if you have any questions about what to do or how to help. (See the sidebar for resources.)

#### Things to Not Do:

- Don't be afraid to ask whether the person is considering suicide and has a particular plan or method in mind.
- Don't attempt to argue someone out of suicide; rather, let the person know that you care, that he or she is not alone, and that depression can be treated.

### OAAP and OWLS Present the Seventh Annual Women's Wellness Retreat for Lawyers May 2-3, 2014



The OAAP and OWLS are pleased to offer the seventh annual Women's Wellness Retreat for Lawyers on Friday and Saturday, May 2-3, 2014. This year's theme is "Mindfulness: Navigating Life and Law." Qualifies for 2 MCLE Personal Management Assistance credits.

A block of rooms is reserved for attendees at a special discounted room rate at The Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton, Oregon. The deadline to reserve rooms at the discounted rate is April 15, 2014. Reserve online at <http://bit.ly/huSkjM> using group code OAAP or call 503-874-2500.

To register for the retreat, download the registration form at [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org), or call the OAAP program assistant at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227, ext. 10. The deadline to register is Wednesday, April 30, 2014. For more information, contact Shari R. Gregory at ext. 14 or [sharig@oaap.org](mailto:sharig@oaap.org).

- Don't be sworn to secrecy.
- Don't leave the person alone.

### Resilience

While suicide warning signs need to be acted on quickly and treated professionally, there are things we can all do to build our own resilience in a demanding and stressful profession. Research over the last quarter century has clearly demonstrated that certain actions and attitudes can, with time, serve to buffer lawyers and others from many of the conditions that contribute to suicidal thinking. Below are some suggestions that can be effective.

- Cultivate close relationships with your family, friends, and colleagues.
- Develop a positive view of yourself.
- Have confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Become aware of negative thought patterns and practice reframing them to positive ones.
- Learn healthy ways to express strong feelings.
- Develop good problem-solving and communication skills.
- Distinguish between what you can control (what you think, say, and do) and what you cannot (other people, specific outcomes).
- Seek help and resources, when necessary.
- See yourself as resilient, rather than as a victim.
- Deal with stress in healthy and balanced ways; avoid harmful coping strategies, such as substance abuse, isolation, and unhealthy acting-out behaviors.

### Alcohol Awareness Month

April is "Alcohol Awareness Month." April 10, 2014, marks the annual observance of National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD). This year's theme is "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow."

If you suspect that you might have a drinking problem, or if you are concerned about someone else's drinking, call the OAAP at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227 and ask to speak to an OAAP attorney counselor.

- Be available to help others.
- Find positive meaning in life despite difficult or traumatic events.
- Practice good self-care.

(See the article, “Bouncing Back – A Short Guide to Resilience,” page 6.)

### Conclusion

Suicide will always be hard to talk about. It will always be hard to even think about. By learning about suicide risk factors and warning signs, we equip ourselves with the tools we need to effectively identify and help our colleagues, and ourselves, in crisis.

Suicide is preventable. The conditions that cause it are treatable. The first step in preventing it is to talk openly about it. Our profession deserves it and our colleagues deserve it.

DOUGLAS S. QUERIN, JD, LPC, CADC I  
ATTORNEY COUNSELOR  
OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

***If you or someone you know is depressed or considering suicide, call the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-OAAP (6227). OAAP assistance is free and completely confidential.***

### Grief and Loss Support Group

The OAAP is offering a six-week evening support group for lawyers who are working through the grieving process. This confidential group will focus on grief, life after losing a loved one, healing, and resilience, and will be co-facilitated by Michael Kahn, JD, LPC, and Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD, OAAP Attorney Counselor.

The group will begin in April and will meet at the OAAP in Portland on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Participants may be able to meet by phone or Skype. The cost of the group is \$150. Preregistration is required as space is limited.

For more information, or to register for the group, contact Shari R. Gregory at sharig@oaap.org or at 503-226-1057/1-800-321-OAAP, ext 14.

### A JUDGE REACHED OUT TO HELP

I was referred to the attorney assistance program by a judge who noticed that I was having trouble keeping up with a particular case. I had missed a couple of court dates and was having difficulty turning in motions on a timely basis. The particular situation that led to the referral was a panic attack that occurred at the end of a hearing. On a personal level, I was experiencing a tremendous amount of emotional stress due to family difficulties. I was also feeling very depressed. I thought I had everything under control and was surprised when the judge suggested I contact the assistance program.

I'm very grateful that someone cared enough about me to suggest that I seek assistance. I truly believe it saved my legal career. Although I was apprehensive about my first visit, I also felt a sense of relief, in that I felt like I was finally addressing a hidden problem. The initial meeting went well, and it was suggested that I attend a weekly support group meeting.

My life began to turn around the moment I attended my first meeting. I cannot tell you the relief I felt when I saw that I wasn't alone. What was particularly helpful was that all of the attendees were in the legal profession, so they understood the particular stresses that I was under; that is, balancing a challenging professional career and stressful family and personal matters.

Each meeting had a life of its own. Sometimes we focused on career concerns, and other meetings were more personal in nature. I really appreciated the confidential nature of the meetings and that we could freely share our concerns in a group session. Our facilitator was great in that he not only listened, but you could tell he also cared. Listening to other members share their concerns and having them give input on my circumstance was particularly helpful. The group meetings were a “safe” place where I could open up without fear of judgment. The primary objective was to give us coping tools to handle the difficult situations that life throws at all of us, as well as build our confidence so that we could become productive members of the legal community.

