

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE LAW

A PRESENTATION BY NGOSA M. SIMACHELA



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INTRODUCTION

What image comes to mind when you hear “productive lawyer?”

Nowadays, stress has been glamorized and this has caused professionals to burn out quicker and exit the profession early.

The aim should be to build a balanced and long-lasting career.

The key word is sustainability.

COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY LITIGATION LAWYERS



1. Law is by nature a stressful profession.
2. High stakes cases.
3. Tight deadlines.
4. Difficult clients
5. Court appearances.

CATEGORIES OF LAWYERS BASED ON THEIR APPROACHES TO STRESS

1. The "Workaholic Warrior" (High Productivity, Low Wellbeing)

- Prioritizes work above all else, often sacrificing personal life and health.
- Measures success by billable hours and workload.
- Often experiences burnout but wears it as a badge of honour.
- Productivity driven by long hours rather than efficiency.

2. The "Burnout Casualty" (Low Productivity, Low Wellbeing)

- Started as a high performer but is now overwhelmed and exhausted.
- Struggles with mental and physical health due to chronic stress.
- Productivity suffers as exhaustion leads to mistakes and inefficiency.
- May consider leaving the profession or drastically changing work style.

CATEGORIES OF LAWYERS BASED ON THEIR APPROACHES TO STRESS (CONT)

3. The "Strategic Performer" (High Productivity, High Wellbeing)

- Focuses on efficiency rather than excessive hours.
- Uses technology, delegation, and prioritization to maintain high productivity.
- Balances work with personal well-being, avoiding unnecessary stress.
- Recognizes the importance of rest and mental clarity in decision-making.

4. The "Detached Practitioner" (Moderate Productivity, Moderate Wellbeing)

- Does the bare minimum to fulfil professional obligations.
- Prioritizes well-being over ambition, sometimes at the expense of career growth.
- May avoid high-pressure cases or firm environments to maintain a stress-free lifestyle.
- Productivity is steady but uninspired, driven more by necessity than passion.

THE MINDFUL LAWYER: (HIGH WELLBEING, BALANCED PRODUCTIVITY)

Integrates mindfulness, wellness practices, and work-life balance into daily routine.

Understands that well-being enhances long-term productivity.

Advocates for a healthier legal culture, promoting mental health and sustainable work practices.

Often involved in mentorship and workplace improvements.



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NAVIGATING STRESSORS AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



1. Setting clear boundaries between work and personal life.



2. Time management tools



3. Regular physical exercise/self care



4. Having a support network. Identify a trusted peer or mentor and share your struggles.

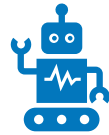


5. Align your core values. Ask yourself why you became a lawyer? What is your idea of success?

WHAT CAN FIRMS/INSTITUTIONS DO TO SUPPORT LAWYERS NAVIGATE STRESS?



Better workload distribution.
Have regular check-ins with employees.



Use of Technology/
Automation.



Wellness Programs e.g.
group sports
and self care.



Flexible work
arrangements.
This allows staff
to balance work
with personal
life and
commitments.



Developing a
culture of
support.



Access to
mental health
services.

CONCLUSION

- The legal profession is demanding but it should not be overwhelming.
- There is need to deliberately combat stress at an individual and institutional level in order to promote balance (Remember the Mindful Lawyer!)
- At an institutional level, the welfare of employees should be prioritized.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!

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