

MIZZOU LAW CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – 1Ls

Objectives

1. Engage students with the Office of Career Development and Student Services and begin long-lasting professional relationships.
2. Provide students with the resources and tools necessary to identify and obtain appropriate employment.
3. Prepare students for life as a successful legal professional through skills training and opportunities for self-assessment in those areas identified in recent research as being essential for new attorneys.
4. Give students the tools needed for ongoing self-care and lifelong professional development.

Goals

1. Introduce Office of Career Development and Student Services to the students
2. Provide information about legal job market and law student work opportunities
3. Teach job search skills
4. Pique interest and engagement with overview of careers in the law
5. Provide networking opportunities
6. Equip with basic skills and strategies for success

Learning Outcomes

By the end of 1L year, students should have a solid understanding of:

1. CDO -- The services provided by the CDO; resources available for their use, who is their assigned advisor; job search processes and timing (OCI, job postings, Expo, self-initiated contact, reciprocity, etc.), and relevant policies, procedures, expectations and deadlines
2. NALP – applicable rules regarding contact with employers, timing of offers and acceptances, prohibition on reneging an offer once accepted
3. SAGE – how to create an account, upload application materials, apply for jobs, search contacts
4. Application materials – how to create skills-based legal resume, employer-focused cover letter, and appropriate writing sample
5. Professional dress -- the reason behind the lawyer “uniform,” appropriate professional dress for interviews and first legal positions
6. Interviewing skills –the different types of interview questions to expect, the skills and attributes prospective employers are seeking, and strategies for addressing weak areas and highlighting transferable skills
7. Networking – identifying contacts, informational interviews, and “working” social events
8. Self-assessment –identify areas of strength and skills to develop
9. Real life lawyering - gain perspective on what lawyers actually do in their jobs and identify opportunities to get practical experience
10. Self-care – Stress management, building confidence and self-esteem, awareness of mental health and substance abuse issues common to law students/lawyers and available resources
11. Tools for Success – Organization and time management, professional etiquette

Chronic Stress Can Damage Brain Structure and Connectivity

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Neuroscientists have discovered how chronic stress and cortisol can damage the brain. A new study reconfirms the importance of maintaining healthy brain structure and connectivity by reducing chronic stress.

Neuroscientists at the University of California, Berkeley, have found that chronic stress triggers long-term changes in brain structure and function.

Their findings might explain why young people who are exposed to chronic stress early in life are prone to mental problems such as anxiety and mood disorders later in life, as well as learning difficulties.



It has long been established that stress-related illnesses, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) trigger changes in brain structure, including differences in the volume of gray matter versus white matter, as well as the size and connectivity of the amygdala. However, researchers are just beginning to understand exactly how chronic stress creates long-lasting changes in brain structure which affect how the brain functions.

In a series of revolutionary experiments, Daniela Kaufer, UC Berkeley associate professor of integrative biology, and her colleagues, discovered that chronic stress and elevated levels of cortisol can generate more overproduction of myelin-producing cells and fewer neurons than normal. Kaufer et al published their findings in the February 11, 2014 issue of the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*.

Chronic Stress Changes Neural Networks

The "gray matter" of the brain is densely packed with nerve cell bodies and is responsible for the brain's higher functions, such as thinking, computing, and decision-making. But gray matter is only half of the brain matter inside our heads—the other half of brain volume is called white matter.

White matter is comprised of axons, which create a network of fibers that interconnect neurons and creates a communications network between brain regions. White matter gets its name from the white, fatty myelin sheath that surrounds the axons and speeds the flow of electrical

signals between neurons and brain regions.

“We studied only one part of the brain, the hippocampus, but our findings could provide insight into how white matter is changing in conditions such as schizophrenia, autism, depression, suicide, ADHD and PTSD,” Kaufer said. The hippocampus regulates memory and emotions, and plays a role in various emotional disorders and has been known to shrink under extended periods of acute stress.



The researchers found that hardening wires, may be at the heart of the hyper-connected circuits associated with prolonged stress. This results in an excess of myelin—and too much white matter—in some areas of the brain. Ideally, the brain likes to trim the fat of excess wiring through neural pruning in order to maintain efficiency and streamlined communication within the brain.

Cortisol Can Trigger Stem Cells to Malfunction

The ‘stress hormone’ cortisol is believed to create a domino effect that hard-wires pathways between the hippocampus and amygdala in a way that might create a vicious cycle by creating a brain that becomes predisposed to be in a constant state of fight-or-flight.

