

# **LAWYER WORK/LIFE BALANCE**

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## OVERVIEW

- **WHAT ARE OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION?**
- **ABA HAZELTON RESEARCH STUDY**
- **TED TALK**
- **WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?**



## **WHAT ARE THE OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS OF BEING A LAWYER?**

- **TIME PRESSURES**
- **FIERCE ECONOMIC COMPETITION**
- **ADVERSARIAL ENVIRONMENT**
- **INADEQUATE TIME FOR SELF AND FAMILY**
- **ADVOCATING FOR THE UNJUST**
- **NEGATIVE PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING LAW PROFESSION**



**THEN THERE  
ARE THE  
TRAITS THAT  
MAKE GOOD  
LAWYERS**



**Perfectionism**



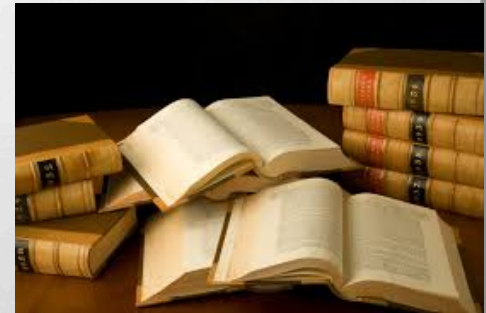
**Analytical - logic not emotion**



**Confident – cannot show weakness**

## **ABA HAZELDEN BETTY FORD STUDY**

- **13,000 LAWYERS WITH ACTIVE LICENSE ACROSS COUNTRY IN EVERY TYPE OF PRACTICE**
- **MENTAL HEALTH**
  - **28% POSITIVE FOR DEPRESSION (MALES HIGHER THAN FEMALES)**
  - **19% POSITIVE FOR ANXIETY**
  - **23% STRESS**



## ABA HAZELDEN BETTY FORD STUDY

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE/DEPENDENCE**
  - **21% POSITIVE FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES (6.4% FOR GENERAL POPULATION)**
  - **FOR ATTORNEYS 30 AND YOUNGER, THE RATE WAS 32% (OPPOSITE OF WHAT HAS BEEN ASSUMED)**



## **ABA HAZELDEN BETTY FORD STUDY**

- **ASSESSED FOR SELF REPORTING**
  - **61% REPORTED ANXIETY**
  - **46% REPORTED DEPRESSION**
  - **11.5% REPORTED SUICIDAL IDEATION**



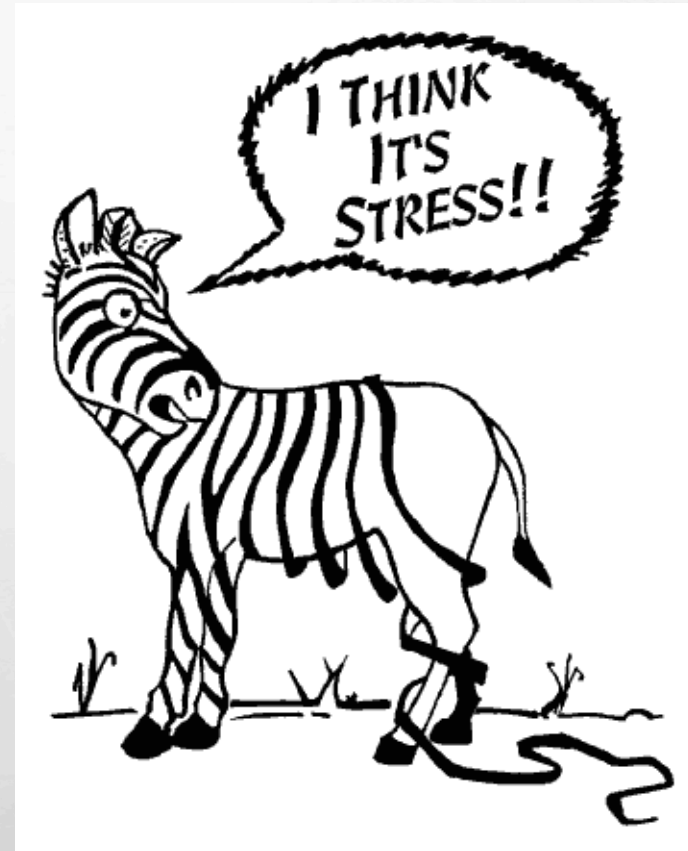


# **ABA HAZELDEN BETTY FORD STUDY**

- **REASONS THEY DIDN'T REACH OUT FOR HELP**
  - **NOT WANTED OTHER FOR FIND OUT**
  - **CONCERNS REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY**
  - **37% REPORTED REACHING OUT FOR HELP WITH MH, 7% REPORTED REACHING OUT FOR SA**

# OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF BURNOUT

- “THE EXTINCTION OF MOTIVATION OR INCENTIVE, ESPECIALLY WHERE ONE’S DEVOTION TO CAUSE OR RELATIONSHIP FAILS TO PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULTS.”
- PSYCHOLOGIST DR. FREUDENBERGER, 1974
- STRESS – SHORT TERM
- BURNOUT – LONG TERM CYCLE OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AND WITHDRAWAL



# WHAT DOES BURNOUT FEEL LIKE?

- **LIKE YOU ARE STUCK ON A HAMSTER WHEEL**
- **EXHAUSTED**
- **CYNICAL ABOUT WORK**
- **MAY HAVE PHYSICAL AILMENTS**
- **ZERO SATISFACTION FROM WORK**



# **WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF BURNOUT**

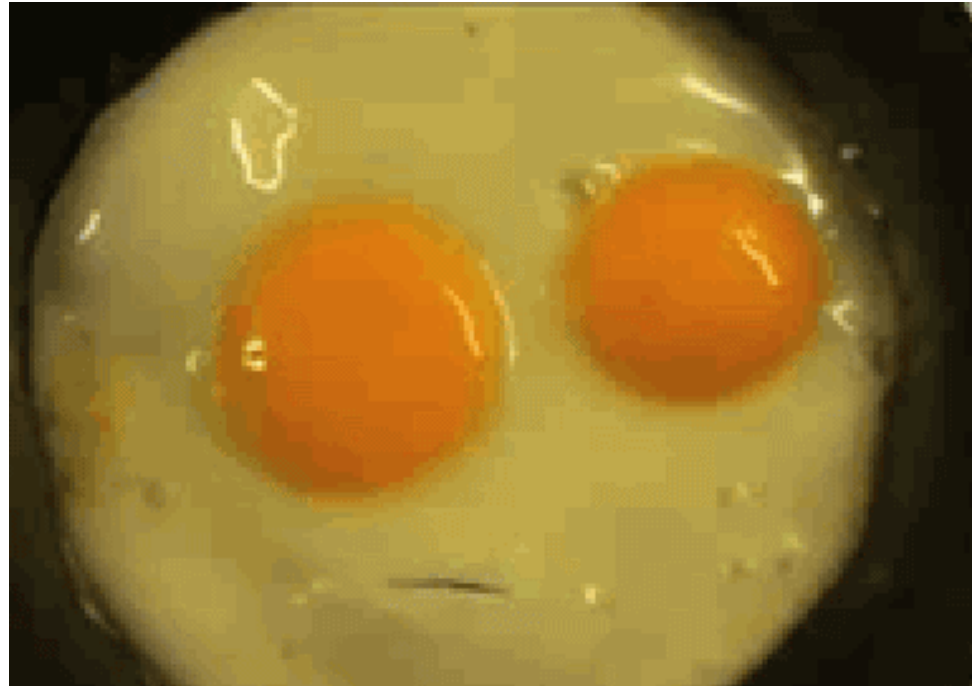
- **DECREASED PRODUCTIVITY**
- **CAN MAKE YOU ILL**
- **CHANGES YOUR BRAIN**
- **ABSENTEEISM/PRESENTEEISM**





# **HOW DOES BURNOUT AFFECT YOUR BRAIN**

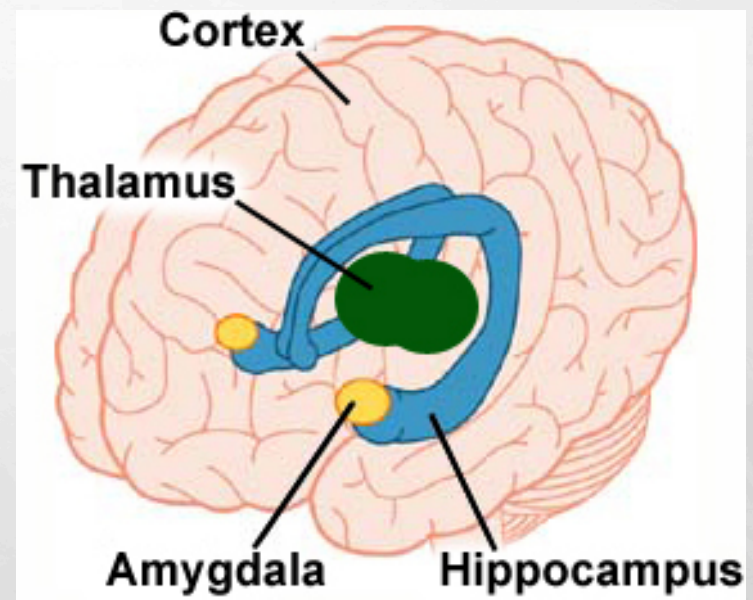
**THIS IS YOUR BRAIN  
ON BURNOUT**





# HOW DOES BURNOUT ALTER YOUR BRAIN?

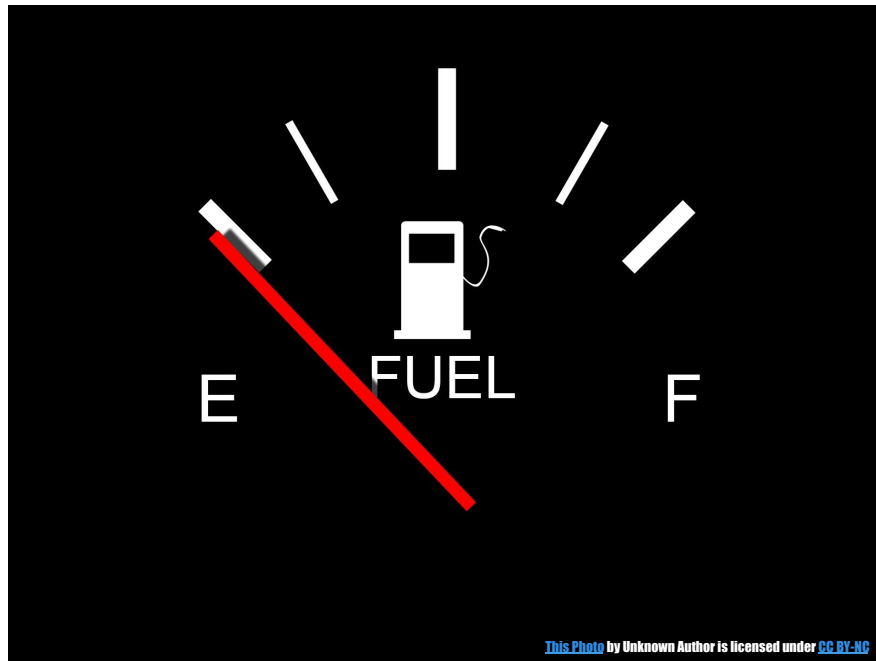
- ENLARGES AMYGDALA
- CAUSES PREFRONTAL CORTEX TO THIN
- PART THAT CONTROLS MEMORY AND ATTENTION ARE WEAKENED
- CHRONICALLY BURNT-OUT BRAIN SHOW SIMILAR DAMAGE AS THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE TRAUMA
- REDUCES THE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN DIFFERENT PARTS OF BRAIN



# WHY ARE LAWYERS MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO BURNOUT?

- **CULTURE – SIGN OF WEAKNESS TO BE OVERWHELMED**
- **STANDARDS OF PERFECTION**
- **ADVERSARIAL NATURE OF PROFESSION**
- **HIGH PRESSURE, HIGH SPEED WORK ENVIRONMENT**
- **RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIENT (BUSINESS, IMAGE, EXPENSES...)**
- **NEVER ENDING WORK, NO CONTROL OVER TIME (EXTERNAL SOURCES, PARTNERS, OPPOSING COUNSEL, COURTS)**





## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BURNOUT IS NOT ADDRESSED?

- **INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE**
- **INCREASED DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY**
- **COMPLETE PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION**



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT BURNOUT?