I no longer attend the group sessions on a weekly basis, but I do check in from time to time. It's good to know that when I am feeling stressed, or when I am dealing with a difficult family or work-related matter, I have a place to go to where I am treated with respect and

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loving kindness. It's sort of like a home to me, but not a dysfunctional one. We are all striving to be our best, and at the assistance program I've found the encouragement and the "I can do it" support system that was lacking in my private life.

I also have a peer mentor, which is someone in the legal profession who you meet with to discuss professional and other matters. After one meeting with my peer support person, I was so motivated. All of my fears about having participated with an attorney assistance program, along with fears that there might be a stigma to that, melted away.

I'm more optimistic about the legal profession than I've been in years. I actually love my job and have started to move forward in a positive direction. I would strongly recommend the assistance program to anyone. Having someone take the time to encourage me to seek assistance was one of the most positive things I've had happen to me. It's good to know that there are people out there who care about others. I'm also grateful for my peer mentor who is pointing me in the right direction as I rebuild my career. And most important, I'm grateful to our group facilitator for giving me positive tools for handling stressful situations and to my fellow group members for their love and support.

*Reprinted with permission from "Stories of Recovery," published by the Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program.*

The OAAP can help. Call us at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227.

## 26th Annual Dinner Celebrating Recovery

Please join the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program on Friday, April 25, 2014, at the 26th Annual Dinner Celebrating Recovery for lawyers and judges at The Governor Hotel (now The Sentinel Hotel) in downtown Portland, from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

For a registration form or more information, call the OAAP at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227. The deadline to RSVP is Wednesday, April 23, 2014. Dinner is \$35 per person.

## BOUNCING BACK – A SHORT GUIDE TO RESILIENCE

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that anyone can learn and develop.

Several factors are associated with resilience:

- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out.
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Skills in communication and problem solving.
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.

### Strategies for Building Resilience

Consider the following ways to build resilience in developing your personal strategy.

**Make connections.** Good relationships with others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in their communities provides social support. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

**Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.

**Accept that change is a part of living.** Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

**Move toward your goals.** Do something regularly – even if it seems like a small accomplishment – that en-

ables you to move toward your goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, “What’s one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?”

**Take decisive actions.** Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

**Look for opportunities for self-discovery.** People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggles. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and heightened appreciation for life.

**Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

**Keep things in perspective.** Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.

**Maintain a hopeful outlook.** An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Practice visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

**Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

**Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.** For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

### Some Questions to Ask Yourself

- What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
  - How have those events typically affected me?
  - Have I found it helpful to think of important people in my life when I am distressed?
  - To whom have I reached out for support in working through a traumatic or stressful experience?
  - What have I learned about myself and my interactions with others during difficult times?

- Has it been helpful for me to assist someone else going through a similar experience?
- Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
- What has helped make me feel more hopeful about the future?

### Staying Flexible

Resilience involves maintaining flexibility and balance in your life as you deal with stressful circumstances and traumatic events. This happens in several ways:

- Letting yourself experience strong emotions, and also realizing when you may need to avoid experiencing them at times in order to continue functioning.
- Stepping forward and taking action to deal with your problems and meet the demands of daily living, and also stepping back to rest and reenergize yourself.
- Spending time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement, and also nurturing yourself.
- Relying on others, and also relying on yourself.

The OAAP can help you build your resilience. Contact us at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227.

*Source: American Psychological Association ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)).*

## Do You Know Someone Who Is Going Through the Disciplinary Process?

Dealing with a discipline complaint can be an extremely difficult, stressful, and isolating experience. From Tuesday, April 22 through May 20, 2014, the OAAP is offering a confidential, five-week support and discussion group to help lawyers through these challenging issues.

This five-week group will meet at the OAAP on Tuesdays from noon to 1:15 p.m. starting April 22, 2014. The workshop facilitator will be OAAP Attorney Counselor Douglas Querin.

There is no fee for this group. To participate, please set up a meeting with Douglas Querin at 503-226-1057, ext. 12, or at [douglasq@oaap.org](mailto:douglasq@oaap.org).

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## **LAWYERS IN TRANSITION CALENDAR**

Lawyers in Transition is a networking, educational, and support group for lawyers and judges making job or career transitions. The group meets on Thursdays at noon in the OAAP offices at **520 SW Yamhill, Suite 1050, Portland**. If you are interested in attending, please contact Shari R. Gregory, 503-226-1057, ext. 14, or Mike Long, ext. 11. A guest speaker for Lawyers in Transition is featured on the first Thursday of each month. These meetings are open for anyone to attend. See the calendar below for scheduled speakers.

The OAAP also occasionally presents career workshops to assist lawyers, judges, and law students in identifying satisfying job and career opportunities. These workshops typically meet one evening per week from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. for six consecutive weeks. If you would like additional information about the OAAP career workshops, call Shari R. Gregory or Mike Long at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227.

**Apr. 3, 2014** **Heidi Brown** **Public Defender to Private Practitioner to Deputy City Attorney**

**May 8, 2014\*** **Toni Kelich** **Administrative Assistant, Classroom Law Project, to OSB Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator**

**June 5, 2014** **Laura A. Schroeder** **“How to Incorporate Your Passion for Travel with Your Law Practice”**

For current information on upcoming Lawyers in Transition speakers and topics, please visit the OAAP website at [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org) and click on CLEs/Workshops.

\* Second Thursday of the month