Chronic stress has the ability to flip a switch in stem cells that turns them into a type of cell that inhibits connections to the prefrontal cortex, which would improve learning and memory, but lays down durable scaffolding linked to anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Kaufer’s lab focused on neural stem cells in the hippocampus of the brains of adult rats under acute or chronic stress. These stem cells were previously thought to mature only into neurons or a type of glial cell called an **astrocyte**.

However, the researchers found that chronic stress made stem cells in the hippocampus mature into another type of glial cell called an **oligodendrocyte**, which produces the myelin that sheaths nerve cells.



The finding suggests a key role for oligodendrocytes in long-term and perhaps permanent changes in the brain that could set the stage for later mental problems. Chronic stress decreases the number of stem cells that mature into neurons and might provide an explanation for how chronic stress also affects learning and memory, according to the researchers.

“Usually the brain doesn’t make much oligodendrocytes in adulthood from those neural stem cells,” according to Kaufer. In fact, a recent study suggested these cells were incapable of producing oligodendrocytes, which are somewhat like a vine spreading out and wrapping around axons, both insulating and supporting them.

Rats who have high levels of cortisol and chronic stress had fewer neurons overall but a big increase in oligodendrocytes. By blocking the equivalent of cortisol receptors, the researchers discovered the process was tied to the stress hormone. “This was absolutely not what we were expecting to find,” Kaufer said. “But those are always the best discoveries.”

Although this sheath is vital to human brains—myelin formation can be good or bad, depending on time or place, according to Kaufer. This excessive sheathing may have evolved to bolster the connection between the amygdala and hippocampus, which would improve fight-or-flight responses during extended periods of threat or attack... Unfortunately, in a modern world, chronic stress can hijack the fight-or-flight system and backfire in a daily life in which you are not in physical danger.

Conclusion: Plasticity Makes it Possible to “Sculpt” Your Brain Throughout a Lifespan



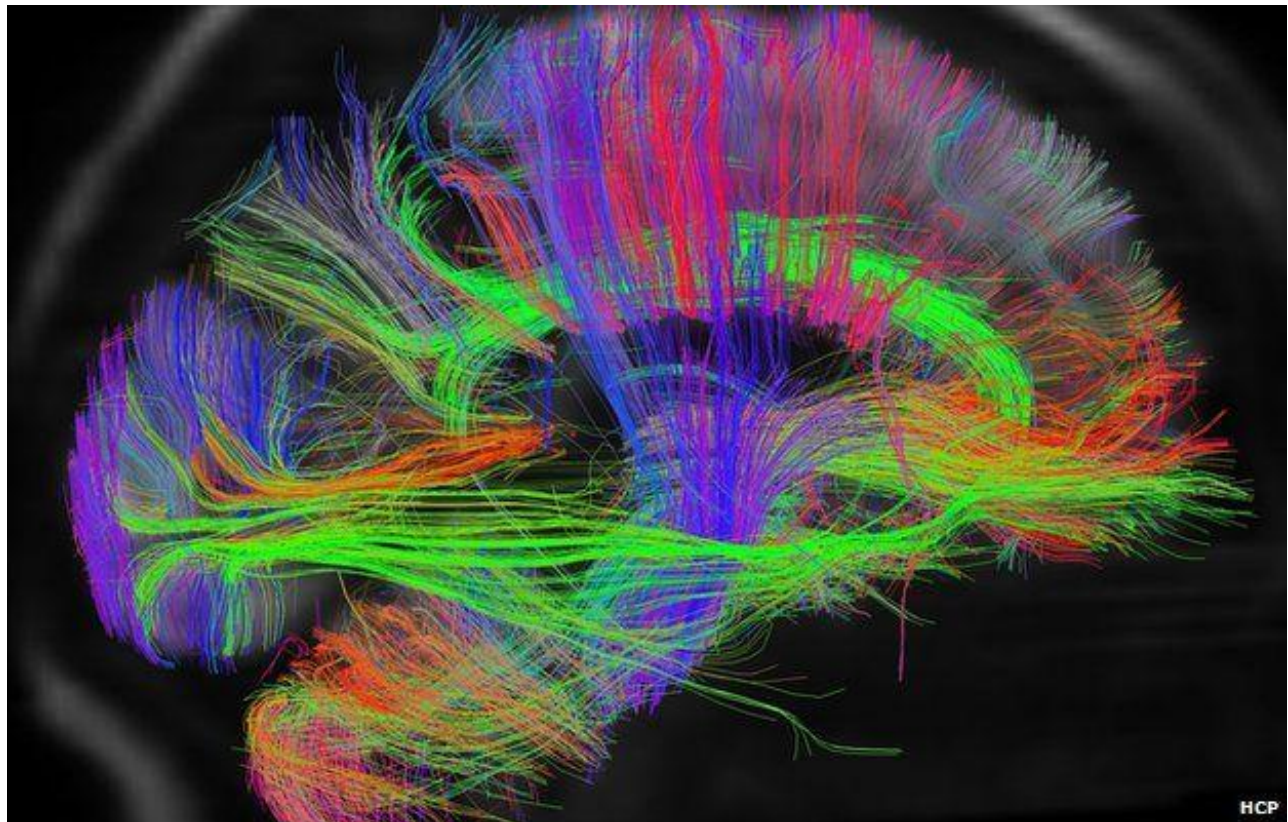
Regular physical activity and mindfulness meditation are two effective ways to reduce stress and lower cortisol. Although this study doesn’t focus on the benefits of reducing cortisol, other research suggests that making lifestyle choices that reduce stress and lower cortisol can improve brain structure and connectivity.

