



**NALP 2022
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CONFERENCE**
New Orleans, Louisiana • April 5-8

Better Together:
**Using Mental Health Training To
Connect Across Departments**

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**Choosing a mental health program:
Easier said ...**

- Reasons to promote employee mental health are straight-forward:
 - Prevalence of mental health issues in legal profession
 - Better mental health = better performance
 - Impact of mental health on others
 - Humanitarian and ethical reasons
 - Increased attention to mental health across society

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**Choosing a mental health program:
... than done**

- Deciding how to promote employee mental health is complex:
 - Mental health issues take many forms
 - Mental health issues affect people differently
 - Difficulty identifying people who need resources
 - Difficulty getting resources to people who need them
 - Well-being and mental health cut across many departments
 - Large variety of resources available

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Choosing a mental health program: A growing array of choices

Different Formats

- Lectures and speakers
- Hands-on learning
- Small discussions/one-on-one



Different Purposes

- Offer information
- Teach specific skills
- Provide targeted interventions

Different Subjects

- General well-being/mental health
- Specific area of well-being or health
- Specific issues

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Thinking about effectiveness: Direct vs. indirect benefits

Direct effects measured by surveys, assessments, etc.

Purpose of program	Was it effective?
Offer information	Did participants receive information?
Teach specific skills	Did participants acquire skills?
Provide targeted interventions	Did interventions benefit participants?



What about *indirect* effects?

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What makes a program effective? Benefits of collaborating



- In general, collaboration:
 - Allows for exchange of ideas
 - Builds camaraderie
 - Improves communication
 - Provides holistic view of organization
 - Increases efficiency

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What makes a program effective? Collaborating on mental health issues

- Reasons to collaborate on mental health issues
 - Mental health impacts people differently
 - Mental health touches all parts of an organization
 - Experience and practical reasons
 - Mental health decisions cross different departments



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Promotion & Impact

Individuals from multiple departments

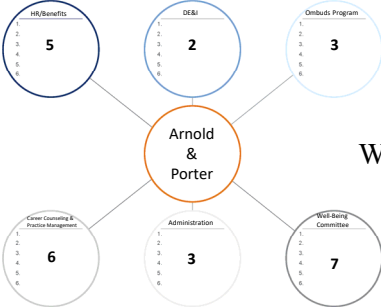
Several locations

Anyone experiencing a mental health challenge within the organization

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Worksheet I

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Who would you involve in Mental Health & Well-Being Programming?

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Program Challenges

Involvement

Scheduling

The right person at the right time

- i.e., someone experiencing a crisis

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Collaborating on mental health issues:
What does this illustration show?

- **Decisions** are made, **resources** are found, **needs** arise in different locations
- Many **departments** may handle aspects of well-being/mental health
- This makes sense and is not inherently problematic
- But **communication** and **cooperation** among groups is needed
- **Mental health trainings** can **promote** communication and cooperation

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: What is it?

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
 - Started in 2001 in Australia; offered in U.S. since 2007
 - Over 2.5 million people trained in U.S.
- Participants learn
 - Information about mental health issues
 - How to identify, understand, and respond to mental challenges and crises with ALGEE action plan
 - Guidance related to self-care

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: ALGEE action plan

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACTION PLAN

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- L**isten nonjudgmentally
- G**ive reassurance and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies



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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: How MHFA training is conducted

- Self-paced introduction (@ 2 hours)
- Classroom discussion/instruction, virtual or in-person (@ 6.5 hours)
- May include 8 to 25 participants; one or two instructors
- Hypothetical scenarios and role-playing
 - Develop awareness of mental health issues
 - Practice identifying and assisting people
- Small group discussion and interaction

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Why we offered it

- Well-established, evidence-based training
- Highly-regarded by employees who had done training
- Provided hands-on skills training and action plan
- Offered in-depth information about mental health issues
 - Education
 - Awareness
 - Destigmatize

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: How we offered it

- Virtual training
- Smaller groups (@ 10-12 people)
- Split training between two days to add flexibility
- Offered several sessions to choose from
- Conducted by employee who had been certified as a MHFA instructor
- Ways to keep costs down

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Who received it

- Participants from several departments
 - HR, benefits, career counseling, professional development, attorneys
- Participants from multiple locations
- Every session ended up with diverse group of employees
- MHFA format required that participants work closely and “break the stigma” of talking about mental health topics



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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Outcomes and feedback

- MHFA material and individual skill development
 - Education about mental health ✓
 - Skills to use with person experiencing challenge or crisis ✓
 - Greater confidence and comfort ✓
- Experience of fellow participants
- Resources available to and used by fellow participants
- Setting the stage for future collaboration

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Outcomes and feedback

Firmwide, we have slightly **different vantage points** when engaging with the same populations. MHFA provides us with a **similar foundation** from which to address a crisis. After participating in MHFA, I feel better-equipped to address a crisis and have a better understanding of which of my colleagues can offer **parallel and/or cross-sectional support**.

The training helped **bring together a number of stakeholders** with a **common goal** of addressing the stigma well-being awareness seeks to combat.

The MHFA training was an excellent experience. It **created a baseline and framework** for knowing that we have a **coordinated approach internally** even among different departments. It also refreshed my knowledge of all of the resources that the firm provides and when to use them. We have many firm touchpoints and this training forced focus on what is and isn't appropriate and how to reach in a variety of situations

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Outcomes and feedback

Perhaps the most critical piece of the training was the refresher of the various supports offered by the Firm - there are a **myriad of people and resources available** to assist any employers experiencing mental health stressors, and it is important that those of us who deal with our legal professionals each day have those resources top of mind. **It was also useful to talk with my colleagues from other departments about how our individual roles overlap and may offer support to one another while being there for our employees.**

Caring. To me, the training showed that the Firm cares about its employees. It's giving us the tools to help others. I appreciated the training and although I am glad I haven't had to use it, **I'm grateful that I am prepared** if I need to be.

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Case study: Mental Health First Aid: Post-Plan Outcomes

- Quarterly Meetings with Key Touchpoints
- “Mental Health First Aiders” working together to address needs
- Knowledgeable about additional resources & where to access them
- Increased connectivity – which is something we are all craving right now

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Better Together at YOUR Organization

Worksheet I

Worksheet II

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Key Considerations

- Why:** Goals/Value Proposition & Needs Assessment
- What:** What training will you offer? Consider the 6 Pillars.
- Who:** Identify Stakeholders and Partners to support the effort
- When:** Scheduling Considerations
- How:** Branding & Promotion

Pre-Plan for the Post-Plan

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Resources

- *The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change*. National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being (2017) (americanbar.org)
- *Well-Being Toolkit for Lawyers and Legal Employers*, American Bar Association (2018) (lawyerwellbeing.net)
- Approaching Well-Being. *The Practice*, Vol. 6, Issue 3 (March/April 2020) (<https://theppractice.law.harvard.edu/article/operationalizing-well-being/>)
- Attorney Wellness, Resource List. NY Academy of Trial Lawyers. (<https://trialacademy.org/?pg=AttorneyWellness>).
- M. J. Tews, J. W. Michel, & K. Stafford, Does Fun Pay? The Impact of Workplace Fun on Employee Turnover and Performance, 54 *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 370 (2013)
- D. M. Cable, F. Gino, & B. R. Staats, Reinventing Employee Onboarding, *M.I.T. SLOAN MGMT. REV.* (2013) (<http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/reinventingemployee-onboarding>)

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Be Well &
Be Better Together

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Worksheet 1: Departments Involved in Mental Health Training

