

DISABILITY LAW AND ATTORNEY WELLNESS

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I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Objectives of this CLE.
- B. Assumptions.
- C. My background.
- D. Acknowledgments.

II. SOURCES OF STRESS FOR THE DISABILITY ATTORNEY.

- A. Daily pressures.
- B. Frustrations dealing with the system.
- C. This is hard work.
- D. Frustrations dealing with disabled clients.
- E. Witnessing suffering and trauma.
- F. Life is NOT fair.
- G. Our personal life.
- H. Being a female attorney and/or person of color.

III. RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF STRESS.

- A. Stress: Portrait of a Killer (National Geographic & Stanford University).
- B. NC LAP.
- C. The Prevalence of Substance Use and other Mental Health Concerns among Attorneys, by *Krill et al.* 2016.

IV. WARNING SIGNS OF THE NEED FOR HELP.

- A. Anxiety.
- B. Anger.
- C. Depression.
- D. Substance abuse.
- E. Severe Signs.

V. RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.

VI. HELPFUL TOOLS IN STRESS MANAGEMENT.

- A. The Advantage of a good Life Crisis.
- B. The Benefits of seeing a Therapist.
- C. The Benefits of Cardio Exercise.
- D. The Benefits of Meditation and Mindfulness.
- E. Picking your battles carefully.
- F. Keeping work in perspective.

VII. HELPFUL RESOURCES.

VIII. FINAL COMMENTS.

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Objectives of this CLE.

1. to increase awareness of the many forms of stress disability attorneys deal with.
2. to review research on how chronic stress can impact one's health.
3. to review warning signs of a problem.
4. to discuss healthy stress management tools.

B. Assumptions.

1. The practice of law is a fundamentally high stress profession. At times, it can be "brutal." The amount of daily stress attorneys must manage is extreme.
2. Daily stress has an adverse impact on one's health - emotionally and physically.
3. Many attorneys experience persistent anxiety and/or depression.
4. Many attorneys struggle
 - a) to develop healthy practices to manage stress, and
 - b) to balance one's personal life with the demands of work.

The Goal of this CLE is to help attorneys manage this struggle.

C. My background.

I have practiced law in North Carolina for 37 years. I worked for Legal Services for one year. In 1981 I opened a private practice in Boone and I have been self employed ever since.

For 29 years I had a diverse civil practice. My first disability case walked in the door in 1982 and I have been handling disability cases ever since. For the past eight years disability law has been the focus of my law practice.

I understand what practicing law involves - the goods and the bads, the highs and the lows.

D. Acknowledgments.

I want to acknowledge the valuable assistance to this manuscript provided by Robynn Moraites, Executive Director of the NC Lawyers Assistance Program. NC LAP has a tremendous amount of useful information on its web site (<http://www.nclap.org/>) and I have used this information in several sections of the manuscript.

II. SOURCES OF STRESS FOR THE DISABILITY ATTORNEY.

We all know practicing law is a high stress profession. Nonetheless, I was surprised by the magnitude of the list when I wrote down all the factors I could think of that cause stress in the practice of disability law.

A. Daily pressures.

- Operating a business.
 - managing a law office.
 - managing employees.
 - having an employee call in sick.
 - the constant need for new cases.
 - maintaining the right volume of cases.
 - generating revenue.
- understanding complex medical conditions.
- being a skilled advocate with expertise in the relevant regulations.
- staying up to date on new regulations.
- having multiple hearings in a short span of time.
- the difficulty of getting medical evidence for clients who are uninsured.
- the difficulty of getting medical records in a timely manner.
- dealing with hospitals that insist we use their unique Release form.
- dealing with health care providers who do not comply with HITECH.
- the difficulty getting doctors to fill out RFC forms or write a letter for our client.
- meeting deadlines.

B. Frustrations with the System.

- dealing with dysfunctional local offices.
- dealing with the dysfunctional DDS.
- the slowness of all steps in the appeals process.
- dealing with ALJs who have not read one's brief.
- dealing with ALJs who have not looked at the file.
- dealing with ALJs who treat our clients in a disrespectful manner.
- dealing with ALJs who are hostile to us.
- dealing with ALJs who do not understand what it is like to be disabled.
- dealing with ALJs who have compassion fatigue and/or mental impairments.
- having a hearing scheduled without prior notice.
- winning a case and having SSA fail to collect the fee.
- getting Fee Petitions approved.
- delays in approved fees being paid.
- dealing with the dysfunctional Appeal Council.
- dealing with federal court judges who approve denials 80 - 90% of the time.
- the national efforts to make disability benefits harder to obtain.
- meeting the 5 day rule.
- dealing with SSR 17-4p.

