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Continuing to Manage – Mental Health, Resilience
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Program materials



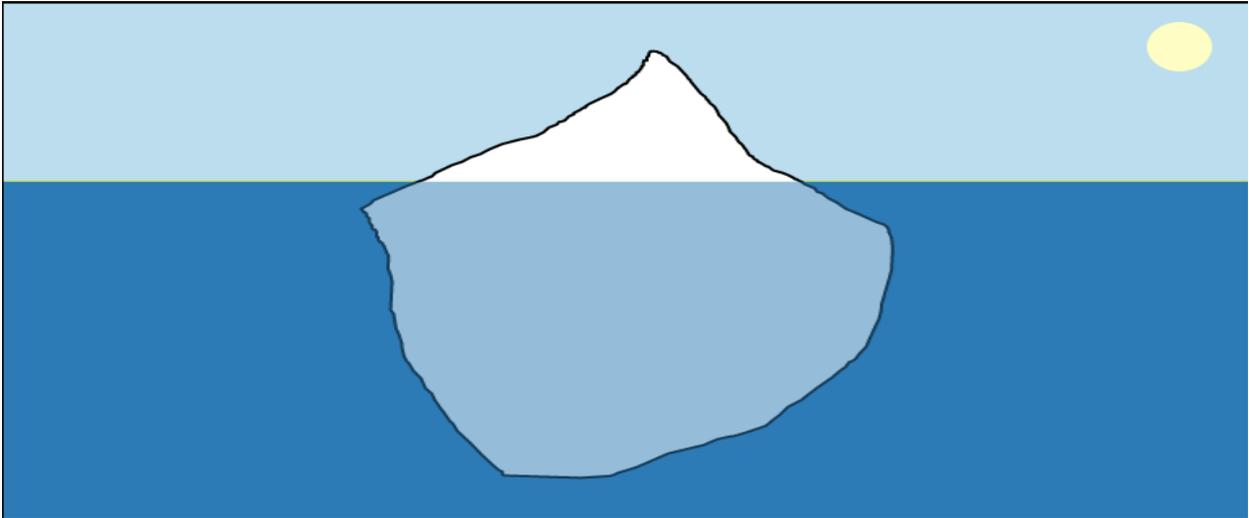
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How to Better Support a High Performing Workforce and Yourself During the Pandemic

In January of 2021 I had a breakdown. For reasons that I elaborate on below, I shared my experience on Twitter.

Since then some people have gently asked if I would be willing to speak about my experience in more detail in a public forum. I cannot. But I do wish to share a few thoughts about my personal experience as I am very concerned that I am just the tip of the iceberg and there are many others out there going through similar circumstances. It is my hope through writing this that the high performers and employers of high performers in my network can learn from my unfortunate experience. Although I am a lawyer, I believe that this experience may be helpful to others working in high performance environments.

So - What Happened To Me?

I spent the better part of six weeks in bed. All of my litigation dates were cancelled or handled by colleagues. I could not fulfil my duties on a new investigation that I was excited about and had to turn two other extremely interesting mandates away.

Up until the day it all came crashing down I was exceeding my personal targets and I had just come off my most productive and profitable year - ever. I had always worked extremely

hard, going back to when I juggled multiple jobs throughout University, and never took more than two weeks off ever in my professional life.

So, what on earth happened? It is hard to say and I believe the seriousness of my situation grew gradually over an extended period of time. I attribute the ultimate collapse to a combination of things that came to a head at once. Those circumstances that I think have a broader application are outlined below.

First, it was incredibly challenging to be extremely busy and building a growing practice at a time where decisions are generally being made based on the very reasonable assumption that the economy is in crisis and there is a requirement for cut backs. Many high performers may see personal "success" during hard times and are doing so without the usual supports. This is obviously more challenging than in the Before Times.

Second, busy high performers who are directly responsible for earning money for the business are under tremendous pressure to keep the money flowing - not only for themselves but to sustain their colleagues and support staff. The focus on collections takes the focus off of other important aspects of the workplace such as wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, mentorship, and the importance of having fun and taking a break from the daily grind.

Third, the work from home life does not provide much opportunity to initiatively see if a colleague is struggling the way we do when everyone works from an office. High performers may not be used to asking for help or communicating the seriousness of their situation (or even recognizing that they are in a "situation"). Had I been in the office, my door would have always been closed, my hair would have been a mess, the dark circles under my eyes would have been obvious, there would not have been any smiles and there would have been days that I would have just left to go back to bed. It is one thing to ask for more assistance. It is another for everyone to see for themselves that you clearly need it.

Fourth (and for me this was actually the least significant factor), there is the added layer of a global pandemic and the worry we may have about our family and society in general. I consider myself fortunate to not be homeschooling children and am not personally

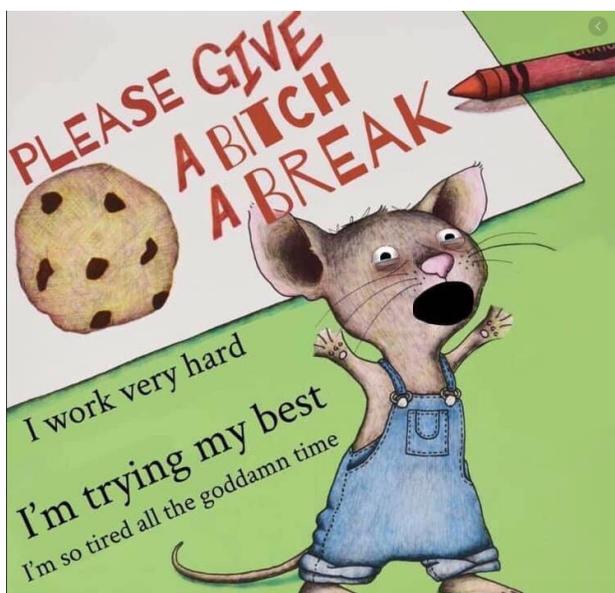
responsible for caring for an elderly relative right now. High performers with that added responsibility need to be especially watched and supported by their employers and colleagues.

Ultimately, after an incredibly challenging and "successful" year in 2020, I looked ahead at what I was supposed to be able to tackle in 2021 and realized that I just could not possibly do it anymore. Fortunately, after an extended hiatus and substantial assistance, I have found part of myself again. But not before about two months of lost productivity, significant lost revenue to the firm and tremendous lost opportunities turned away.

I think some lessons can be learned from my personal experience both for employers/managers of high performing people and for high performers themselves. I think these lessons are applicable to a lot of workplaces and environments that attempt to foster a culture of high performance.

Be Mindful of When You and Your High Performers Need a Break

If I am honest with myself, I should have taken an extended break at least 6-8 months before my body left me no choice and completely shut down. I had felt like the poor mouse in the image below for a while (try not to be offended by the language). This image was shared on Twitter by another young female lawyer many months ago and I quickly made it the background on my iPad. That probably should have been my clue that my time for an



extended vacation and perhaps professional help was long passed.

There is always going to be more work to do, another interesting or important mandate that you just need to finish and people that you do not want to disappoint. There is never a good time to be away. But you **need** to take the time anyway.

As the high performer, you need to be aware of the signs that you need a break and act on

them. I now know what those clear signs are for me: not being excited about but dreading new files, growing annoyance upon the receipt of every email and difficulty sleeping.

As the employer or manager of high performers, you need to encourage your people to take breaks. Make sure they are aware of the supports available to them within your organization and the process of how to access them. An important point that I think many employers miss is making sure that your people have the capacity and time available to actually attend meetings, seminars and other resources in order to support their health and wellbeing. Be on the lookout for individuals going lengthy periods of time working excessive hours and working on stressful mandates. Rather than rewarding people for excessive hours worked, consider whether there is a way to better balance the workload among your people or consider hiring more people. Listen when your high performers come to you for assistance. Be direct about offering assistance if you notice the warning signs.

Consider If Easy Changes Can Be Made

Without getting into some of the specifics of my situation, there may be little things that you may consider altering that have the potential to have a large impact on your personal well being. Often these things do not cost money or additional resources. Consider this to be the low hanging fruit.

I had way too much time to think during my extended leave. I read quite a bit about making these small changes. I realized that there were several minor things that had a negative impact on my mood and elevated my stress levels.

