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SAVE THE DATE VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Monday, October 26 to 30, 2020

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OF NOTE

NCBA Member Benefit - I.D. Card Photo

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UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 12:45 PM

Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 12:45 PM

Self-Care in Time of Uncertainty

Carolyn Reinach Wolf and
Elizabeth Eckhardt, LCSW, PhD

By the end of March, our family, professional, and social life as we knew them came to a screeching halt. The pandemic was in full swing. We were, and still are, faced with a whole new world of work and play, family, and profession. It was at once comforting to be safe, but also isolating and bewildering.

After receiving a surge in callers, emails and text messages from colleagues and friends to the Lawyer Assistance Program, LAP Director Elizabeth Eckhardt, Ph.D., LCSW, and Carolyn Reinach Wolf, Esq.—mental health attorney and invited member of Lawyer Assistance Committee—decided to take action. In May 2020, in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, the LAP Committee and the NCBA Mental Health Law Committee joined forces to address the very serious effects of this pandemic on the legal profession.

On Thursday, May 7, 2020, Eckhardt and Wolf facilitated the virtual CLE program titled, "During the Coronavirus and Beyond: Lawyers Caring for Themselves, Colleagues and Clients." With nearly 100 participants, the CLE was a huge success. Attendees were anxious to share their experiences to date, meet and greet virtually, and air their concerns, emotions, successes, and challenges. It quickly became evident that attorneys and members of the judiciary were very interested in issues related to attorney well-being and that much more was to be discussed.

Virtual Town Halls

Given the positive response and clear notice of wanting more, Eckhardt and Wolf collaborated further and established the monthly LAP Virtual Town Hall Meeting



titled, "Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?" These virtual meetings provide lawyers, judges, and law students the opportunity to speak freely and openly about their personal and professional concerns regarding the state of their lives, professions, and family life during the pandemic.

To date, three virtual town halls were held on July 30, August 18, and September 15. The turnout has been heartwarming and rewarding, for presenters and participants alike. Topics are focused on the continued challenges of living through COVID-19 and included how to best adapt to new rules and regulations regarding getting back to work, the mental and emotional challenges of practicing law, financial and career challenges, personal challenges, as well as challenges employers may have in determining the best ways to implement change.

Having town hall participants from various sectors of the legal community allows for a knowledgeable exchange of information and strategies. As one town hall participant said, "With a judge, a litigator, a transaction attorney, trained counselors and others, the conversations flowed well."

Participants are offered the option to sign

in anonymously by changing the name on the sign-in screen and deactivating their camera, or choosing to call in by telephone, which would show only a phone number, not a name. This option has allowed for a more personal and open exchange.

LAP has received an extremely positive response to the monthly town halls. One Member wrote, "Listening to comments about uncertainty, difficulties with accomplishing administrative tasks, filing, coordination of transactions and other pre-COVID matters that we used to take for granted helped calm my anxieties with such concerns."

Personal and Professional Self-Care

The COVID-19 crisis is a marathon, not a sprint. With no clear end in sight, it is more important than ever to share the information discussed at the CLE and subsequent town halls. The past six months of uncertainty and change has been challenging. This uncertainty is likely to continue into the fall and winter months, and possibly into 2021.

The first step discussed in LAP's programming has been attorney self-care. While it is normal to experience stress, anxiety, and sadness during times of crisis, it is important to be aware of serious warning signs so that help can be sought out. Prolonged anxiety or stress can lead to depression, substance or alcohol use, or other compulsive behaviors. Particularly in the case of COVID-19, obsessively watching the news has been detrimental to our mental health. Taking note of issues such as having difficulty sleeping, concentrating or making decisions, feeling especially fatigued, over or under eating, having difficulty controlling anxious or

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The Value in Membership

Bridget Ryan

During these times of uncertainty, it is more important now than ever for the legal profession to come together. In response to the global pandemic, the Nassau County Bar Association (NCBA) has adapted to this new normal, making membership even more valuable. Over 4,000 NCBA Members and staff have come together during these uncertain times to create a stronger and more unified bar association. As times continue to change, the NCBA will continue to grow and adapt, continuing to provide exceptional and relevant services to Members.

CLE On-Demand and Virtual Committee Meetings

The NCBA is now offering CLE on Demand, a new way to earn continuing legal education credit. Members can earn up to 12 FREE CLE credits by viewing previously recorded programs whenever and wherever is most convenient for them—at home, at the office, or even on the go! Membership also includes unlimited FREE live CLE, FREE committee CLE, FREE Bridge-the-Gap weekend, and more. Members can find these programs online and register for them by visiting the NCBA website at www.nassaubar.org, or by contacting the Nassau Academy of Law at academy@nassaubar.org or (516) 747-4464.