C. This is hard work.

- dealing with clients who are depressed.
- dealing with clients who are suicidal.
- dealing with clients with cognitive issues.
- dealing with mentally impaired clients who are anxious, hysterical, obsessive compulsive, or all of the above.
- dealing with clients who are angry, a few of whom are homicidal.
- dealing with clients who are dying.
- having a client die before the hearing.
- being the only ray of Hope for many clients.
- for most clients the hearing is the most important event in their life.
- saying "no" to prospective clients.
- realizing I should not have accepted this case.
- losing a case.

D. Frustrations dealing with disabled Clients.

- dealing with clients who are not responsible.
- dealing with clients who are frustrated by the long delay and blame us.
- dealing with clients who disappear.
- trying to communicate with homeless clients.
- winning a case and having the client fail to reimburse us for expenses.

E. Witnessing suffering and trauma.

- listening to a client without health insurance describe medical problems that could be managed with proper medical treatment.
- trying to console a client having an emotional meltdown because he/she just can't take it any more.
- having a client commit suicide.
- bearing witness to extreme suffering that sometimes is "off the charts."

F. Life is NOT fair.

- working on a case for years, doing everything right, then losing and not getting paid.
- losing a case where you know your client is disabled, but there is just not enough medical evidence to prove it, often because the client is poor and uninsured.

G. Our personal life (or efforts to have a personal life)

- being in a relationship - having a partner.
- being a parent - raising children.
- the difficulty getting home at a reasonable hour to spend time with family.
- the difficulty not working every weekend.
- the difficulty in coping with high levels of stress for years.
- the difficulty in preparing to go on vacation.
- getting slammed the day we get back to work after a vacation.
- the difficulty in having an elderly parent.
- the difficulty in having an acute illness/injury.
- the difficulty in having a chronic illness.
- getting divorced.
- the death of a loved one.

H. Being a female attorney and/or being a person of color.

I do not have the right DNA to discuss stress factors unique to women and persons of color. As a white male, I am not able to be fully aware of and understand these stresses. However, I want to acknowledge that there are stress factors unique to women and persons of color which makes practicing disability law even more challenging to these colleagues.

III. RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF STRESS.

A. Stress: Portrait of a Killer (National Geographic & Stanford University).

There is a considerable amount of research on how stress affects us. The bodies we inhabit today were adapted over the past 100,000 years for living in caves and fighting wild animals.

We have all heard of the "Fight or Flight" response which is built into our DNA. When our ancestors were confronted with danger, this powerful response began in micro seconds.

- Lungs pumped massive amounts of oxygen into the bloodstream.
- The heart raced to pump oxygenated blood throughout the body.
- Blood pressure spiked so oxygenated blood could be delivered fast.
- Muscles sprang into action fed with this oxygenated blood.
- Non-essential body functions such as the immune system were shut down.

When the danger was over, the "Fight or Flight" response quickly turned off and our ancestors' bodies returned to a normal state.

This response to stress is driven by hormones. Our bodies produce Adrenaline and Glucocorticoid which trigger our vital organs to race into action.

Our bodies have not changed much over the past 30,000 years. They are maladapted for life in the modern world. For example, as I present this information to a group of more than 100 colleagues, my levels of Adrenaline and Glucocorticoid are increased, my heart rate is above normal, and my blood pressure is above normal.

I am not in danger. I am among friends. I enjoy what I am doing. But my primitive brain scans this setting and does not recognize it. Then it sees I am in the open and vulnerable, so it triggers the Fight or Flight response.

This response is involuntary. The executive function part of the brain cannot control the primitive brain stem.

Modern humans turn on the Fight or Flight response for purely "psychological" states, and we have trouble turning it off. Consequently, we often have high levels of certain hormones that can be very damaging to our bodies.

This is not speculation. There is a great amount of scientific, peer reviewed research out there. Research on the effects of **chronic stress** has found:

- it increases atherosclerosis in the arteries.
- it increases blood pressure which damages arteries, which reduces blood flow, which eventually can cause a heart attack.
- it reduces the functioning of the immune system making us more vulnerable to many illnesses.
- it decreases neural connections in the brain which decreases memory function.

