

MENTAL HEALTH ARTICLE FOR APRIL ISSUE OF DICTA

It's come to that time of the year again when our lives get consumed by finals, seminar papers and final trials or mediations. This means many of us are incredibly stressed and likely not eating or sleeping right. The law profession as a whole is one that is plagued by depression, anxiety and stress. In fact, a recent study by Professor Larry Krieger of Florida State University notes the following: 1) practicing attorneys exhibit clinical anxiety, hostility, and depression at rates that range from 8 to 15 times the general population, 2) 20-40% of law school students suffer from clinical depression by the time they graduate, 3) Lawyers rank the highest in a national survey of occupational groups for depression and are 5th in terms of incidence of suicide, and lastly, 4) Lawyer exhibit disproportionately high levels of substance abuse. The Law Student Division of the American Bar Association has created a Mental Health initiative to help combat these sorts of issues by increasing awareness, destigmatizing mental health problems and promoting healthier solutions and habits.

Tulane University's Center on Education Resources and Counseling offers a lot to enrolled students. The ERC offers a variety of services to the Tulane community, such as individual, group, and couples psychotherapy; psychological testing; vocational testing; ADHD assessments; tutoring; disability services; community outreach; consultations; and educational workshops. Each student can receive up to ten, forty-five minute counseling session per year completely free of charge. These sessions are confidential and will not be reported back to the law school, and will be kept confidential to the fullest extent allowed by the law. Additionally, all students are eligible to attend an unlimited amount of group sessions free of charge. Currently operating group sessions deal with a variety of issues including, coping with loss, anger management, post traumatic stress disorder, an academic support group and a family support group. They also have weekly support group meetings, free of charge. Current groups include a therapy group for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, a support group for graduate students, a support group for students with learning disabilities and a support group for women of color. Other groups can be created upon a showing of sufficient student interest.

The ERC is located on the first floor of the Mechanical Engineering Building on the Uptown Campus. It is open from 8:30 – 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday. You can also call (504) 865- 5113 to schedule an appointment. Generally, appointments can be scheduled for the very same week you call. If you have a crisis or an emergency, please alert the ERC staff and they will do their best to accommodate your needs.

Although ABA Mental Health occurred during our Spring Break, the SBA Executive Board and the ABA representative really believe that this is an important issue that should be brought to TLS. To this end, the SBA has arranged to co-sponsor a visit from a Tibetan Lama to speak about meditation, altruism and life balance. On Friday, April 17th from 7-8:30 p.m., there will be a public presentation in the LBC. The Lama will speak on mediation and altruism. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided. On Saturday, April 18th there will be a mediation seminar. This seminar will take place in the Howard Memorial Chapel. It will begin at 10 a.m., break for a vegetarian lunch from 12-2, and

then the seminar will continue from 2-4. All are invited to attend and it is completely free of charge.

Additionally, on the SBA page of the intranet, the SBA has posted a variety of the ABA's mental health information and research. This includes coping techniques for depression, stress and anxiety attacks as well as websites, contact information and resources to get help and support when needed. Please use these resources when needed, and remember, that needing help and admitting you have a problem that you can't handle does not make you weak, it makes you smart.