I have adopted some changes and other suggests I have come across are still aspirational. Some examples include: development of better workflow systems, creating boundaries and sticking to them, being realistic with client expectations and deadlines, checking email less frequently, implementing rules which reduce overall email traffic, automatically directing certain emails out of your main inbox (yes I have an overwhelming hatred of email), limiting the news you consume as so much of it is negative, social media breaks, and learning mindfulness/grounding techniques for when you do struggle.

As an employer or manager of a high performing yet stressed out workforce, consider whether there are minor changes that might yield big impacts. I recently learned about some of these while attending a Women's Law Conference. Some workplaces have implemented the following:

- no emails in the evenings or weekends unless it relates to an urgent matter - otherwise encourage use of the "delayed delivery" feature or make it clear in the subject or at the beginning of the email that a response until the next business day is not required.
- no internal meetings on Fridays to allow for a day of uninterrupted work.
- no internal meetings after 6 pm.
- no scheduling of meetings that could have been an email.
- meeting in smaller groups which facilitate discussion rather than meetings where participants watch a small few speak in order to foster engagement.
- encouraging flexible work arrangements to better accommodate parents who may have children at home by making sure parents know your existing policies and that you support them in adopting the schedule that best suits them.

Be Direct About the Support You Require and Listen to Requests for Support

I am still working on this one. But are there specific, concrete things that you absolutely need to improve your work life in order to continue to be a high performer? If so, ask for them clearly and directly. Even if they cost money and resources. Be specific about the problem that you are trying to solve and offer a solution or multiple options.

As a manager/employer in receipt of these requests, trust that your high performers know what they need to continue performing at that capacity and to be successful. In times of crisis, you cannot afford to lose your high performing individuals to burnout or to a competitor.

Encourage the Development of Informal Support Networks

I first disclosed my personal challenges on Twitter on #BellLetsTalk day. I did not plan to make the disclosure. At the time I had been off work for over a week and was mostly hiding in the darkness of my room. I probably never would have done so if my leave did not correspond with a day that encourages talking about mental health. But I am glad I did.

The response I received was overwhelming. It resulted in a number of highly successful individuals reaching out to me about their own experiences. This assisted in my own recovery. I learned that many people I admired managed their careers with the support of therapists and medication and that they had taken extended medical breaks. Individuals shared stories about how they managed returning to work and ensuring they did not end up back in the same place - which is my biggest personal fear. Many spoke positively about their experience making use of the Member Assistance Program available to my profession which provides access to therapists with experience working with high performance professionals - a resource I quickly took advantage of and benefited from greatly.

More recently I spoke with three younger lawyers who reached out to me. They were on a similar path that I had went down and I hope that I may have helped them change course. If I had reached out to someone, many months ago, my personal path could have been different.

If you are a high performer that feels that they are on the path to crisis, reach out to a colleague. Send me a message. Do not go down the path alone assuming the only option is eventual burnout. Doing so is not a sign of weakness but a way to help your business and productivity in the long run.

If you are a manager or employer of high performers, encourage the exchange of experiences. If you have struggled, talk about it with your staff. Consider the development of internal support groups or discussions where stories can be shared. I learned about such a group that is very active at the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General and was delighted when some of them reached out to speak with me.

Schedule Regular Time for Interaction and Encourage Others to Do So

You may be surprised to read that leading up to my collapse I was doing many of the things that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. I had decreased my alcohol consumption considerably. I was running 3-4 times a week and training to run a half marathon. I had lost 30 pounds in just over a year by eating better, drinking less, and exercising more. I was incredibly happy to be spending more time with my husband than ever before. I had spent more time on myself than I had since approximately 2015 and was the fittest that I had been since finishing law school.

But one thing I was missing was social interaction. On bad work days in the Before Times, I would call a friend, leave work early, and drink Prosecco. As unhealthy a habit as that may have been, it was a social outlet and a way to blow off steam that I was clearly missing. I also regularly attended client events and lawyer networking events and was involved in a number of committees. The pandemic and the crushing demands of my practice put an end to all of those things.

As a social person, I realized that I am missing the social interaction with people outside of my Firm and that those interactions were among the favourite parts of my job. A change I am implementing upon my return to work is attempting to schedule a phone call or Zoom meeting with a new person - or a person that I have not heard from in a long time - each week to try to spark some of the joy missing from the lack of these interactions. You may get a message from me about this (or feel free to reach out and offer up your time!).

Employers and managers should give their people the time for such interactions - just as they would approve afternoons off with clients for golf or curling or attendance at social gatherings before the pandemic. Your high performers should not be so overwhelmed with work that they cannot engage in these activities.

Going Forward

I am still working through my experience. I am not back to being 100% or even 75%. I have been incredibly grateful for the words of support from my clients, colleagues, friends and

acquaintances. I am particularly grateful to one lawyer who left me a voicemail last week offering to move an upcoming date as he knew I was away for medical reasons and he did not want to force the matter ahead at my personal expense. I am also extraordinarily grateful for one colleague who reminded me that a legal career is a marathon and not a sprint and that there was no need to rush my return. It is the good people like them that will help us all get through these challenging times.

I am being so open about my experience because I fear that the current situation for many high performers (not just the lawyers in my network) is like an iceberg. A few people have shared publicly that they are struggling. But the number of people talking about it is just the tip of the iceberg visible above the water. I am very concerned about a number of my colleagues, friends, clients, and Twitter acquaintances who seem to be on the path that led me to a dark place. Maybe my own experience has made me more in tune to the warning signs - but they are certainly right there for everyone to see who bothers to look. We need to realize that we are all going through a shared experience, that productivity is not likely to be the same and that we need to create more time and safe space to care for ourselves and one another. If we do, we will create a better and perhaps even more productive and healthy place for everyone going forward.

I may revisit the topic later as I continue to work through my own experience. I would love to hear from others - in particular those who have returned to work following similar circumstances or those who have other ideas on how we can better support each other (both during the current pandemic crisis and afterwards).

Erin Durant
Lawyer, Ottawa

Why Speaking About Mental Health as a Leader is Not Brave—but Necessary.

On February 21 I decided to **share my own experience with burnout**. I did so because I was observing in my friends, colleagues and on social media the same "warning signs" that I was experiencing late in 2020 and early 2021. I am not overly surprised that the original article spread like wildfire throughout both the legal profession and the business world as many seem to be going through the same experience. **The Globe and Mail** recently featured an article on the subject, referencing the experiences of many, brainstorming causes and offering some possible remedies.

Since my article, I have received messages from hundreds of lawyers, business professionals, self-employed entrepreneurs and employees of all levels. I have had helpful discussions with people at various stages of their journey towards a healthier career. I have also heard from many young people, mostly lawyers, who were on the same dangerous path that led me to my own struggles. My discussions with young lawyers were most helpful in realizing that sharing my experience was not just a "brave" thing to do — as some have said—but a necessary thing for me to do as a leader in my firm and in the profession. Talking about mental health and well-being needs to be normalized.

Younger people or new members of your organization may not yet know how leadership will react to any sign of "weakness" or need for support. In high performing professions, most of us have always exceeded expectations, been the top of our class, received awards for our hard work, and been rewarded with bonuses for exceptional hours. Other than the need for direction regarding new substantive problems we encounter in our work life, we rarely have had the need to ask for help or accommodation. Getting help to maintain boundaries, ensure your well-being and carrying a manageable workload is not "weakness" but a way to ensure the continued success of your career and the organization that you work with.

And it starts with our leaders. Here are some wonderful ideas shared with me by others of how other leaders can (a) help those that they work with feel comfortable with disclosing that they need assistance and (b) help their team maintain a more healthy and productive work life:

- In addition to checking in with people regarding workload, **normalize asking people how they are feeling and share your own experience**. Those who are struggling may feel the need to maintain their same workload at a time when they should be scaling back. The more that team members hear their leaders talk about mental health, the more people will be comfortable sharing when they are struggling.
- Create an environment where **taking real time off is actively encouraged**. Ask when was the last time one of your mentees took a vacation. Suggest that they take what is allotted to them. Help them direct email communications on urgent matters to others within the organization so that they can truly disconnect. Do not

contact people who are on vacation unless there is a real and pressing crisis that only they can possibly deal with.