For 5 simple ways to lower cortisol without drugs check out my *Psychology Today* blog, “Cortisol: Why “The Stress Hormone” Is Public Enemy No. 1.”

Daniela Kaufer is now conducting experiments to determine how stress in infancy affects the brain’s white matter, and whether chronic early-life stress decreases resilience later in life. She also is looking at the effects of therapies, ranging from exercise to antidepressant drugs, that reduce the impact of stress and stress hormones.

Kaufer concludes that moderate or 'good stress'—such as studying hard for an exam or training to compete in the Olympic Games—can build stronger circuitry and a more resilient brain. But acute, prolonged chronic stress wreaks havoc. "You're creating a brain that's either resilient or very vulnerable to mental disease, based on the patterning of white matter you get early in life," said Kaufer.

That said, the structure of your brain is constantly undergoing changes through plasticity. Mindset, behavior, and chronic stress are never fixed. The power of neuroplasticity makes it possible to change brain structure and function throughout your lifespan. You can consciously make daily choices of mindset and behavior that will improve the structure and connectivity of your brain.



In 2012, Alex Schlegel from Dartmouth College published a study showing that the adult brain can change for the better. "This work is contributing to a new understanding that the brain stays this plastic organ throughout your life, capable of change," Schlegel says.

"This flies in the face of all these traditional views that all structural development happens in infancy, early in childhood," Schlegel says. "Now that we actually do have tools to watch a brain change, we are discovering that in many cases the brain can be just as malleable as an adult as it is when you are a child or an adolescent."

If you'd like to read more on this topic, check out my *Psychology Today* blog posts:

Follow me on Twitter @ckberglund for updates on *The Athlete's Way* blog posts.

MIZZOU LAW SAMPLE 1L TIMELINE

August

- Professionalism and networking program and lunch (during Orientation)*

September / October

- Skills assessment completed as part of Lawyering Course*
- Informal 'get to know you' meeting with CDO advisor*
- Program on productivity
- Life of a Lawyer lunch
- Career panel – employment law

October / November

- Boot Camp*
 - Resumes
 - Cover letters
 - Job search strategies
 - Career paths
 - Networking reception with alumni
- Life of a Lawyer lunch
- Career panel – health care law

Winter Break

- Submit resume and cover letter to CDO advisor for review and approval*
- Winter judicial internships*

January / February

- Interviewing skills workshop*
- Mock interview*
- Professional headshots
- Chicago trip
 - Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference
 - Site visits
 - Alumni networking events
- Program on confidence and self-esteem
- Life of a Lawyer lunch
- Career panel – public interest law

March

- Career Expo
- Program on dealing with panic attacks
- Life of a Lawyer lunch
- Career panel – legal journalism

April

- Program on how to succeed in your summer job
- Career panel – criminal law

*Required

Career Development Office

The Career Development Office is here to assist you throughout your three years of law school and to help you secure your first-post-graduate job. The primary focus of your first year will be on your academics. We know that your first year will be busy and sometimes stressful. Accordingly, we will not be asking a great deal of your time and energy in the first year. We know, however, that some of you are already concerned about summer jobs. To help put you at ease, we have broken down everything we think you should have done/be able to do by the end of the first year into a simple 5-point list and a month-by-month reminder. Remember, we are here to help!

By the end of your 1L year, you should....