- it kills brain cells!
- it causes brains to shrink!
- it decreases dopamine binding in the brain, which decreases feelings of pleasure, which puts us at greater risk of depression.
- it affects how bodies distribute fat, which causes more fat to be distributed around the mid section which has adverse health consequences.
- it damages chromosomes! Telomeres protect the ends of chromosomes and shorten with age. Stress hormones accelerate the shortening of telomeres, thereby accelerating the aging process.

This is just a small sampling of the research that is out there.

B. NC LAP.

The North Carolina Lawyers Assistance Program (NC LAP) has a tremendous amount of useful information on its web site (<http://www.nclap.org/>). I borrowed a few statistics.

- Lawyers are **3.6 times** more likely to suffer from depression than the general population (per American Psychological Assn).
- The lawyer suicide rate is **6 times** that of general population (per CDC).
- Suicide is **3rd leading cause of death** among lawyers after cancer and heart disease (per CDC).
- 60% of malpractice claims and **85% of trust account violations** involved attorneys with alcohol or drug problems.
- While the word "addiction" traditionally refers to overuse of alcohol or drugs, it also applies to compulsive behaviors such as gambling, sex, work, eating, or spending. The consequences from these **process addictions** are similar to those of alcohol and drug addiction.

C. The Prevalence of Substance Use and other Mental Health Concerns among Attorneys, by Krill et al. 2016.

There is not a lot of research on the practice of law and mental health, and most of it is old. In 2015, the American Bar Association Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation funded a study on the prevalence of substance use and other mental health concerns among practicing attorneys. 12,825 employed attorneys participated in survey.

This study confirmed results of prior studies that attorneys experience mental health problems at a rate significantly higher than that of the general population.

28.3% reported depression - 19.3% reported anxiety - 20.6% had scores indicating problem drinking.

IV. WARNING SIGNS THAT YOU MAY NEED HELP.¹

We all experience symptoms of anxiety and depression on a regular basis. Whether these emotions constitute an illness depends upon the number, the severity, and the frequency of the symptoms. The more symptoms an attorney experiences and the greater the severity of each symptom, the greater the potential for there to be an illness. Here are some warning signs.

A. Anxiety.

- constant worrying.
- having a sense of panic, impending danger or doom.
- uncontrollable, excessive thoughts, often repetitive or fixated on a single trigger.
- feeling powerless.
- unrealistic view of, or overreaction to, events (magnifying/catastrophizing).
- difficulty with tolerating uncertainty.
- difficulty concentrating - hard to "think straight".
- fear or confusion.
- difficulty relaxing, feeling edgy, feeling apprehensive.
- poor memory.
- hyperventilating.
- excessive sweating.
- frequent gastrointestinal problems.
- muscle tension and/or trembling.
- difficulty falling asleep.
- heart palpitations.
- shortness of breath.

B. Anger.

- inability to let go of situations or to accept disappointments or frustrations.
- a hair trigger - getting very angry, very easily.
- reaction disproportionate to the circumstance (an overreaction).
- impatient; intolerant; inflexible.
- saying or doing things in anger that we later regret.
- intimidation or bullying.
- verbal attacks through criticism, sarcasm, or name-calling.
- cursing frequently.
- impaired sleep due to thinking about a situation that has angered us.
- getting so angry that we can't remember what we said or did.
- constantly complaining, blaming others, and feeling unappreciated.
- family or co-workers expressing fear of our temper.
- being cynical or sullen.

¹ Many of the warning signs described below have been taken with permission from the NC LAP web site at <http://www.nclap.org/>. Go to this web site for a more in depth discussion of warning signs.

C. Depression.

- you rarely sleep though the night; instead you often wake up in the early am and have difficulty going back to sleep.
- OR the opposite, you sleep more than 8 hrs, longer than you have in the past, yet experience great difficulty getting out of bed.
- you often feel bad for no apparent reason.
- you often feel sad for no apparent reason.
- it is difficult to feel happy.
- you rarely smile or laugh.
- you are constantly irritable.
- frequent sarcasm.
- being cynical.
- you feel a deep, profound sense of loneliness.
- you often just want to be alone.
- you often feel miserable.
- you often feel your life is out of control.
- you often feel hopeless.
- you often feel helpless - you have no control over your life.
- you often feel apathy.
- angry outbursts or frustration over small matters.
- loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities that were previously enjoyable.
- fatigue and lack of energy.
- procrastination or inability to complete even the smallest tasks, regardless of known consequences.
- changes in appetite, either a reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased cravings for food and weight gain.
- anxiety, agitation or restlessness.
- slowed thinking, speaking or body movements.
- feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on what you perceive as past failures or blaming yourself for things that are not your responsibility.
- inability to think clearly, poor concentration, struggling to make decisions and to remember things.
- unexplained physical ailments, such as back pain, headaches, or gastrointestinal problems.
- thinking you would be better off if you were dead.