- **Model healthy behaviours.** Take time to reflect on your own health and wellness. If you are implementing any changes, talk about them with your teams. If you have a self-help routine that drives your performance, share it with others. It is normal for your subordinates to model the behaviours demonstrated by leaders. Taking time to improve your own wellness will have a positive impact on those around you.
- Ensure that there is **awareness of available resources**. Consider having a single location that outlines your organization's mental health resources. Include in that location: the contact information for any Employee Assistance Program, details about any short-term or long-term disability programs and the information required to access those programs, who the employee should contact within the organization to request a leave of absence, and any proactive programs that the organization has to assist with mental health challenges (such as wellness apps, employee support groups, mental health mentors etc.). If an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis, even sorting out how to access the help they will need will seem overwhelming. Make it easy on them.
- **Actively manage workload.** The World Health Organization recently classified burnout as an **occupational phenomenon**. A key element of burnout is chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It includes increased mental distance from one's job, feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, feelings of energy depletion/exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy. Many who I have spoken with indicate that these feelings began for them due to workload issues - both having too much of it as well as having too little meaningful work. Ask whether individuals on your teams have too much work or if they need more work that is meaningful to them. Review available performance data and watch for individuals that routinely work beyond desired levels. Actively share the workload around more equitably. Hire more people when necessary before your team approaches burnout.
- **Involve your people in projects to improve the workplace.** A common question that I have been asked since I shared my experience is what can organizations do to build a better environment for their people. I replied briefly to one tweet by saying "a) ask people what they need, and b) give it to them." A lot of

leaders make assumptions about what might be helpful or are approached by vendors with the next greatest program or application. What people need may actually not cost any money and may just be a daily annoyance that they experience in their workflows. Involving your people in these discussions may lead to some very easy solutions that improve the quality of the work life.

- Evaluate and **reduce non-essential meetings**. Face-time at meetings that are not essential for advancing work product is a source of much time and frustration. With only so many hours in every day, a workforce needs time to do the work. Take a critical look at your ongoing meetings organized by all aspects of your organization. Can any be combined? Can any be eliminated? Can the attendee list be reduced? Can essential information be communicated in other ways? Can Podcasts or On-Demand videos be created? The less time people spend in meetings, the more time they have to complete their work and the more time they have to themselves for self-care when the workday ends.
- **Organize smaller meetings involving active discussion**. Where meetings are necessary, consider whether they can be in smaller groups which encourage active participation and the sharing of ideas rather than a setting where a few leaders speak to a large group. Active discussion and the sharing of ideas can assist in alleviating feelings of "negativism and cynicism" that is a key component of burnout. It helps people feel that their opinions are valued and that their attendance at the meeting is for a purpose.
- **Consolidate non-essential email communications**. For many professionals in many industries the proliferation of email communications is a huge problem. For me, personally, I receive between 150 and 200 emails every single day. Individuals in large organizations receive a large number of internal emails. Ask yourself if any of this information can be consolidated into a weekly email containing essential "must-read" information. Consider whether there is another location to post the information - such as an internal website. Consider whether your team can implement or better use tools like Slack or Jabber to move discussions out of the email inbox. Consider restricting the use of the "reply all" button.
- **Actively guard employee personal time**. Do not email or call team members outside of their regular work hours unless there is an emergency. Normalize that practice throughout your teams. Make use of Outlooks "delay delivery" feature for

that purpose. If you notice an employee contacting you outside their work hours, have a discussion with them about why they feel the need to do so. Actively encourage them to protect their time. I recall my old boss sending me a kind email after I had emailed him a research memorandum late at night on a weekday. He thanked me for the work but encouraged me not to spend time in the evenings working on non-urgent tasks and that the time is better used with my husband. That email has stuck with me all of these years.

- **Treat mental health like any other business risk.** A burnt out, unhealthy and disengaged workplace is a legitimate business risk. It should be treated just as seriously as other risk areas such as cyber security or physical health concerns. The risks involve include both the quality of the work product as well as loss of profitability. In almost all industries, the most valuable resource is the people performing the work. Active and purposeful steps towards supporting and improving the mental health of your workforce needs to be taken.

I'd like to thank everyone who has been in touch with me after my first article. I will never have the time to reply to everyone but know that I appreciate the support, words of wisdom (some of which I have repeated above) and the time you have spent sharing your stories. Although I have not always replied, I have read and will continue to read every message. There is truly an army of fantastic people out there who have forged brilliant careers out of their own challenges. Together we will build a better workplace and profession for everyone.

Take care of yourselves and others,

Erin Durant

Happier where you are, or getting to a better place

How to improve satisfaction and reduce stress wherever you are

Lawyering is stressful. Lawyers expect to handle the pressures of solving individuals' high-stakes, emotionally-charged problems.

What lawyers don't necessarily anticipate is that they may suffer stress from being stuck in a work situation that is not their first choice. Competition for jobs may mean that a lawyer needs to accept work outside his or her preferred area of practice, work for a difficult boss, or work in a high-pressure, long-hours environment.

The ultimate cure for this kind of stress is to find another career that is a better fit. But if there are good reasons for sticking it out for a while, there are steps you can take to be happier where you are.

When work is uninspiring (or outside your preferred area)

During articling or in the first few years of your career, you may need to accept work in an area of practice outside your main area of interest. You may even have to do rote or low-autonomy work. After putting

Strategies to help you cope

Feeling overworked, under-challenged, or unappreciated? Try these strategies to improve the quality of your work environment:

- Set a time limit by which you'll make a move if things don't improve
- Learn a new skill or try a new technology – even if the current context you use it in is uninspiring
- List the aspects you like best – and least – about your current work, to gain insight about how to steer your career in the future
- Find ways to use the skills you don't use at work in other areas of your life – for example, volunteer on a residents' association executive, or coach kids' sports
- Study and practice the Buddhist principle of non-attachment or other spiritual discipline or philosophy that helps you improve emotional and mental balance
- Impress yourself: take new risks; or set a "personal best" standard for a task (for example, drafting a lease agreement, negotiating a price) and strive to beat it
- Find an inspiring mentor outside the organization
- When your workload feels overwhelming, aim to do the work while rejecting the stress – consciously choose your reactions
- Identify and reaffirm the reasons you've chosen a legal career
- Address your lifestyle so that you can better cope with work: eat well, exercise, spend time outside, reconnect with friends.

in the effort to obtain a legal education, this can be very discouraging. In the interests of reducing your student debt and feeding yourself and your family, you may have decided that you need to stay put until something better comes along. What can you do to find meaning in uninspiring work?

Hone general skills

Regardless of the context, there are certain skills you can hone in almost any legal environment. You can gain proficiency with unfamiliar technologies. You can work on your writing style, aiming for clarity and effectiveness. You can develop your listening skills. Improve whatever skills you can, so that when the right opportunity comes along, you're more likely to be an excellent candidate for the job.

Practice self-analysis

Make an effort to learn from your frustration. What are you looking for, in a career, that you feel is lacking in your current work? Do you crave one-on-one interaction with clients? The authority to make important decisions? Variety in the legal issues you encounter? Identifying the features of the right work for you can help identify what you would like to do instead, helping you to steer your future career development. In the meantime, if you feel you can have a positive conversation with your current co-workers/practice leaders, let them know how you would like to grow. They are busy, too – maybe they have not turned their minds to your aspirations, and there could yet be a win-win outcome achieved.

Find your inspiration elsewhere

Work need not be the sole source of personal fulfillment. If your work doesn't offer opportunities to use skills that you value, you can try using those skills in other parts of your life.

If you enjoy public speaking but don't get to do it at work, you could look for opportunities to do so in your community, perhaps in connection with a hobby. If you enjoy being a leader but are very junior in your workplace, you might seek leadership roles in community organizations. If you find fulfillment in making a difference for people in need, but your area of practice does not align with that personal value, you can donate your time and skills to charitable organizations that inspire you. Instead of letting an uninspiring job sour your overall attitude to life, use the mental energy you retain by not being challenged at work to build a more satisfying personal and community life. You may also develop competencies that serve you well in your next – more inspiring – work environment.

Put a limit on it

If you are truly miserable in your current situation, mitigate your negative feelings by treating your current position as a time-limited experiment. Determine how long you are willing to stay, define what needs to change and which strategies you are willing to employ to effect those changes, and commit to moving on if you don't see progress. In the meantime, maintain your network of contacts and your positive relationships with coworkers; in other words, no “checking out.”

When you have a difficult supervisor or colleague

Interpersonal problems can add an enormous amount of stress to work life. A recent Danish study¹ found that much more so than a heavy workload, a feeling of being treated unfairly by one's boss is likely to lead to worker depression. What can you do to minimize the impact of a difficult supervisor on your mood and mental health?