1. Be able to articulate your interests, strengths, and goals

- Know your Gallup Top 5 and have plans to invest in your talents (Orientation)
- Use the BYC program to track your progress on your professional development
- Develop a short meaningful *Elevator Speech* (Orientation)
- Understand that you already have, and must take control of, your *Personal Brand* (Orientation)
- Create an initial career development plan with 1L summer goals (October 16th Kick-Off)
- Visit with a career counselor about your plans (Late October-December)

2. Possess a broad understanding of JD Required and JD Advantage employment options

- Attend the Exploring Opportunities programs
- Take part in a Table for 10 lunch with a professor if a topic is of interest to you
- Participate in the Sections of the Bar event to meet a variety of practitioners (March)
- Consider a Spring Break Shadow experience (March)

3. Develop solid applications materials

- Create and edit a strong legal resume (Should be done before Orientation)
- Draft a solid cover letter (Over break or in November if needed for December outreach)
- Identify and create a list of 3-5 references (by spring)
- Choose one of your fall assignments to use as a legal writing sample (January)
- Request and upload electronic copy of your first semester grade report to ROSCOE (January)

4. Begin to develop a professional network (in person and online)

- Create LinkedIn profile and clean up other social media sites
- Participate in the Nebraska Law college alumni mentor-mentee program
- Begin to develop a relationship with at least one of your professors
- Understand etiquette norms & expectations regarding RSVPs, and Thank yous
- Attend informational fairs on law firms, gov't agencies, nonprofits, etc.
- Conduct an informational interview or shadow an attorney

5. Secure and prepare for a summer legal placement

- Navigate and utilize ROSCOE and other CDO resources (Training in October)
- Participate in a Mock Interview (January)
- Prepare for and interview effectively (both standard and behavioral style interviews)
- Participate in On Campus Interviews if interested (January/February)
- Generate job opportunities outside OCI (for long-distance searches, smaller firms, etc.)
- Apply for NPILF Public Interest Summer Funding (as appropriate – in March)
- Understand expectations of employers and the keys to a successful clerkship (April program)
- Understand timing of 2L summer job search (Early Interview Week, Fall OCI, Fellowships)

FIRST-YEAR TIMELINE

Here is a rundown of what you can expect month by month in your first year with regards to the Career Development Office. *Remember that the NALP blackouts are in place until October 15 for one-on-one counseling with the CDO, and December 1st for students applying for summer employment.*

August

- Submit a draft resume for review by the CDO (Before Orientation)
- Get acclimated to legal study and law school classmates

September

- Attend general CDO programs based on interests but do not receive direct counseling

October

- Participate in Community Justice Week (Gov't and Public Interest Fair/Justice Jam)
- Attend mandatory 1L Kick-Off lunch to learn about services/basics of career plan (Oct. 16)
- Be aware of FBI and State Department exemptions from Dec. 1 Blackout

November

- Focus on Legal Writing and finals
- Students looking for long-distance placements should attend the November 7 event and then set up a one-on-one counseling session with the CDO
- Attend the Legal Employer Fair and continue to consider summer options

December

- Apply for government internships with December deadlines if interested
- Send letters/emails to employers in home-state/city to meet over break if appropriate

Semester Break

- Meet with employers near home over break/Make inquiries in geographic area of interest
- Attend Winter Socials and Area Open Houses if available
- Draft a strong cover letter in preparation for Spring OCI (cover letters, resume, writing sample)

January

- Sign up for and participate in Mock interviews and participate in On-Campus interviews (OCI)
- Attend law firm open houses/socials if interested
- Explore options other than OCI for Summer (NPILF/ Externships/ Study Abroad) (1/23 Program)

February

- OCI continues (possibly participate in Call-back interviews)
- Sign up for the Spring Break Shadow Program
- Send out targeted mailings and continue to apply for summer jobs outside of OCI

March

- File your FAFSA and apply for Federal Work Study. (Summer FWS application available in March)
- Submit application for NPILF grant if applicable (Non Profit legal work)
- Participate in one or more shadow experiences/Conduct an informational interview

April

- Focus on Finals and be proud/happy you finished your first year!

May – August

- Get some kind of legal experience (paid or unpaid)
- Update your resume and upload materials for Fall OCI (be prepared to apply in July)
- Consider applying for post-graduate Judicial Clerkships

Professionalism Tips to Implement from Day One

1. Create an email signature block with your full name, class year, and contact information.
2. Use professional sounding e-mail and voicemail messages.
3. Consider ordering business cards for networking purposes (<https://law.unl.edu/business-cards>)
4. Whenever in question, err on the side of formality in dress and communication style.
5. RSVP when requested and keep your appointments.