- **DEPENDS ON THE LEVEL**
- **OUNCE OF PREVENTION**
- **USE YOUR RESOURCES**
- **JOIN THE CULTURE OF CHANGE**

# ABA WELLNESS INITIATIVE

- **CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO:**
- **A CAMPAIGN OF INNOVATION TO IMPROVE THE SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO BETTER SUPPORT THE VITAL ROLE THAT LAWYERS PLAY IN THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF SOCIETY, THE ECONOMY, AND GOVERNMENT, AND TO ENSURE THE LONG TERM HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR MEMBERS AND OUR PROFESSION, OUR MISSION IS TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF PROBLEMATIC SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH DISTRESS, CHALLENGE THE STIGMA SURROUNDING THOSE ISSUES, AND IMPROVE THE OVERALL WELL-BEING OF THE PROFESSION.**



# WELL-BEING TOOL KIT FOR LAWYERS

- **DEFINITION OF LAWYER WELL-BEING**
- **DEFINITION OF A HEALTHY WORKPLACE**
- **8-STEP ACTION PLAN FOR LEGAL EMPLOYERS**
- **POLICIES & PRACTICES AUDIT**
- **ACTIVITIES & EVENTS, EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**
- **ASSESSMENTS, ONLINE RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGY**
- **BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS WELL-BEING PARTNERS**
- **WORKSHEETS**



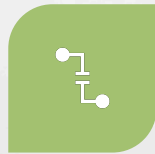
# PREVENTING BURNOUT



**TAKE CARE OF  
#1**



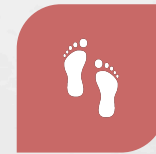
**BOUNDARIES  
ARE GOOD**



**DISCONNECT**



**USE YOUR  
RESOURCES**



**TAKE A LEAVE  
OF ABSENCE**



**CONSIDER A  
CHANGE**



**Implement one thing at a time**



**Live intentionally**



**Proper sleep hygiene**



**Healthy eating - different for everyone (Try The Challenge)**



**Regularly exercise – doesn't have to be for an hour**



**Have a support system (family, friends, co-workers)\  
Learn something new**

# HEALTHY HABITS

# PERFECTIONISM VS. STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

## The Perfectionist ←-----→ The Optimalist

Journey as a straight line	↔	Journey as an irregular spiral
Fear of failure	↔	Failure as feedback
Focus on destination	↔	Focus on journey and destination
All-or-nothing thinking	↔	Nuanced, complex thinking
Defensive	↔	Open to suggestions
Faultfinder	↔	Benefit finder
Harsh	↔	Forgiving
Rigid, static	↔	Adaptable, dynamic

Ben-Shahar, T. (2009). *The Pursuit of Perfect - How to Stop Chasing Perfection and Start Living a Richer Happier Life*. USA: McGraw Hill.

# HELP STOMP OUT STIGMA

- **REASON PEOPLE DON'T REACH OUT**
- **MORE OF SIGN OF STRENGTH THAN WEAKNESS**
- **EDUCATE YOURSELF, EQUATE PHYSICAL PROBLEMS WITH MH AND SUD**
- **CHOOSE EMPOWERMENT OVER SHAME**



## **TED TALK BY SHAWN ACHOR**

- [HTTPS://WWW.TED.COM/TALKS/  
SHAWN\\_ACHOR\\_THE\\_HAPPY\\_SECRET\\_TO\\_BETTER  
WORK](https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work)

# RESOURCES

- **LAWYERS AND JUDGES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
  - **CONFIDENTIAL**
  - **VOLUNTARY**
  - **NOT UNDER DISCIPLINE**
- **FIRM EAP**
- **LAWYERS DEPRESSION PROJECT** [HTTPS://WWW.KNOWTIME.COM/](https://www.knowtime.com/)
- **HEALTHY LAWYERS NETWORK-**  
[HTTPS://WWW.HEALTHYLAWYERS.ORG/HEALTHY-LAWYERS-CHALLENGE/JOIN-THE-NETWORK](https://www.healthylawyers.org/healthy-lawyers-challenge/join-the-network)
- [HTTPS://WWW.AMERICANBAR.ORG/CONTENT/DAM/ABA/ADMINISTRATIVE/LAWYER ASSISTANCE/LS COLAP WELL-BEING TOOLKIT FOR LAWYERS LEGAL EMPLOYERS.PDF](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/ls_colap_well-being_toolkit_for_lawyers_legal_employers.pdf)
- **LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS**





## QUESTIONS??

- **THANK YOU!**
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