Practice non-attachment

The most powerful thing you can do to minimize the impact of a supervisor's actions on your mental health is to actively resist taking those actions personally. It's important to give appropriate consideration to feedback and to put effort into finding ways to collaborate, but when a supervisor or colleague's demands or criticisms are unreasonable or excessive, they can generate counterproductive stress. Everyone starts out wanting to impress a new boss, but once it becomes clear that a supervisor or colleague's support and approval are being unreasonably withheld, it's emotionally healthier to practice “non-attachment” – a concept embraced by Buddhist practitioners, among others. Non-attachment involves letting go of one's desires, including one's investment in particular outcomes, such as winning the approval of others.

Non-attachment can help you weather a wide range of challenging situations and emotions. The article “Let it R.A.I.N. – a journey into mindfulness” on titleplus.ca offers a four-step process for handling difficult emotions.

Another clever technique to avoid taking a colleague's actions personally is to imagine yourself as an actor playing a role, and to “watch” yourself enduring an unpleasant interaction, rather than feeling yourself enduring it. What do you have to say for yourself? What are the feelings you observe? What is your facial expression? Seeing yourself from the perspective of an outside observer, and making adjustments to your own behaviour can help you feel like you have some control over the situation.

¹ The findings of the study were published in three articles in the scientific journals *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *Psychoneuroendocrinology* and *The Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*. See a summary at: sciencenordic.com/boss-not-workload-causes-workplace-depression

Fail better

Doron Gold, Staff Clinician and Presenter with the Law Society's Member Assistance Program (MAP)², notes that particularly in the early years of their careers, many lawyers have a sense of irretrievability: they believe that if they make a mistake they will never recover. The truth is that there are very few permanent mistakes. Working in an environment in which it feels like you can't do anything right may be a golden opportunity to take risks that help you learn and grow. If you're going to be criticized no matter what you do, why not take bolder risks? Fail bigger and better – propose the strategies and defend the positions you truly support.

Impress yourself

If there is no way to impress the boss, at least you can impress yourself by practising according to your personal convictions. Learn how to generate internal motivation and a strong sense of self-worth. This kind of personal development will serve you well throughout your career.

One of the dangers of a difficult boss is that a steady diet of criticism can lead you to doubt your own abilities and to undervalue your skills when it comes time to look for new work. Try to keep a sense of perspective on your skills and protect your self-image. Got a compliment from a judge, a colleague or a client? Remember it, and give it at least as much weight as you give to the negative feedback you are receiving.

No mentors? Look further afield

Instead of stewing about the lack of role models within your organization, look outside the organization for mentors in the profession at large. As long as you are respectful of their time, many senior lawyers will be happy to teach you a thing or two. Our “Managing the mentoring relationship” booklet, available for download from practicepro.ca, provides tips about how to structure the mentoring relationship so that it's safe and rewarding for both mentor and mentee. It is a common misconception that acting as a mentor exposes a lawyer to a greater likelihood of a professional liability claim. In fact, LAWPRO rarely sees claims arising out of mentoring relationships. We believe that mentoring can reduce claims. And to encourage mentoring, we will waive any deductible and claims history levy surcharge for a claim made against a mentor and arising out of a mentoring relationship, provided some simple guidelines have been followed (see page 20 of the booklet).

When the hours are long or the pressure is high (or both)

Depending on the nature of your legal career, the hours may be long, unpredictable, or both. Feeling tired in the face of a grueling schedule is normal; feeling hopeless and depressed is not. Don't

ignore symptoms and thoughts that go beyond the normal stress associated with a demanding job.

Rethink your reactions

It's a cliché, but there is some truth to it: life is 10 per cent about what happens to you, and 90 per cent about how you react. Consider trying to change how you think about your workload. After all, the work will still be there whether you feel stressed or calm in the face of it. See the passage on page 15 about non-attachment, and remind yourself that feeling stress is not the only possible reaction available to you.

Be clear about the “why”

When your workload is high enough to cause you significant stress, it's important to reflect on why you have chosen your particular career. There are areas of practice, locations, and organizations in which you can practise law without working extremely long hours. If you find yourself in an especially high-pressure work situation, consider whether the sacrifices are worth it.

When asked how they cope with very long hours, many lawyers explain that they feel that the work they do aligns with their values and gives them a strong sense of purpose. Feeling as though you are making a difference and doing work that has value can greatly reduce your stress. If, on the other hand, you *don't* experience this sense of personal reward, long hours are harder to justify.

Live well outside of work

If you have no power over your work schedule, you can improve your life satisfaction by working on things over which you do have control. In other words, make sure the rest of your life is ship-shape.

To cope better even on stress-filled days, be sure to take the time to eat properly, get some exercise, prioritize sleep, and get out in the fresh air and sunlight. Many people find that meditation, mindfulness practice, or yoga help them feel calmer and more centred. Finally, take the time to nurture existing relationships with family and friends, and strive to build new ones. Having a supportive social circle can reduce your stress, make your days feel more meaningful, and even improve your physical health.

Invest in yourself

Hardly anyone spends their entire career in his or her “dream job,” and many lawyers will work in less-than-ideal settings. Invest in the best version of yourself by taking steps to be happier where you are, and you will be ready when opportunity finally knocks. ■

Nora Rock is Corporate Writer and Policy Analyst at LAWPRO.

² The Member Assistance Program (MAP), co-funded by the Law Society of Upper Canada and by LAWPRO, can be reached at 1-855-403-8922 (TTY: 1-866-433-3305). Online resources can be accessed at myassistplan.com

Independent but engaged: Support networks for solos

Nora Rock

There are plenty of good reasons for choosing sole practice, or for transitioning into sole practice after practising with a firm. You may have chosen to practise in a small community; you may have opened a sole practice because you couldn't find the right fit with a firm in your chosen area of practice; or you may be a person with a naturally independent work style and a desire to be your own boss. Whatever a lawyer's reasons, sole practice is a choice that can be profitable and personally rewarding.

Practising solo, however, presents special challenges. From a risk management perspective, it can be more challenging, because lawyers who practise alone lack colleagues close at hand with whom to discuss tricky legal issues. From a business perspective, it means that you alone are responsible for bringing in business; and business development activities take up precious time that you would otherwise spend doing the work that earns you money. Finally, from the perspective of life satisfaction and mental health, sole practice can be isolating.

With a small investment of time and energy, lawyers who practise alone can mitigate all of these risks by building a support network.

Make connecting with peers a priority

When you are trying to build a new business, it can be tempting to spend your days holed up in your office, working hard at "marketing" during the gaps between client matters. But making the effort to introduce yourself within the broader legal community will make marketing easier in the long run, and will ensure that you don't fall prey to the pitfalls of isolation.

Conversely, if your practice is well-established, you may feel that you are "too busy" to interact with your peers. This can be a mistake, because if you let your relationships with other lawyers fade away, it can be harder to find help when you need it – for example, if a health or family crisis forces you to take unexpected time off.

Meet your "senior partners"

Perhaps the most important category of connections new sole practitioners can make are with lawyers who have many years of experience. These lawyers are likely to be especially valuable to you as mentors.

Because successful and established lawyers are busy, it may take some effort to cultivate relationships with them; but lawyers who take the time to seek out mentors are often pleasantly surprised at their senior colleagues' willingness to help. One way to build relationships with potential mentors is to make referrals, either of an entire client matter, or, where possible, an issue related to a client's matter that is outside your current comfort zone, but is something you'd like to learn to do. For example, if you draft

wills but have never dealt with the intergenerational transfer of a farming business, you might refer the file to a more experienced lawyer, but ask for the opportunity to review the finished will (with the client's consent, of course) and to speak with the other lawyer about the issues.

You may also be able to gain a mentor by making yourself available as a backup to another sole practitioner – for example, by agreeing to file documents and receive courier packages when the lawyer is away, or to appear on his or her behalf to seek an adjournment should a last-minute conflict come up.

The benefits of mentoring flow in the other direction too: if you have been in practice a long time, taking the time to forge connections with new lawyers who come into your community can provide opportunities for you to learn about new technologies and new theories of practice.

To learn more about how to establish a productive mentoring relationship, you can download the practicePRO program's "[Managing a Mentoring Relationship](#)" booklet on the practicepro.ca website.