RESOURCES

Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World, Cal Newport (2016)

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity, David Allen (2015)

Presence, Amy Cuddy (2015)

Designing Your Life, Bill Burnett and Dave Evans (2017)

Eat that Frog: 21 Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time, Brian Tracy (2017)

Stress Management for Lawyers: How to Increase Personal & Professional Satisfaction in the Law, Amiram Elwork (2007)

Mindset, Carol S. Dweck (2016)

Grit, Angela Duckworth (2016)

When Panic Attacks, David D. Burns (2006)

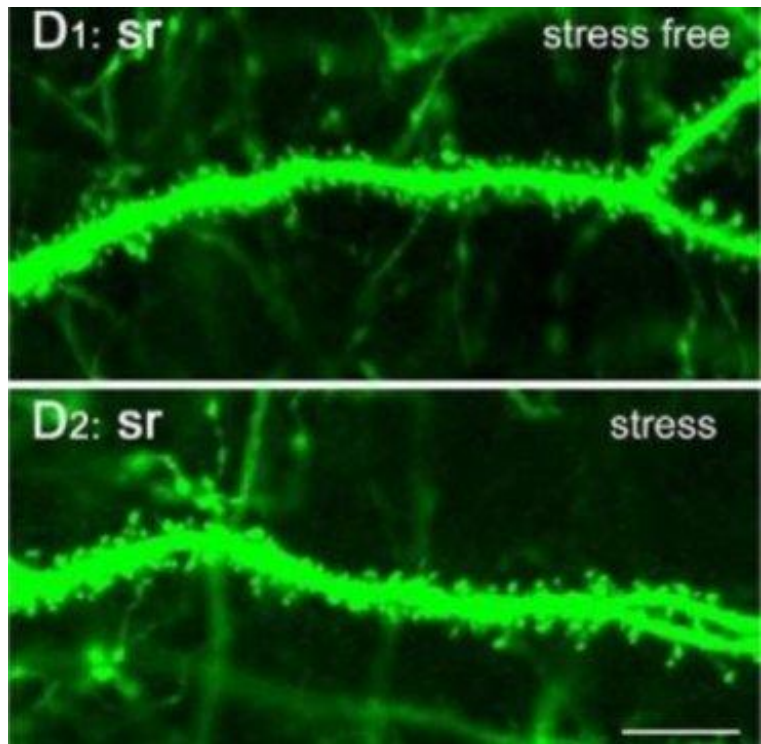
The Sweet Spot: How to Accomplish More by Doing Less, Christine Carter (2017)

Short-term Stress Can Affect Learning And Memory

 getpocket.com/a/read/3421050

It has been known that severe stress lasting weeks or months can impair cell communication in the brain's learning and memory region, but this study provides the first evidence that short-term stress has the same effect.

"Stress is a constant in our lives and cannot be avoided," said Dr. Tallie Z. Baram, the Danette Shepard Chair in Neurological Sciences in the UC Irvine School of Medicine and study leader. "Our findings can play an important role in the current development of drugs that might prevent these undesirable effects and offer insights into why some people are forgetful or have difficulty retaining information during stressful situations."



In their study, Baram and her UC Irvine colleagues identified a novel process by which stress caused these effects. They found that rather than involving the widely known stress hormone cortisol, which circulates throughout the body, acute stress activated selective molecules called corticotropin releasing hormones, which disrupted the process by which the brain collects and stores memories.

Learning and memory take place at synapses, which are junctions through which brain cells communicate. These synapses reside on specialized branchlike protrusions on neurons called dendritic spines.

In rat and mouse studies, Baram's group saw that the release of CRH in the hippocampus, the brain's primary learning and memory center, led to the rapid disintegration of these dendritic spines, which in turn limited the ability of synapses to collect and store memories.

The researchers discovered that blocking the CRH molecules' interaction with their receptor molecules eliminated stress damage to dendritic spines in the hippocampal cells involved with learning and memory.

In addition, the authors replicated the effects of stress on dendritic spines by administering low levels of synthetic CRH, and watching how the spines retracted over minutes. "Fortunately, once we removed the CRH, the spines seemed to grow back," Baram said.

Baram also noted that there are compounds under development that show the ability to block CRH receptors, and that this study can play a role in the creation of therapies based on these compounds to address stress-related learning and memory loss.

The study appears in the March 12 edition of the Journal of Neuroscience. Yuncai Chen, Celine Dubé and Courtney Burgdorff of UC Irvine also participated in the study, which was supported by the National Institutes of Health.

Story Source:

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