In addition to virtual and on-demand CLE programs, many NCBA Committee meetings are being held virtually on Zoom to ensure that Members are still able to actively participate on their chosen committees in a safe and efficient way. NCBA Members can cultivate close relationships and referrals through participation in over 50 substantive committees that provide Members the opportunity to socialize with leaders in their legal field and other attorneys who practice in your area of law.

Virtual committee meetings are always private and secure. Only committee members and previously approved speakers are given the link and allowed access into the

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TO LAWYERS AND JUDGES**

alcohol or drug use, depression or
other mental health problems
Call Lawyer Assistance Program
(888)408-6222



First Ever Member Appreciation BBQ at the Bar Drive-By Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Although this year was not our typical BBQ at the Bar due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to thank all of our Members and Corporate Partners who attended our first-ever BBQ at the Bar Drive-By and donated non-perishable goods to our food drive. We missed you and cannot wait to see you again soon. Here's to the 2020-2021 Bar year!

Special thanks to our Corporate Partners for helping to make this special event happen: AssuredPartners Northeast, Regina Vetere Champion Office Suites, Roger Kahn PrintingHouse Press, John Farrell RealtimeReporting Inc., Ellen Birch Tech ACS, Mauricio Vides and Juan Vides Tradition Title Agency, Karen Keating

Photos by Hector Herrera



Assistance ...

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fearful thoughts, being irritable and lacking patience, or engaging in other unhealthy or compulsive behaviors should be assessed regularly.

Members of the LAP Committee also discussed "Ten Tips to Stay Sane," which included: 1) create a space to do work and a space to relax; 2) manage expectations of ourselves and others; 3) create a routine; 4) set boundaries; 5) practice tolerating uncertainty; 6) strengthen self-care; 7) reach out to others; 8) be of service to others; 9) do something that you enjoy; and 10) create a gratitude list. These tips still apply today, even as we venture from home and back into a work setting.

In addition to personal self-care, LAP has also spoken about the importance of professional self-care. It is important to ensure you have the technological tools to succeed at home, and to stay current on the executive orders, court procedures, judge's rules, and availability. It is important to be realistic about what we can and cannot accomplish in our practices given that our "new normal" is changing week by week, without much

notice.

As we continue to care for ourselves, we must look to our colleagues and clients to ensure that they are doing well under the circumstances. Continuing to collaborate with colleagues will reduce feelings of isolation. This can be achieved by continuing to hold virtual meetings regularly with colleagues. If your office has reopened, hold a socially distant, in-person meeting to reignite the feelings of teamwork and collegiality.

As for clients, it is crucial to maintain contact with them and continually educate them on their legal options and rights, which frequently change pursuant to different executive orders and court rules. Being flexible is key, as legal plans and strategies change. We must also manage their expectations and anxieties about how the pandemic is affecting their case, prolonged delays, and other complications while assuring them that you are always available to assist them, in good times and in bad times.

Seeing positive changes has been encouraging, such as restaurants, offices, and schools reopening, in part or in whole, and the numbers of infections and deaths decreasing in New York. However, we are all still struggling to adjust to new versions of "normal" each week and each month.

Participants in LAP Town Hall described that once they got into a groove, managing the new demands of working from home and caring for young children, they were told that everything is changing again. Around June 2020, many of us were told that offices are reopening, just as we had finally created and developed a routine. Not only were camps closed for the summer, but many were told that their child's school is reopening in September with new safety protocols and schedule changes to navigate, all while managing existing clients, attending virtual court appearances, bringing in new business, and collecting receivables.

These changes—often sudden and with little notice—can cause stress and anxiety. Learning coping strategies is key to managing the constant changes to our daily lives. Effective coping strategies include knowing when to set boundaries, recognizing triggers, taking time out to walk or exercise, eating a well-balanced diet, and getting enough rest. It is also critical to know when to reach out for help, and so often do attorneys have trouble reaching out for assistance.

If you find that you are having difficulty managing your thoughts or you are concerned about the amount that you are drinking, eating, or you are engaging in other

compulsive behaviors, you may have a problem for which there is help. If you find that you are sad or anxious most of the time, are having difficulty sleeping, are struggling with personal and professional relationships, the Lawyer Assistance Program is here for you. LAP—along with members of the Lawyer Assistance Committee—provide free, confidential services to the legal community. These services include peer support, crisis intervention, evaluation, referrals, professional supportive counseling, outreach, education, prevention, and wellness programs. Eckhardt is currently providing confidential counseling services via Doxy.me, a HIPAA compliant secure video platform.

LAP is committed to helping members of the legal community stay healthy and productive during these challenging times. Contact LAP at (516) 512-2618 or eckhardt@nassaubar.org for help. The Suicide Prevention Hotline is (800) 273-8255 or can be texted at 741741.

Thank you to Jamie Rosen, past co-chair of the NCBA Mental Health Law Committee, for her contributions to this article.