Meet your new “associates”

If you are not already a member of the Canadian and Ontario Bar associations, signing up is one of the easiest ways to build connections with lawyers in your community, and joining a practice section is a great way to meet lawyers in your particular area of practice. While these associations are perhaps best known for their continuing professional development programs, they also host general social and networking events, and not only in Toronto – there are a number of programs each year offered in other communities around Ontario. There are also local associations serving every part of the province. Besides the national, provincial, and district law associations, there are also associations that have been developed by lawyers who share practice interests, culture, or other demographics. These associations typically encourage mentorship, networking, and mutual support. A few examples:

- the Women's Law Association of Ontario
- the Criminal Trial Lawyers' Association
- the Hispanic Canadian Lawyers' Association
- the Family Lawyers' Association
- the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
- l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario

And there are many more.

Of course, just joining an association is not enough. To get the full benefit of this kind of community-building, consider volunteering in an administrative role, or offering to give a presentation at an association meeting. The idea is to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible to meet and converse with lawyers in your community and to build professional relationships and friendships. Don't only focus on introductions that will “be good for business.” Getting to know people who may not be an immediate source of client referrals can offer other kinds of help. For example, the connections you make may be great sources of advice about local judges' preferences with respect to court materials, contact information for experts, or even just basic career advice. Finally, consider joining a club or other special interest group in your community.

Impress your opponents

If you are new to a local legal community, you can make excellent connections simply by treating opposing counsel with courtesy and respect. Often, the lawyers best placed to assess your professionalism and competence are the ones sitting on the other side of the negotiating table. If you can establish that you are both a competent advocate for your client and a reasonable and courteous opponent, you will be on your way to being accepted, within your practice area, as a person who does quality legal work and is worthy of respect. You may even get referrals from lawyers who have come to trust you, and who need to turn away clients for conflicts or other reasons.

Being seen as a reasonable opponent often boils down to basic professional courtesy: being accessible (returning phone calls and emails); keeping your word; and being fair when it comes to agreeing to adjournments, requests to reschedule meetings, and requests to allow the other side to rectify minor errors. It also means avoiding sharp practice and dirty tricks.

Be seen

Finally, you can't expect a network of allies to come to you. If you want to develop a support network, you need to get out of your office and meet other lawyers in person. This may mean traveling to attend the occasional conference or CPD program in person (instead of just watching webcasts at your desk), serving on an association executive, volunteering at charity events (especially those sponsored by the legal community), or attending social events.

You can also be "seen" on social media – for example, on LinkedIn, on Twitter, or as a participant in a legal online community (listserv, chat room, message board). If you like to write, consider launching a blog, and invite lawyer colleagues to subscribe to your posts, or to prepare "guest posts". You can also visit other lawyers' blogs, and engage them via commentary.

Sole practice is not for everyone; but if it's the right fit for you and you invest time in building your network, you can make your mark while avoiding isolation and practice risks.

Nora Rock is Underwriting Counsel for LAWPRO



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YOUR SOURCE

A full circle of supports for lawyers and paralegals

The Law Society of Ontario strives to support you at all stages of your career – professionally and personally.

Practice Management Helpline

- Confidential telephone service for all Ontario lawyers and paralegals with questions about the rules of conduct or other professionalism and practice management topics.
- Experienced representatives and counsel are available to provide information and guidance.
- To access this service call 416-947-3315 or toll free 1-800-668-7380, ext. 3315, and select the Helpline when prompted, or email practicehelpline@lso.ca

Coach and Advisor Network (CAN)

- Connects lawyers and paralegals with those who seek to develop a specific skill or tackle a practice management issue.
- Commitments are as short as one 30-minute phone call or four hours over three months.
- Coaches and Advisors are continually in demand – the hours completed may be eligible towards annual CPD Requirement.
- To take part in CAN as a participant, Coach or Advisor visit lso.ca/CAN

Discrimination and Harassment Counsel

- Funded by the Law Society of Ontario – but 100% independent and confidential.
- Confidential and available free of charge to anyone who may have experienced discrimination or harassment by a lawyer, paralegal or licensee candidate within Ontario.
- Visit dhcounsel.on.ca or call 1-877-790-2200 or email assistance@dhcounsel.on.ca

Member Assistance Program

- Confidential service funded by and fully independent of the LSO provides, secure, web or telephone access to counselling, coaching and peer volunteers.
- Licensees can get professional help with issues related to addictions, mental or physical health, work-life balance, career, family and more.
- Visit myassistplan.com or call 1-855-403-8922.



YOUR SOURCE

EDI resources & CPD opportunities

As part of its mandate, the LSO integrates Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) values and principles into its policies, programs and procedures and recognizes the diversity of the legal professions and the public.

The following resources are focused on helping to facilitate and promote EDI throughout the professions. In many cases, these resources will help you meet your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements.

Do-It-Yourself EDI Toolkit for Workplaces

The LSO developed this toolkit to help legal workplaces design and deliver their own program focused on advancing EDI in the legal professions. The toolkit includes a Facilitator's Guide, Participant's Guide and Bibliography. Access the toolkit:

iso.ca/edi-programs#toolkit

Certified Specialist Program in Indigenous Legal Issues

Canada's first Indigenous specialist program includes three subspecialties, each with its own set of experience, knowledge and skills standards:

- Rights and Governance
- Litigation and Advocacy
- Corporate and Commercial

Learn more about this program and other areas of specialization at

iso.ca/certified-specialists

Guide for Lawyers Working with Indigenous Peoples

This Guide is intended to be a starting resource to help lawyers and others in the justice system to learn about Indigenous cultures and understand the interplay between Indigenous legal orders and the Canadian legal system.

Download the Guide here:

iso.ca/working-with-indigenous-peoples

CPD Programs

The LSO offers a diverse range of CPD programs in various formats throughout the year such as in-person programs, on-demand webcasts, electronic program materials, and E-Courses.

Visit store.iso.ca to learn more.

To assist licensees during this difficult time we have been releasing complimentary responsive content via store.iso.ca/cpdassists including:

Your Paralegal Legal Services Practice & COVID-19: What You Need to Know Now.

This program qualifies for 70 minutes of CPD Professionalism hours and is available free:

store.iso.ca/paralegal-covid-19

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Le Barreau de l'Ontario s'efforce de vous soutenir à tous les stades de votre carrière –
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Ligne d'aide à la gestion de la pratique

- Ce service téléphonique confidentiel pour les avocat(e)s et les parajuristes de l'Ontario répond aux questions sur les codes de déontologie ou sur d'autres sujets de gestion de la pratique et de professionnalisme.
- Les représentant(e)s chevronné(e)s, dont des avocat(e)s, sont à votre disposition pour offrir information et conseils.
- Pour vous prévaloir de ce service, composez le 416 947-3315 ou le numéro sans frais 1 800 668-7380, p. 3315 et sélectionnez Ligne d'aide, ou écrivez à practicehelpline@lso.ca

Réseau d'encadrement de la pratique (REP)

- Le REP connecte les avocat(e)s et les parajuristes avec les personnes qui cherchent à développer une compétence particulière ou à répondre à une question de gestion de la pratique.
- Un engagement peut durer aussi peu que 30 minutes au téléphone ou jusqu'à quatre heures sur trois mois.
- Nous avons continuellement besoin de conseillers et de formateurs – les heures consacrées au REP peuvent compter comme heures de FPC annuelle.
- Pour vous joindre au REP, comme participant, formateur ou conseiller, rendez-vous au lso.ca/REP

Conseil juridique en matière de discrimination et de harcèlement

- Financé par le Barreau de l'Ontario – mais 100 % indépendant et confidentiel.
- Service confidentiel et gratuit à quiconque aurait subi de la discrimination ou du harcèlement par un (une) avocat(e), un(e) parajuriste ou un(e) candidat(e) inscrit(e) au processus d'accès à la profession en Ontario.
- Allez au dhcounsel.on.ca/fr-ca, appelez le 1 877 790-2200 ou écrivez à assistance@dhcounsel.on.ca

Programme d'aide aux membres

- Ce service confidentiel financé par le Barreau et entièrement indépendant offre un accès en ligne ou téléphonique sécurisé à du counseling, de l'encadrement et du soutien par les pairs.
- Les titulaires de permis peuvent obtenir de l'aide professionnelle pour des problèmes de dépendance, de santé mentale ou physique, de conciliation travail-vie personnelle, de carrière ou de famille.
- Allez au www.monpam.com ou appelez le 1 855 403-8922.

