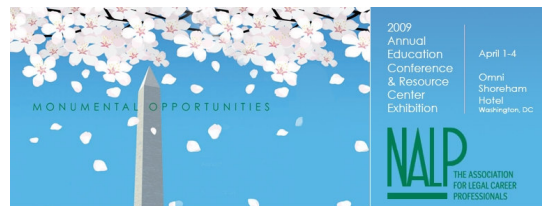




“Down and Out in Law School: Identifying and Coaching Students with Depression”



Presenters

Gwendolyn L. Ferrell

Associate Director of Career Services

Louisiana State University, Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Victor C. Massaglia

Career Advisor

University of Minnesota Law School

Jennifer F. Powell

Assistant Dean for Career Services

West Virginia University College of Law



Agenda

- The stresses of law school and working in the legal profession. Recognizing symptoms of depression.
- Career Development process / strategies to support individuals with depression and in crisis.
- Distinguishing the legal, ethical, professional, personal roles of the career development professional.

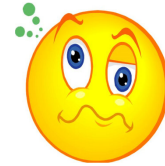


Setting the Stage

The stresses of law school and
working in the legal profession.
Recognizing symptoms of
depression.

“Depression and Affect Among Law Students During Law School: A Longitudinal Study”

Journal of Emotional Abuse



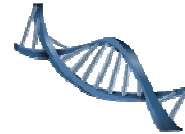
Law Students and Depression

- Lawyers have dramatically higher rates of clinical depression and anxiety as compared to general population
- 20-40% of law students suffer from clinical depression by time they graduate
- Of 104 occupational groups, lawyers rank highest in depression



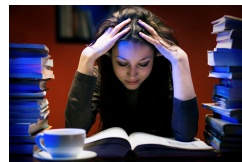
Law School & Depression

- May come to law school with pre-existing mental health problems
- Stress of law school may exacerbate those problems or create new ones
- Some students may be more prone to depressive illness: heredity/genetics; low self-esteem; poor coping mechanisms; women



Law Students and Depression

- Mental health is an integral part of physical health
- Mental illnesses fall among a continuum of severity
- Grave concerns about suicide risk with severe depression
- Substance abuse and alcoholism frequently co-exist or are used to mask/alleviate symptoms



Recognizing Depression

- Trust your feeling
- Look for obvious changes in academic performance, physical appearance and behavior
- May see the effects of unhealthy coping:
 - Compulsive or impulsive behaviors
 - Alcohol/drug use
 - Worry and procrastination



Recognizing Depression

Physical symptoms:



1. Appetite: overeating or loss of appetite
2. Low energy or fatigue
3. Sleep disturbance: can't sleep, sleeping excessively
4. Agitation: can't sit still, pacing, hand-wringing
5. "Retardation": slowed or monotonous speech, slow body movements

Recognizing Depression

Emotional/Psychological effects:

1. Feeling hopeless/lacking purpose
2. Low self esteem, self criticism and guilt
3. Feeling sad, empty, alone; crying spells
4. Anxious; irritable; overreacting
5. Recurred thoughts of death or suicide

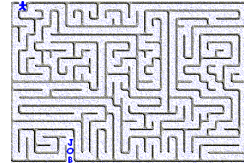


Recognizing Depression

Social/Academic issues:

1. Decreased motivation; difficulty concentrating
2. Loss of interest or enjoyment in social activities and hobbies; withdrawing
3. Difficulty in relating to others; spending more time alone; decreased trust





Career Development Professional Activities

Career Development process /
strategies to support individuals
with depression and in crisis.

Career Development Process: Three Words: Assessment-Assessment- Assessment



General Guidelines

1. Educate yourself about resources before you need to use them.
2. Assess – Assess – Assess
3. Know thy self. What are your motives? Avoid preaching, punishing or criticizing.
4. Observe and document behavior.
5. Ask how you can support.
6. Offer emotional support, understanding, patience and encouragement.
7. Are you the only or best person to approach and/or to support this individual?
8. Never ignore comments about suicide and report them to immediately.

Counseling Students – Self Identified

- Discussing if, what, and/or when to divulge to employers
- How is his or her depression going to interfere with career process?
- Know rights - eligible for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Encourage students to “Don’t do it alone.”



Coping With Depression

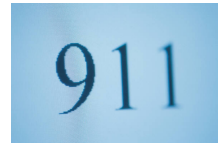
From the ABA Student Division *Mental Health Toolkit*

- Be aware of your stress levels
- Take care of your body
- Surround yourself with supportive people
- Take one day at a time
- Avoid alcohol
- Become involved
- Remember depression is treatable
- Express your feelings (friends, family member, counselor, professor, journal, etc.)

Student/Alumni in Distress –
Now!

Student in Distress – Now!

- Quick Assessment - Listen
- Safety to self, the student and to others
- Call for help (911) – “Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers” or an organization similar (have their number on hand)
- Notify the appropriate staff members
- Follow-up

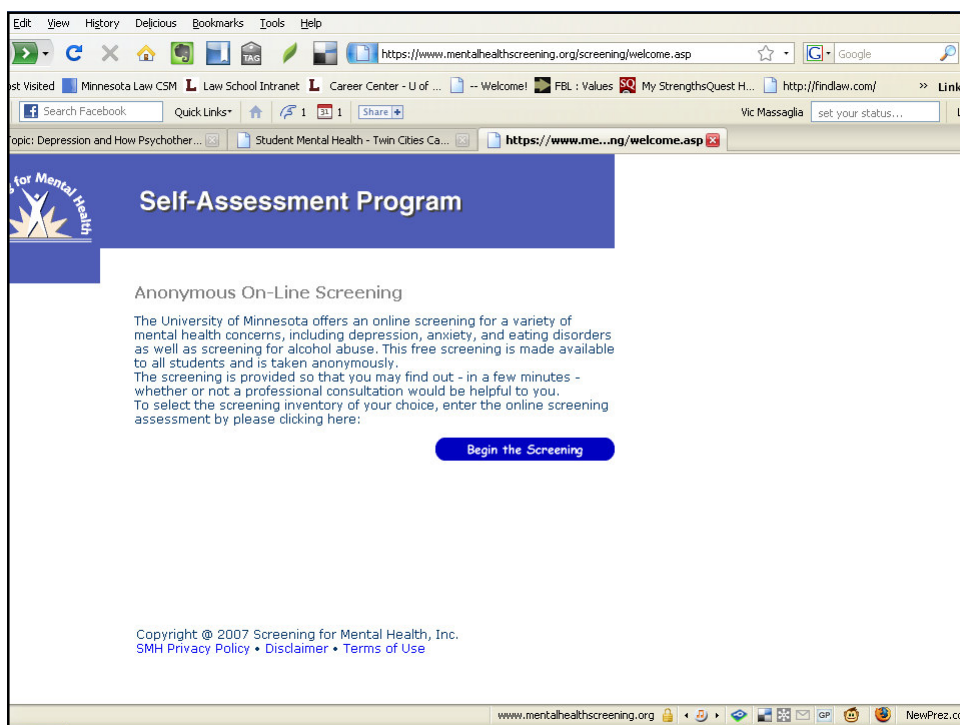


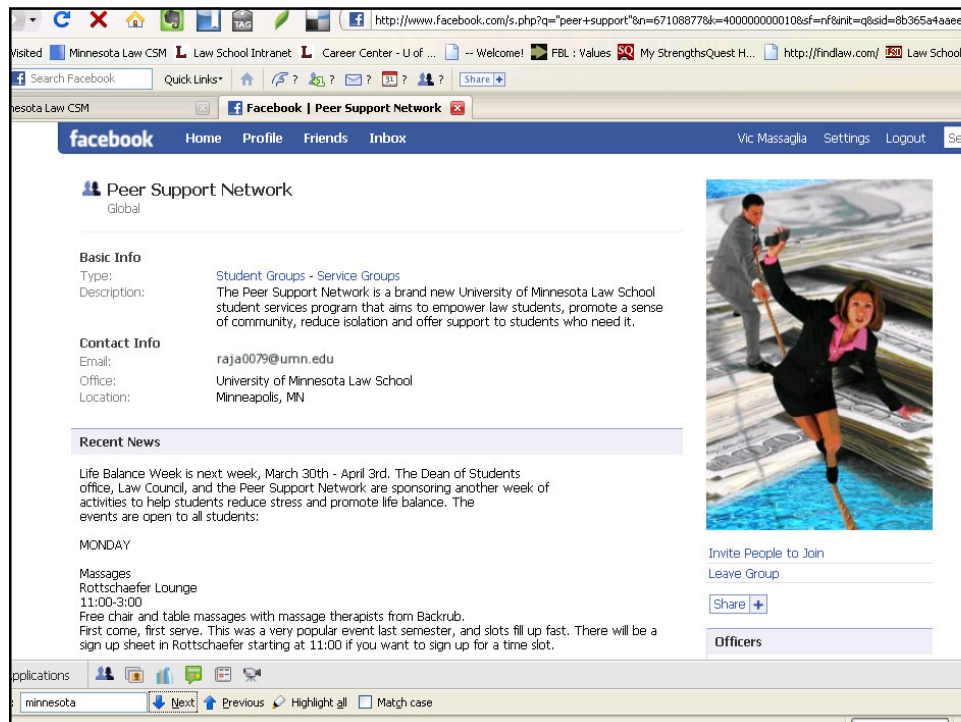
Prevention: Orientation

- How to effectively cope with stress & anxiety
- Incidence of depression in law school & the legal profession
- Overview of resources available through the law school, the university and legal community

Prevention: Programs

- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Assertiveness Training
- Conflict Management/Negotiation Skills
- Self-Assessment
 - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
 - Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
- Interpersonal/Human Relations Training





Peer Support Network

- We now have trained Peer Support Network Volunteers!!
If you are a University of Minnesota law student and you'd like to speak with a volunteer, email me at [student leader] or look for me at the law school.
- We are starting a student org, Law Students for Life Balance, which will work closely with Law Council to organize programming similar to last semester's Life Balance Week. Please let me know if you are interested in joining the group or if you have ideas for programming.

Life Balance Week: The Dean of Student's Office, Law Council, and the Peer Support Network are sponsoring a week of activities to help students reduce stress and promote life balance. The events are open to all students.

MONDAY

- Massages
- Free chair and table massages with massage therapists from Backrub.

TUESDAY

- Yoga Class
- Andy Gerstenberger teaches yoga classes at Corepower Yoga at the Stadium Village Studio. He has extensively studied both Iyengar and Vinyasa Flow styles of yoga.

WEDNESDAY

- Healthy Snacks with the Peer Support Network
- Stop by for fresh fruits and vegetables, granola bars, other healthy snacks, and to talk with Peer Support Network volunteers. We will also have information on nutrition resources and stress reduction tips.
- Pet Therapy
- De-stress with pet therapy dogs and their owners.

THURSDAY

- Mental Health Support Group Kickoff Meeting
- This new student-run support group will provide a safe environment for students to talk about depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, and other mental health issues. All students are welcome.

- ArtiCulture
- Get crafty with ArtiCulture! An ArtiCulture instructor will guide you through a fun, hands-on art project. ArtiCulture's mission is to educate, enrich, and nurture through the visual arts.

FRIDAY

- Movie Night
- Come see Frost/Nixon in a 1950's style neighborhood theater.



Career Development Professional's Personal/Professional Roles

Distinguishing the legal, ethical, professional, personal roles of the career development professional.

Confidentiality (Example)

- Students may be concerned about privacy or parental notification. Mental Health professionals adhere to Minnesota State Laws and professional ethical standards which guarantee that everything a student mentions to them is held in the strictest confidence. This confidence can be broken only after the student gives written permission to release information. Exceptions to these standards are very limited (e.g., if the individual is a danger to self or others, if the issue includes child abuse, or if records are subpoenaed as part of a criminal case).

Role of the Career Professional

- National Career Development Association – Code of Ethics
 - Counselor Obligations / Role
 - Personal: Values & Personal Beliefs
- Professional: Career Search & Institutional policies
- Legal: The Bar
- Ethical Decision Making Model

National Career Development Association – Code of Ethics



Six Steps to Ethical Decision Making

Filter: **P** = Policy **L**=Legal **U**=Universal **S**=Self

Step 1: Define the problem

Step 2: Identify alternatives

Step 3: Evaluate the alternatives

Step 4: Make the decision

Step 5: Implement the decision

Step 6: Evaluate the decision

<http://www.ethics.org/resources/plus-ethics-filters.asp>

Discussion