D. Substance Abuse.

- Neglecting responsibilities.
- Abandoning activities that were previously enjoyable, including those with family.
- Cannot remember conversations or commitments.
- Sudden over-sensitivity, temper tantrums, agitation, or resentful behavior.
- Difficulty in paying attention.
- Unsuccessful attempts to cut back on alcohol or other drug use.
- Excessive need for privacy.
- Drop in performance at work, tardiness, frequent absences.
- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual.
- Changes in appetite, may include weight loss or weight gain.
- Changes in sleep patterns, insomnia, hypersomnia.
- Deterioration of physical appearance, neglectful of personal grooming habits.
- Feelings of guilt following alcohol or other drug use.
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing.
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination.
- Excessive sweating.
- Puffy face, blushing, or paleness.
- Financial problems or unexplained need for money.
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors.
- Unexplained change in personality.
- Sudden mood swings.
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, giddiness, or excessive talkativeness.
- Lack of motivation and energy, apathetic, appears lethargic or “spaced out”.
- Appears fearful, anxious, nervous or paranoid, with no reason.
- Dishonesty or evasiveness.
- Drinking an excessive amount of alcohol.
- Feeling a desire to have an alcoholic drink in the middle of the day.
- While drinking you become violent.
- Waking up with a hangover from drinking alcohol the previous night.
- Using illegal drugs.

E. Severe Signs. (Author's note: if you experience any of these symptoms, STOP EVERYTHING and GET HELP!).

- you have blank spots in your memory in which you cannot remember anything for a period of time.
- you stop caring about winning the case.
- you start missing important deadlines.
- you consider withdrawing money from your Trust Account for personal reasons.
- you start thinking of ways you could kill yourself.

V. RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.

It is always important to be mindful concerning what the Rules of Professional Conduct require. A large percentage of discipline cases involve attorneys who are impaired physically or mentally. 85% of trust account violations involved attorneys with alcohol or drug problems.

RULE 0.1 PREAMBLE: A LAWYER'S PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. . . . (d) In all professional functions a lawyer should be competent, prompt, and diligent.

RULE 1.01 COMPETENCE. A lawyer shall not handle a legal matter that the lawyer knows or should know he or she is not competent to handle . . .

RULE 1.03 DILIGENCE. A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

RULE 1.04 COMMUNICATION.

(a) A lawyer shall:

- (3) keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter;
- (4) promptly comply with reasonable requests for information;

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

RULE 1.16 DECLINING OR TERMINATING REPRESENTATION.

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

- (2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client;

RULE 8.4 MISCONDUCT. It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

- (b) commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects;
- (c) engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation;

VI. HELPFUL TOOLS IN STRESS MANAGEMENT - ONE ATTORNEY'S TOOLKIT.

A. The Advantage of a good Life Crisis.

Years ago I attended a workshop on "Healing" by Stephen Levine. Levine said we experience the most personal growth during life's difficult moments. This has been my experience.

One of the most difficult moments in my life was when my marriage ended.

- I was only 33.
- My two sons were only 3 and 5.
- I had just built my dream house for the family.
- I was still in the early years of building my law practice.

Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, I now see my divorce in a positive light.

- it forced me to let go of some old habits and attitudes that were not serving me well.
- it forced me to find a therapist - I needed help.
- it forced me to "open up" my mind, and to see the world from a broader perspective.
- it forced me to turn inward, take a deep look at myself, and see some flaws.
- it forced me to recognize, and then deal with, some major issues from my childhood.

That life crisis was the beginning of a wonderful period of personal growth. Sometimes it takes a good life crisis to wake us up, and to turn us toward a path that is healthier and more fulfilling.

B. The Benefits of seeing a Therapist.

The time I spent with a therapist in my 30s was one of the most helpful actions I have ever taken for myself.

- She helped me open my eyes and see myself in ways I could never have discovered on my own.
- This experience helped me recognize unhealthy behavior patterns I was not aware.
- She helped me learn how to be more skillful in my relationships with others.
- She helped me learn more skillful methods for dealing with life's difficulties.

C. The Benefits of Cardio (Aerobic) Exercise.

I am pretty sure that every program on Stress Management includes some form of exercise. I affirm this 100%. We must make time to take care of our bodies! Here are some of the benefits.

1. It is good for the heart.
2. It is good for the lungs.
3. It is good for muscles.
4. It increases bone density and reduces the risk of osteoporosis (weight bearing cardio).
5. It helps maintain a healthy weight.
6. It decreases blood pressure.
7. It lowers bad cholesterol levels and raises good cholesterol levels.
8. It reduces glucose levels and reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes.
9. It relieves stress.
10. It improves mood by releasing endorphins.
11. It promotes brain health by increasing oxygen to the brain.
12. It increases the basal metabolic rate, resulting in a greater number of calories being burned per day.
13. It lowers resting heart rate.
14. It helps with depression.
15. It decreases risk of a stroke.
16. It improves memory.
17. It improves stamina.
18. It helps one sleep better.
19. It improves one's life expectancy.

Don't wait until it is too late!

D. The Benefits of Meditation and Mindfulness.

What is Meditation?

There are different methods, but it boils down to this.

- You sit in a quiet place for 15 - 20 minutes each day.
- You focus your attention on your breath, or a word (a mantra).
- You let thoughts come and you let them go - always bringing attention back to your breath or mantra.

That is it. It is VERY simple. This practice is more than 2,000 years old.

What is Mindfulness?

The term "Mindfulness" refers to a state of mind, in which the individual has a high state of awareness, internally and externally. Mindfulness involves

- "paying attention."
- "focusing" on the present moment - neither dwelling on the past nor anticipating the future.
- practicing self awareness - noticing one's thoughts and feelings.
- practicing non-judgment - our thoughts and feelings are neither good nor bad.

Meditation promotes Mindfulness.

For the past 20 years I have had a daily meditation practice. Here are some of the benefits I have experienced.

- It calms me - it helps me let go of my work and leave my work at the office.
- Meditation, along with aerobic exercise, are the most effective tools I have discovered to manage stress.
- Meditation has been the most effective method I have found to reduce anxiety.
- I worry less, dramatically. It helps me to "let go" of worries.
- It promotes greater awareness of what is going on around me.
- It promotes a feeling of deep, inner peace.

When I started meditating it was considered a kooky Eastern thing. Today it is part of mainstream Western medicine. Scientific studies keep finding new benefits, such as:

- it reduces blood pressure.
- it reduces chronic pain.
- it reduces anxiety.
- it reduces depression.
- it reduces insomnia.
- it reduces stress.
- it reduces colitis flares.
- it helps with smoking cessation.
- it helps with irritable bowel symptoms.

Brain scans have shown meditators have an increased amount of gray matter in the insula and sensory cortex, which can enhance our senses. Brain scans have also shown meditators have more gray matter in the frontal cortex, which is associated with working memory and executive decision making.

Meditation can be done anywhere without equipment, and has no negative side effects.

Mindfulness is a particularly useful tool to help an attorney achieve a more balanced perspective. As lawyers we have been trained to focus our mind on the future and consider the many things that can go wrong. Mindfulness does the opposite. It focuses our mind on the present - to notice what is going on, inside us and around us, without judgment.

If you are interested in learning more, Duke Health offer a course in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, referred to as MBSR. *See*

<https://www.dukeintegrativemedicine.org/programs-training/public/mindfulness-based-stress-reduction/>

UNC offers an MBSR course. *See*

<https://www.med.unc.edu/phyrehab/pim/mindfulness-program/mindfulness-course-schedule>.

Wake Forest Baptist Health also offers an MBSR course. Contact Ann McCarty at (336) 908-1287 or TJ Shaffer at (336) 722-7266.

E. Picking your battles carefully.

My youngest son taught me one of the most valuable lessons I have ever learned, a lesson that has helped me tremendously in my law practice.

Raising this child was the toughest challenge I have experienced in my life. Unprovoked temper tantrums started at 9 months and continued for 10 years. By the age of two he and I were engaged in some serious battles, and he was every bit as strong willed as I was. He intuitively knew how to punch my buttons.

At the age of 17 my son was diagnosed with High Functioning Autism which helped me understand what was going on with him. However, the diagnosis did not make being his Dad any easier.

The ultimate challenge I faced was - how could I be a loving father, and have a healthy, positive relationship with my son?

Eventually I learned there was only one strategy that would work. I had to pick my battles with my son VERY carefully. I could not fight with him every day. Doing so would destroy our relationship. It did not matter if I was right.

I had to learn to distinguish between what was vitally important to his personal growth, and what was not. I had to learn what was "small stuff", and not sweat about it.

My son taught me to pick and choose my battles carefully, and most battles are not worth the negative cost of waging them.

Today my son is 33. We have not had an argument in 14 years. He has a good marriage. He is a good father. He is running a successful business which he started.

The wisdom I learned from my son has helped me tremendously to not sweat the "small stuff" in my law practice.

F. Keeping Life in Perspective - valuable lessons learned from the death of a loved one.

When I was 32 years old, my sister asked me to be the nurse for her husband, a close friend, as he was dying from cancer. They had daughters who were one and four, and she needed help.

I sat by Bill's bed serving as his nurse for 48 hours until he died. We talked through the night. Bill wanted to experience every precious moment he had left on this earth. It was a tough 48 hours.

This experience of caring for a dying loved one changed the way I view the world and taught me some valuable lessons.

1. Compared to dying, most of my problems are very small. It changed my concept of what a "real" problem is.
2. It made me more humble. There will be a day when I am completely helpless, and I will need a helping hand.
3. It made me more tolerant. We are mortal. We are all in this boat together, and we need each other.
4. It has helped me be kinder, and more forgiving. Life is damn tough for all of us. We are all doing the best we can.

5. It taught me to figure out everything I want to do in life and go for it sooner rather than later. There will be a day for each of us when our time is up.

Our work is very important. But so are our families and so are our friends. There are other very important parts of life besides our work.

6. It taught me that when my Journey comes to an end, it will not matter how much wealth I have acquired or fame achieved. Instead, what will be most important is the number of souls I have touched with compassion and kindness.

VII. HELPFUL RESOURCES.

In a crisis.

- Call 911.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **(800) 273-8255**. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. See <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

North Carolina Lawyer Assistance Program - NC LAP.

A program of the North Carolina State Bar.

Robynn Moraites at 704-892-5699

Towanda Garner at 919-719-9290

Cathy Killian at 704-910-2310

Nicole Ellington at 919-719-9267

All calls are confidential. Information is never conveyed to anyone outside of the LAP program without written permission from the attorney.

These folks are here to help us. For more information, see <http://www.nclap.org/>.

Videos

1. NC LAP: A Story of Hope and Compassion. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F47cWtX2n2s&noredirect=1>.
2. Getting Lost in Our Own Lives. Go to <https://vimeo.com/190558799>.
3. Stress: Portrait of a Killer (National Geographic). Google "Stress: Portrait of a Killer."

CLE on Demand - NC Bar Association.

Ethics/Professional Responsibility.

Attorney Wellness: Achieving Health Physically and Professionally.

Balancing Your Life Creating the Path: Being the Mapmaker as Well as the Traveler.

Dark Side of the Law: Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

Articles.

1. *What's All the Buzz About.* NC State Bar Journal, Summer 2016, Robynn Moraites. *See* <http://www.nclap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Whats-All-the-Buzz-About.pdf>.
2. *How lawyers can avoid burnout and debilitating anxiety.* ABA Journal, 7/1/15, Leslie A. Gordon. *See* http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/how_lawyers_can_avoid_burnout_and_debilitating_anxiety.

Books.

The Big Picture

1. "A Year to Live" by Stephen Levine.

Healing

2. "Legacy of the Heart: The Spiritual Advantages of a Painful Childhood" by Wayne Mueller.
3. "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Bessel van der Kolk.

Food & Diet

4. "The China Study" by T. Colin Campbell.
5. "Eating Well for Optimum Health" by Dr. Andrew Weil.

Join a DAS support group. Email David Paletta at dpaletta@att.net.

Newsletter.

1. Sign up for the NC LAP Newsletter "Sidebar" at the bottom right of the LAP home page at <http://www.nclap.org/>.

VIII. FINAL COMMENTS.

In closing, I want to end on a positive note. After 37 years of practicing law I still love being a lawyer. I love people bringing their problems to me and trying to solve them. The decision to go to law school was the best decision I ever made.

I still get excited when I get a new case.

Yes, being a lawyer is very high stress. But, the practice of Disability Law offers each of us a priceless opportunity

to lend a helping hand where one is desperately needed,

to offer compassion where there is suffering;

to offer hope where there is despair,

to offer kindness where there is sadness,

and, often we succeed in lessening the suffering of another human being.