VOTRE SOURCE

Ressources d'EDI et de FPC

Dans le cadre de son mandat, le Barreau intègre les valeurs et les principes d'égalité, de diversité et d'inclusion (EDI) dans ses politiques, programmes et procédures, et reconnaît la diversité des professions juridiques et du public.

Les ressources suivantes visent à promouvoir l'EDI dans toutes les professions. Souvent, ces ressources vous aideront à satisfaire à votre obligation de formation professionnelle continue (FPC).

Trousse d'outils pour créer votre propre EDI au travail

Le Barreau a créé cette trousse d'outils pour aider les lieux de travail juridiques à concevoir et à offrir leur propre programme pour promouvoir l'EDI dans les professions juridiques. La trousse d'outils contient un guide de l'animateur, un guide pour les participants et une bibliographie. Pour avoir accès à la trousse d'outils :

iso.ca/FPC-EDetl

Programme de spécialisation sur les enjeux juridiques autochtones

Le premier programme de spécialisation sur les enjeux juridiques autochtones au Canada comprend trois sous-spécialités, chacune ayant ses propres exigences et normes en matière d'expérience, de connaissances et de compétence :

- Droits et gouvernance
- Litige et représentation
- Sociétés et commerce

Pour en savoir plus sur ce programme et sur les autres domaines de spécialisation, allez au iso.ca/agrément-spécialistes

Guide pour les avocats qui travaillent avec des parties autochtones

Ce Guide est une ressource de départ pour aider les avocats et autres intervenants du système juridique à en savoir davantage sur les cultures autochtones et à comprendre l'interaction entre les ordres juridiques autochtones et le système de justice canadien.

Téléchargez le Guide ici :

iso.ca/travailler-avec-des-parties-autochtones

Programmes de FPC

Le Barreau offre une multitude de programmes de FPC dans divers formats durant l'année, comme des programmes en personne, des webémissions sur demande, des documents électroniques et des cours en ligne.

Allez au store.iso.ca pour en savoir plus.

Pour aider les titulaires de permis en cette période difficile, nous avons publié du contenu gratuit au store.iso.ca/cpdassists dont *Your Paralegal Legal Services Practice & COVID-19: What You Need to Know Now*. Ce programme accorde 70 minutes de FPC en professionnalisme et est offert sans frais au store.iso.ca/paralegal-covid-19

Restez branchés

- Ouvrez une session/inscrivez-vous au portail.
- Mettez votre catégorie à jour dans le répertoire des avocats et des parajuristes.
- Mettez votre adresse courriel à jour.
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It takes a village to build a lawyer:



The importance of mentors in your legal career

As a lawyer, you may have a good understanding of where to find historical legal documents, cases, or precedents, but what about advisers, or mentors, or counsellors? Starting a legal career can be an isolating experience, with many new lawyers spending time working alone while drafting documents or doing research. That's why it usually takes a deliberate effort to find effective mentors.

Mentorship builds better lawyers, and it also builds happier lawyers. Professionals benefitting from mentorship often find they have higher satisfaction with their careers and are more likely to feel capable performing their daily tasks. A strong network of knowledgeable and helpful confidants may be the most important investment you will make in your career, and this article will give you a sense of how to start building that network from day one.

Multiple relationships for multiple roles

When building mentor-type relationships, it's important to keep in mind that it's relationships, plural.

In their paper, *Is More Truly Merrier?: Mentoring and the Practice of Law*, Fiona Kay and Jean Wallace conclude that "individuals benefit more from having multiple mentors over the course of their career." It is the ability of professionals to draw on a "constellation" of mentors and a broad and diverse range of individuals for mentoring support that best portends success. Having multiple mentors leads lawyers to higher job satisfaction, better perceived

career success, better earnings, and a sense of real social value to their legal work. It also provides a new lawyer with a variety of perspectives, drawn from a broad range of experiences.

More importantly, having multiple mentor-figures allows many types of individuals to play different roles in a lawyer's career. For example, as a lawyer, you will sometimes be looking for the assistance of **teachers**. Learning about an unfamiliar area of the law, or staying up-to-date on new developments, is the purview of continuing professional development, higher education, or self-directed learning. At other times, you may be in need of **sponsors**: people that are able to act as personal references and provide networking contacts. Perhaps most importantly, lawyers may, at different points in their career, need to look beyond their professional mentors and advisors if they require the assistance of **counsellors** or mental-health professionals. These relationships are important, normal, and can be accessed through the Member Assistance Program available to all Ontario lawyers and law students (see page 17 for more information on the MAP).

Two other important forms of mentoring relationships are those of **advisor** and **coach**.

An **advisor** is someone that can help with a particular problem and has particular practice area expertise. This relationship will often be characterized by questions and answers, and may be with someone you seek help from only once.

A **coach**, on the other hand, is someone that can help you improve a particular skill, such as client communications, time management, or business development. Coaching relationships are built on a specific goal you wish to work toward.

The Law Society of Ontario's Coach and Advisors Network

Sole practitioners or those practising in small firms often have the most difficulty finding mentors. And while lawyers practising in larger firms will often have access to mentoring-type figures in both formal and informal contexts, they can often benefit from seeking assistance outside the firm.

Addressing this need is the mandate of the LSO's Coach and Advisor Network (CAN). Launched in November 2016, CAN is offered to all Ontario lawyers and connects those looking for coaches or advisors with experienced counsel that can offer assistance. As of June 2018, the program coordinated more than 200 volunteer senior lawyers from around the province who each have, on average, more than 20 years of experience.

CAN focuses exclusively on coordinating coaching and advising relationships. Advisors within CAN respond to one-off inquiries, completed in a single, confidential telephone call, and are usually matched to a lawyer seeking assistance within three days.

A coaching relationship, on the other hand, consists of five one-on-one meetings between parties and is usually completed within three months. In addition to professional legal experience, coaches are trained by CAN on coaching techniques using texts, videos, and workshops.

Tina Lee is a senior lawyer that acts as a coach with CAN. As someone who started her own employment law firm, she helps lawyers at various stages of their career. She says that the newer lawyers she works with are "bright legal minds, who just need experience. I think the biggest benefit they receive is having someone listen to them and confirm that everything they're feeling and experiencing is normal."

Tina says that she wishes she had reached outside of the firms she worked at earlier in her career for more coaching and mentoring assistance, because there are benefits to speaking with people that don't know you personally, saying "it can sometimes be very hard to ask questions, but there's never a dumb question. One thing I hear from young lawyers using CAN is that, since it's structured and through the Law Society, there's peace of mind that they're not going to be judged by anyone they know. So it can build confidence to be able to just ask these questions and get answers."

Kerry Boniface, the director of CAN, stresses that finding the right fit is important, saying, "we're happy to do a rematch, and you can use the service as often as you want. You can have both an advisor and a coach at the same time, or multiple advisors." Matches are made based on the particular goals of the lawyer requesting assistance, and on their request can also take into account gender, ethnicity, and shared communities of interest.

Antonio Urdaneta is another lawyer with experience as both a mentee and a mentor with CAN. When he first moved his practice to Canada from his native Venezuela, he benefited from senior lawyers sharing their knowledge and providing important contacts, which led to volunteering opportunities, which led to career opportunities. Now, as an established workplace lawyer himself, he gives back, in part, by acting as a coach and advisor to other lawyers.

Antonio suggests that anyone looking to establish mentor-type relationships should first ask themselves what they want in their careers. Speaking about the mentor-figures in his own career, he says, "for some particular points I needed a coach, for other areas I needed a mentor, or an advisor. If I was looking for help with technology, that may be a different person than someone that can assist with business development, for example. I was then able to manage my expectations for each relationship."

Making and using your team

Knowing who you can and should consult to address particular problems or goals is one of the most important things you will do in your career.

While CAN provides invaluable coaching and advising services, it's important to remember that it is just one piece of a successful support system for a legal career. Some particular issues and questions, such as ethical conundrums, can be best assisted by a call to the LSO's Practice Management Helpline. Wellness and mental health problems, which affect many lawyers and non-lawyers, can best be addressed through assistance from the counsellors and wellness professionals available through the Member Assistance Program. And a phone call to LAWPRO, of course, will provide lawyers with assistance pertaining to potential or actual malpractice claims.

