



## RESOURCES FOR LAW STUDENTS & BAR APPLICANTS

### The Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program (KYLAP)

KYLAP is a program of the Kentucky Bar Association that offers help to members of the Kentucky legal community (including law students) who are struggling with mental health issues, such as depression, alcohol and drug abuse, stress, compulsive gambling or any other condition that may adversely impact the individual's personal or professional life. KYLAP contact is confidential and there are no fees for services.

### Why is KYLAP Important?

- 30% of law students report they have abused alcohol;
- 9% of law students report use of illegal substances, including marijuana and cocaine;
- 12% of students begin abusing substances in law school;
- Nearly 4% of law students feel they need help to control abuse of drugs and/or alcohol;
- 17% to 40% of law students suffer from depression;
- Self-reports of anxiety and depression are significantly higher among law students than either the general population or medical students.



### KYLAP Can Help Students with Bar Application Issues

All applicants seeking admission to the Kentucky Bar are expected to fully disclose any physical or psychological issue that may impair his or her ability to practice law. Often applicants have past or current issues that may require detailed explanation. In some cases, the applicant may be required to meet with the Character & Fitness Committee. KYLAP is available to discuss any law student's or applicant's situation in a confidential setting prior to submission of the Bar Application. In addition, when appropriate, KYLAP can implement a structured rehabilitation program for each individual that documents his or her efforts to address the issues in question. If the applicant chooses, this evidence may be submitted to the Office of Bar Admission and the Character & Fitness Committee to aid them in their determination whether the applicant is permitted either to take the bar or to be admitted to practice.

### How can KYLAP Help?

The solution to law school stress is to take care of yourself—but if you do have problems, the responsible thing to do is get some help. KYLAP is a safe place to turn for confidential assistance. KYLAP services include:

**Assessment and Referral:** A trained member of the KYLAP staff will meet with the affected attorney, to discuss the problem and recommend available treatment and rehabilitation options.

**Interventions:** In appropriate situations, a member of the KYLAP staff may make arrangements for, and participate in, a formal intervention to assist an impaired attorney.

**Peer Support Network:** The affected attorneys may be paired with a recovering lawyer in their area to act as their mentor and assist with their recovery. KYLAP also sponsors lawyers-only recovery meetings in some locations.

**Education and Prevention:** KYLAP works with law firms, the courts and bar associations to provide training and education concerning attorney impairment and recovery. In addition, KYLAP makes regular presentations at Kentucky's law schools regarding impairments and the bar admission process.

**Structured Rehabilitation Program:** In cases involving attorney discipline or admissions problems, KYLAP will implement a structured rehabilitation program to document a participant's recovery. If the individual chooses, this documentation may be taken into consideration by the KBA, OBA and/or the Kentucky Supreme Court when determining discipline or recommendations for admission or re-admission.

**Recovery group meetings:** In areas where it is possible, KYLAP facilitates the organization of recovery group meetings and provides on-going support.

## The Pitfalls of Law School

Law school has much to offer. You are in the midst of an intellectually stimulating environment, you're getting to know other like-minded students who share your interests, you have the opportunity to bond with faculty members, and you are training to be part of an exciting profession. In spite of the positive, there will be some bumps in the road, which can include:

- Heavy workload
- High expectations
- Competition for top grades
- Fear of failure
- Outside pressures and expectations
- Finding the right job
- Law school debts

## Maintain Your Balance

A fulfilling social life is important to keeping life in balance during law school, but it's also easy to turn to heavy drinking, drug use and too much partying to relieve the tensions. Some law students turn to isolation and a life of all work and no play.

Depression, substance abuse, anxiety and other stress-related illnesses are all too common among law students and lawyers. Moderate levels of stress have a positive impact on performance; however, excessive and prolonged stress negatively impacts performance.

Stay connected to yourself. Stay connected to those in your life who support you and will help you have a healthy and balanced law school life. Remember that your personal values, preferences and feelings are an important part of who you are – even as you learn to think like a lawyer.



## Become a Healthy Law Student Now....

### And Avoid Becoming an Unhappy, Unprofessional Lawyer Later

For most, legal education is unlike any other experience. The volume and intensity is far greater than undergraduate programs and, as a general rule, every class hour will require four hours of studying. That means a 15-credit course load may require 60 hours a week of studying outside of class.

For most of this work you are on your own—to learn actively, independently, and responsibly. So it is no surprise that law school can be a stressful experience.

Many law students strive for success in school along with a balanced life—yet find they get stuck and fall victim to self-defeating behaviors. It is not easy to achieve balance and perspective when caught up in study, assignments, not enough sleep and never enough time. This can feel like “going up the down escalator”.

## Confidentiality Is the Cornerstone

All contact, information gathered and all interactions with KYLAP are held in strict confidence according to Kentucky Supreme Court Rule 3.990. Confidentiality is assured.

If you are in recovery from alcohol and/or drugs, KYLAP can connect you with other recovering students for support and connection.

At some point in your legal career, you may have a need to turn to us for assistance, or as a legal professional you may encounter a colleague who needs assistance. If so, you can call KYLAP and we can provide intervention services for the impaired colleague who may not realize there is a problem. Your referral is confidential and you can remain anonymous.

## Contact Us:

Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program (KYLAP)  
(502) 564-3795  
www.kylap.org

## SIGNS OF SUBSTANCE OR ALCOHOL ABUSE

- Feeling the need for a drink or drug to face a certain situation;
- Missed appointments because of alcohol or drug use;
- Feeling regret, “morning after” guilt, remorse, depression, anxiety;
- Isolation from friends or family;
- Blackouts or memory lapses;
- Not being able to control the amount consumed;
- Not being able to live up to promises of not using for set periods of times or occasions;
- Persistent feeling of sadness, hopelessness or depression;
- Thoughts of death or suicide;
- Increased restlessness or irritability;
- Decreased ability to think or concentrate;
- Increased fatigue or loss of energy.