

# Attorney Wellness: Speaking Up, Reaching Out

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- ▶ A Special Presentation by Townsend Allala, Coulter & Kludt
- ▶ UTCLE - First Friday Ethics program
- ▶ July 2, 2021
- ▶ Presented by Stephanie Townsend Allala



## Description

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*Mental health issues are taboo discussions in law firms, yet when attorneys consider suicide, it's often a result of work-related stress. The rules of privilege preclude attorneys and staff from speaking with family and friends about their work, even when they include traumatic events and traumatized clients.*

## Description

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*Years and decades of honoring our duty to maintain silence about our legal work take their toll. It is revealed in statistics about attorney alcohol, drug abuse, and suicide. Today we explore real-world tips and information on how to spot a mental health crisis in someone you work with, and what to do once you are aware of a problem.*

3

## Objectives

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- Raise peripheral awareness of attorneys and legal staff at risk for mental health crisis and or suicidal ideation.
- Destigmatizing help-seeking behavior, like therapy.
- Learn a breathing technique and how meditation can help calm anxious minds.
- Using these tools to create space for discussions about anxiety with colleagues, employees and family who may be experiencing mental health crisis.
- Learn how to speak up and speak out!

4

## Do We Really Have To Talk About Feelings?

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**Statistics:** We have all heard the frightening numbers about attorney drug and alcohol abuse, as well as suicide rates. We get it. We know it's a tsunami of a problem. The pandemic is only magnifying the problem. Rather than hear depressing numbers, we will spend the next hour learning real-world techniques to help yourself, and others, in times of crisis.

## Do We Really Have To Talk About Feelings?

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**Ethical Duty:** We owe an ethical duty to our clients to be our best. Well-being is indispensable part of a lawyer's duty of competence. It's also good for business, if you and staff can function at higher level because they are not struggling with their mental health. Ultimately, that's good for our clients! There's a connection between mental health and good client service.

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