As you build your support network, don't be afraid to ask for help from those who are best able to provide it. Whether it be career or life advice, skill coaching, specific file advice, or professional counselling services, a larger team will allow you to receive the best assistance possible, while not expecting any individual mentor figure to provide help outside of their own expertise and knowledge. ■

Shawn Erker is Legal Writer and Content Manager at LAWPRO.



Ontario Mentoring Programs

Organization	Details
<p data-bbox="128 394 411 500"><u>Association of French Speaking Jurists of Ontario</u></p> <p data-bbox="212 548 327 578"><u>(AJEFO)</u></p>	<p data-bbox="449 297 1635 365">Mandate: The Association of French Speaking Jurists of Ontario facilitates equal access to justice in French for everyone everywhere in Ontario.</p> <p data-bbox="449 410 1656 516">Mentorship Program Details: Mentor relationships are facilitated by the organization and have 5-month duration, from February-June. One-on-one meeting occur every 1-2 months, at a minimum.</p> <p data-bbox="449 565 1499 597">Eligibility: Membership cost: \$110-\$185 (\$55 for retired or unemployed lawyers).</p> <p data-bbox="449 643 1528 675">Availability: Applications for 2022 will open from August 23 – September 17, 2021.</p>
<p data-bbox="128 773 411 841"><u>Canadian Association of Black Lawyers</u></p> <p data-bbox="222 889 317 919"><u>(CABL)</u></p>	<p data-bbox="449 712 1667 773">Mandate: To bring together law professionals and other interested members of the community from across Canada.</p> <p data-bbox="449 813 1656 873">Mentorship Program Details: One-year mentoring relationship with one-on-one meetings at least once every quarter.</p> <p data-bbox="449 914 1661 946">Eligibility: Open to CABL members in good standing. Membership costs \$75 - \$150 per year.</p>
<p data-bbox="149 1057 390 1125"><u>Canadian Defense Lawyers</u></p>	<p data-bbox="449 1011 1535 1044">Mandate: A national organization representing the interests of civil defence lawyers.</p> <p data-bbox="449 1076 1587 1141">Mentorship Program Details: CDL encourages informal mentoring relationships where senior members develop new lawyers through education and collegiality.</p> <p data-bbox="449 1182 1152 1214">Eligibility: Membership cost is \$135 to \$170 annually.</p>

Ontario Mentoring Programs

<p><u>Durham Regional Law Association</u> (DRLA)</p>	<p>Mandate: To support, in both a print and digital capacity, the citation research, reference and educational needs of our member Lawyers and visiting counsel throughout Durham Region and beyond.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: DRLA's Mentorship Committee matches interested mentors with mentees.</p> <p>Eligibility: Membership requires an annual fee of \$50 – \$125. Mentors must have at least 10 years of practice.</p>
<p><u>Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers</u> (FACL)</p>	<p>Mandate: FACL is a diverse coalition of Asian Canadian legal professionals who promote equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian Canadian legal professionals and the broader community.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: FACL organizes a variety of networking and social events, including an annual “Speed Mentoring” a-thon.</p> <p>Eligibility: Membership requires \$50 annual fee.</p>
<p><u>Global Lawyers Canada</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Global Lawyers of Canada exists to provide Internationally Trained Lawyers (ITLs) with a voice and a community, and to celebrate the strengths that ITLs bring to Canada’s legal community.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: In lieu of a one-on-one mentorship program, GLC Ontario has launched a Small Group Program that places licensing candidates and practicing lawyers into groups of 4 to 5 individuals.</p> <p>Eligibility: GLC’s mentorship program supports NCA students or ITLs who are looking to secure and/or complete articles.</p>

Ontario Mentoring Programs

<p><u>National Committee on Accreditation Network</u></p> <p><u>(NCA Network)</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Promotes professional connections with NCA alumni who now have successful legal practices and foster meaningful mentor relationships for NCA students.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: The NCA Mentor program aims to connect Mentees, who are usually law students or NCA Students with Mentors, who have completed the NCA process. Due to the volume of Mentee applications the NCA Network has shifted towards monthly Coffee Chats via Zoom with Mentors.</p> <p>Eligibility: NCA Network is open to all students and lawyers living in Canada pursuing or who have an international degree and will be based in Toronto, Ontario.</p>
<p><u>Ontario Bar Association</u></p> <p><u>(OBA)</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Provides professional development, networking, and information to members of the legal profession.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: Mentorship administered through self-serve “Mentorloop” software. Mentors and mentees upload personal information to an online profile. Users can then request a connection with other OBA members present within the mentoring program.</p> <p>Eligibility: OBA membership requires annual fee of \$331.65 – \$683.65 for practising lawyers.</p>
<p><u>Ontario Trial Lawyers Association</u></p> <p><u>(OTLA)</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Professional association for plaintiff lawyers and staff.</p> <p>Mentorship Program Details: The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association has established a mentorship program that offers guidance and assistance on various issues, including those that relate to their practice, general advice on handling their matters, and work / life balance. OTLA’s mentoring program will allow mentees to choose from a list of OTLA members offering mentorship on different topics. The intent is an informal matching of mentors and mentees on a one-time basis, although more long-term mentoring relationships may naturally develop.</p> <p>Eligibility: Membership requires annual fee of \$275 – \$695 for lawyers, and \$215 for law clerks and paralegals.</p>

Ontario Mentoring Programs

[South Asian Bar Association of Toronto](#)

[\(SABA\)](#)

Mandate: The South Asian Bar Association of Toronto is the GTA's is dedicated to promoting the objectives of South Asian members of the legal profession. Members of SABA include lawyers that self-identify as South Asian or are of South Asian origin, and lawyers that advocate on issues of relevance to the South Asian community.

Mentorship Program Details: The SABA Toronto Mentor Match Program for Lawyers is a mentorship program that aims to pair new lawyers with senior lawyers who can help provide guidance and support to lawyers entering the profession or a new area of practice.

Eligibility:

- All mentors and mentees must be SABA Toronto members and lawyers of good standing in Ontario.
- Mentees can be any year of call.
- Mentors must be at least 5th year calls.

Interested members can learn more about the mentorship program by emailing sabatoronto@gmail.com

[South Asian Women in the Law](#)

Mandate: To provide targeted and concrete mentorship opportunities for self-identifying South Asian women.

Mentoring Program Details: The program pairs racialized licensees with Mentors in the legal profession who share similar identity factors to afford them access to a richer mentorship relationship. This mentoring relationship provides for a safe space for Mentees to discuss potential barriers they may face in their career development, and acquire advice on how to overcome them, and essentially step into their power.

Eligibility: There is no membership fee. This is a free, volunteer based program for self-identifying South Asian women.

Availability: Mentoring pairing last completed in Winter 2021.



Ontario Mentoring Programs

<p><u>The Advocates Society</u> (TAS)</p>	<p>Mandate: To help advocates become leaders inside and outside the courtroom.</p> <p>Mentoring Program Details: One-on-one and group mentoring is available to members who “opt-in” through their TAS profile and matches are made through the online Mentoring Portal.</p> <p>Eligibility: Membership requires annual fee of \$155 – \$485.</p>
<p><u>Waterloo Region Law Association</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Law association serving the Waterloo region.</p> <p>Mentoring Program Details: Formal mentoring program available through the female lawyers practice group: “Female Engagement and Mentorship for Practitioners of Waterloo Region” (FEMPOWR). The program matches young female practitioners with senior female practitioners for mentorship.</p> <p>Eligibility: Lawyers and paralegal in good standing of any Law Society. Membership requires an annual fee of \$180.80.</p>
<p><u>Welland County Law Association</u></p>	<p>Mandate: Law association serving Welland County.</p> <p>Mentoring Program Details: Multiple wine and cheese and mentoring “speed dating” events hosted each year to facilitate mentoring relationships between members. Since COVID, virtual “reverse mentoring” relationships have been facilitated where younger members assist senior members in setting up virtual practises and remote workplaces.</p> <p>Eligibility: The association serves lawyers from Welland, Fonthill, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, Thorold and Ridgeway.</p>

Ontario Mentoring Programs

[Women's Law Association of Ontario](#)

[\(WLAO\)](#)

Mandate: The Women's Law Association of Ontario is dedicated to empowering women in the legal profession by providing a collective voice and advocating for equality, diversity and change.

Mentoring Program Details: WLAO facilitates mentoring relationships between interested mentors and protégées who are members.

