



Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program

Help is Out There

By SARAH MYERS, LMFT, LAC
Clinical Director, Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program

"The healthy and strong individual is the one who asks for help when he needs it."
- Rona Barrett

Do you know when you need help or assistance? Do you know where to turn to ask for help? And, most importantly, do you actually ask for help when you need it? In Colorado, judges, lawyers, and law students have access to free, confidential assistance. Your Colorado Lawyers Assistance Program (COLAP) is here to help you with any issue that is impacting your ability to be a productive member of the legal profession. These issues include, but are not limited to, coping with everyday stress, struggles at home with family or friends, increased use of alcohol or other drugs to control anxiety or depression (self-medicating), difficulties with co-workers, burn out, compassion fatigue, anger management, career path challenges or changes, financial issues, planned or unplanned retirement, etc, etc.

It can be difficult to know where to turn for help. COLAP can assist in that process so you can make sense of whatever is happening in your life. Sometimes judges, lawyers and law students just want to talk about their issues and what is going on in their life, and a confidential listener is all that is needed. Sometimes the legal professional knows what the issue is and the type of resources needed, but does not know where to begin to look for the assistance needed. A judge, lawyer, or law student may call out of concern for a colleague. A friend or family member may call because of concerns about their judge, lawyer or law student friend. Regardless of the reason, we can assist that person to find the "next step" in getting back on track to a healthy lifestyle and healthy career.

That "next step" may include assistance such as life coaching, referral sources for medical and mental health professionals, career and financial counselors, pairing with a

COLAP volunteer/mentor for confidential peer to peer assistance, referral to one of many Colorado Lawyers Helping Lawyers' confidential weekly peer support group meetings held in Denver, Boulder or via a telephone conference call-in group.

Personal self-care is just as important as your duty to your profession and your clients. Without your own wellness intact, your relationship with clients and your work product could suffer, not to mention your interpersonal relationships with family, friends, and most importantly, yourself. When the members of our legal profession are mentally, emotionally and physically healthy, the legal system and the public in general benefit.

It is not only important to remember that COLAP is a broad-brush program with many resources available to assist judges, lawyers and law students, but also that you feel safe to reach out for help. Rule 254 sets forth our confidentiality and immunity. COLAP does not release any information, either written or verbal, to anyone without a signed release from the caller and/or participant.

So now you know where to turn to for help!

Your Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program provides free and confidential services for judges, lawyers, and law students. If you need resources for ANY issue that is compromising your ability to be a productive member of the legal community, or if there is someone you are concerned about, contact COLAP at (303) 986-3345 or toll free at 1-855-208-1168. For more information about COLAP, please visit www.coloradolap.org.