Eligibility: Membership requires annual fee of \$50 - \$150.

[Women's Legal Mentorship Program](#)

[\(WLMP\)](#)

Mandate: To dismantle the systemic barriers facing all self-identified women (which includes LGBTQI2S+, non-binary, gender diverse and BIPOC self-identified womxn) within the Canadian legal profession through integrative intersectional feminist mentorship, equity and leadership.

Mentoring Program Details: The mentorship program allows members to create their own customized professional mentorship experience using a private virtual mentoring community, smaller mentoring circles for formal and informal mentoring experiences, and access to professional development virtual events.

Eligibility: There is no membership fee.



Ontario Mentoring Programs

[York Region Law Association](#)

Mandate: A community focused professional organization of lawyers serving the York Region of Ontario.

Mentoring Program Details: Association matches interested junior members looking for legal mentors with senior members.

Eligibility: Membership requires annual fee of \$96.05 – \$127.13.

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SPEAKER BIOS

Orlando Da Silva, LSM



Orlando Da Silva was appointed Chief Administrator of the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC) on October 28, 2019. The ATSSC is responsible for providing support services and facilities to 11 federal administrative tribunals by a single, integrated organization.

Prior to joining the ATSSC, Mr. Da Silva served for nearly 25 years as a trial lawyer—most recently as a Senior Crown Counsel for the Province of Ontario’s Serious Fraud Office—a specialized, expert team of police and crown attorneys responsible for investigating and prosecuting serious financial crimes, corruption, and bribery cases. He is also a former partner of one of Canada’s largest law firms and former leader of the Corporate-Commercial Litigation team and member of the Indigenous Litigation Team for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney-General.

In 2019, Mr. Da Silva was a Bencher (Governor) of the Law Society of Ontario, which regulates Ontario’s 55,000 lawyers and 12,000 paralegals. From 2014 to 2015, he served as President and CEO of the Ontario Bar Association. During this tenure, he championed a Canada-wide mental health and wellness campaign targeted at the legal profession, speaking publicly about his own experience overcoming depression that has led to a successful and rewarding professional and personal life.

Mr. Da Silva is a recipient of a Law Society of Ontario Medal, the Ontario Bar Association’s Distinguished Service Award, the Lexpert Zenith Award for Change Agents, the Deputy’s Award of Excellence, the Tom Marshall Award of Excellence for Public Sector Lawyers, and the Transforming Lives Award from Canada’s Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. He has also been recognized by Canadian Lawyer Magazine as one of the “Top 25 Most Influential” lawyers in Canada.

Teresa Donnelly



Teresa Donnelly was elected as Treasurer by the Law Society's governing body (Convocation) on June 26, 2020. The Treasurer is the top-elected official of the Law Society, which regulates Ontario's lawyers and paralegals in the public interest. She is the fifth woman Treasurer in the 223-year history of the Law Society. Treasurer Donnelly was elected as a bencher in 2015 and 2019. She has served as Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee, Chair of the Human Rights Monitoring Group (Equity) and Chair of the Program Review Task Force. She also served on numerous other Law Society committees, task forces and working groups. She is on the faculty of the National Criminal Law Program, Federation of Law Societies of Canada.

As a Prosecutor with the Ministry of the Attorney General for 26 years, Treasurer Donnelly has dedicated her career to providing access to justice for victims of domestic and sexual violence – the majority of whom are women and children. As the West Region Sexual Violence Crown with the Sexual Violence Advisory Group with the Ministry, from 2015-2020, she was one of seven prosecutors in the province dedicated to enhancing the quality of sexual violence prosecutions and the victim's experience in the criminal justice system.

Treasurer Donnelly is a member of the Huron Law Association, the Ontario Association of Senior Crown Attorneys, the Advocates Society, the Women's Law of Ontario Association and the Southwest Region Women's Law Association. In 2018, the Sexual Violence Advisory Group that she was a member of, won the Excelsior Award for Innovation and Transformation. In 2014, she was named the Most Inspiring Women in Huron and in 2012, she received the Deputy's Award for Excellence in the Aftermath of the Goderich Tornado. She has received several other awards and honours from the Ministry of the Attorney General during her career. She was called to the Bar of Ontario in 1991 after receiving an LLB from the University of Toronto (1989). She also holds a B.A. (Hons) from McGill University (1986).

Contact the Treasurer at treasurer@lso.ca

Erin Durant



Erin Durant is the founder of [Durant Barristers](#). Previously, she was a litigation partner at one of Canada's largest law firms. Operating throughout Ontario and based in the Ottawa area, she is selective with potential clients. Erin aims to provide efficient, practical and timely representation to a small roster of dedicated clients. Practicing in the areas of professional liability defence, investigations and sports law, the firm works with a network of lawyers throughout Ontario to ensure that each mandate has the expertise required. The firm's technology allows us to work as a team from anywhere. Erin can be reached at Edurant@durantbarristers.com.

Doron Gold



Doron Gold is a Staff Clinician at Homewood Health, the provider of the Ontario legal profession's Member Assistance Program. He is a Registered Social Worker, Certified Professional Coach and psychotherapist, as well as having previously practiced law for 10 years, primarily as a family and civil litigator. Since 2006, Doron has assisted lawyers, paralegals, law students, judges and their immediate family members with personal and professional issues such as addiction, depression, anxiety and career stress. Doron's role at Homewood Health includes psychotherapy with clients, assisting with the ongoing management of Homewood's peer volunteer program as well as providing workshops and presentations to various groups in the community.

Doron has written and been quoted extensively in publications such as Lawyers' Weekly, Law Times, Canadian Lawyer and LAWPRO Magazine on various topics related to lawyer distress and wellness. As well, Doron has written a regular "Lawyer Therapist" column in Law Times. Doron has been asked to speak to various groups throughout Ontario on topics as varied as Work-Life Balance, Lawyer Stress 101, Retirement, Vicarious Trauma and Compassion Fatigue. He is the co-author of the Canadian Bar Association's "Mental Health and Wellness in the Legal Profession" online course and is the recipient of the 2016 CBA Wellness Forum Award of Excellence.

Jennifer Gold



Jennifer Gold is President of the Women’s Law Association of Ontario and partner of the law firm, Wood Gold LLP, a boutique Family Law firm in Peel Region. By entering into partnership, Jennifer Gold and her partner, Frances Wood, sought to create an alternative to the traditional law firm and thereby achieve work-life balance and a diverse workplace. These efforts were noted by Carol Goar in her article for the Toronto Star entitled, “Women Create Family-Friendly Law Practice.” Jennifer was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of Legal Aid Ontario and is Chair of Legal Aid Ontario’s Audit and Finance Committee. She has a keen interest in feminism, equity and inclusion, and smashing the glass ceiling.

Jennifer is the 2021 recipient of the Ontario Bar Association Women Lawyers Forum’s Award of Excellence in the Promotion of Women’s Equality and a 2017 recipient of the Lexpert Zenith Awards celebrating the advancement of women in the legal profession. When Jennifer is not busy with law related activities and advocacy work, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking and singing with a barbershop quartet.

Mahwash Khan



Mahwash is Communications Counsel at LAWPRO, and Chair of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group. She has a Certificate in Leadership and Inclusion, and is working towards a Certificate in Adult Learning and Development.

Mahwash grew up in nine countries on five continents. She is an internationally trained lawyer (UK) and was called to the Ontario Bar in 2003. She practised real estate and family law prior to joining LAWPRO. She is a member of the Ontario Bar Association, South Asian Bar Association and Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers. Mahwash has given various presentations on diversity and inclusion, and real estate law.

Mahwash's race is human. She believes in being different together and loves talking about equity, diversity and inclusion - a popular topic at the dinner table with her husband and three teenagers. Her pronouns are she/her/hers.

Juda Strawczynski



Juda manages and promotes practicePRO, LAWPRO's innovative claims and risk management initiative, including identifying emerging claims and risk, resource creation, and outreach to the profession.

Prior to joining LAWPRO, he served as a Policy Counsel at the Law Society of Ontario, where he provided strategic counsel with respect to key issues facing the legal profession, including access to justice, professional regulation, governance and legislative issues. Prior to that, Juda practised litigation, and served as a Fellow at Physicians for Human Rights in Cambridge, MA, as President of Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAHR) from 2013 to 2018, and as a Director of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Juda has a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University in Humanistic Studies and International Development Studies, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto.