

MENTAL HEALTH FOR LAW STUDENTS



Law school comes with its own unique set of challenges. It is not unusual for law students to feel overwhelmed and struggle with high levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and substance use. With the added responsibilities that law school can bring, taking care of your own mental health should be a top priority.

Texas Lawyer's Assistance Program - TLAP

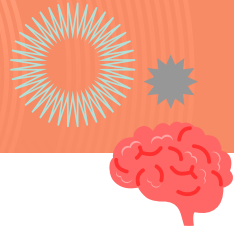
Texas Lawyer's Assistance Program (TLAP) provides confidential support to law students for problems with stress, anxiety, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders. TLAP works with all Texas law schools to provide students with wellness programming, peer and group support, referrals to quality professionals and programs, connection to financial assistance for needed care and more. Below are just some of the services TLAP provides:

- 24/7 Helpline - 1-800-343-TLAP(8527):** TLAP's helpline is available 24/7, offering confidential support for students. Whether dealing with a mental health emergency, substance use, or a personal challenge, students can reach out for immediate help at any time.
- Wellness and Educational Resources:** TLAP provides resources to help law students manage their mental health and well-being and for law students dealing with substance abuse or addiction. Explore TLAP's Resources on:
 - Wellness - <https://www.tlaphelps.org/wellness>
 - Stress & Anxiety - <https://www.tlaphelps.org/stress-anxiety>
 - Depression & Bipolar - <https://www.tlaphelps.org/depression-bipolar>
 - Suicide Prevention - <https://www.tlaphelps.org/depression-bipolar>
 - Substance Use - <https://www.tlaphelps.org/substance-use>
- Information About Support Groups:** TLAP offers information about support groups such as LCL (Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers – weekly meetings for alcohol, drug, depression, and other issues) which take place in major cities across the state.
- Referrals to Short and Long-Term Care:** TLAP helps connect law students to counselors, psychiatrists, and short or long-term care options when needed.
- Financial Assistance:** TLAP resources also include information regarding financial assistance, such as the [Sheeran-Crowley Memorial Trust](#) which is available to help Texas attorneys, judges, and law students in financial need who need treatment for substance use, depression, and other mental health issues. To access this resource, please call TLAP and talk to one of the TLAP Professionals.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH IN LAW SCHOOL

- Self-Awareness: Recognize if You Need Assistance**
 - Watch out for warning signs so you know when to act. TLAP offers self-assessment quizzes for alcohol and drug use, depression, and anxiety, to help students identify if they, or someone they know, may be struggling and need help.
 - Take the self-assessment quiz on TLAP's website to check in on your well-being.
 - Getting help early is beneficial!
- Stay Connected with Your "Why"**
 - Remind yourself why you decided to pursue a legal career in the first place. Whether it's advocating for justice or seeking intellectual challenges, reconnecting with your why can provide a sense of purpose and help you stay grounded when feeling overwhelmed.

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3. Stay Organized

- Staying organized can help with time management and alleviate stress.
- Keep a calendar and block off time to prepare for each class, work on your outlines, and set aside specific time for yourself.
- Set reminders for self-care activities (e.g., taking a break, getting outside, connecting with friends, or drinking water).

4. Prioritize Your Physical Health

- Exercise: Exercise can help with depression, decrease stress and anxiety, improve self-esteem and sleep, and even boost brain performance and productivity. Getting outside for exercise can further lower stress and anxiety and help improve your mood.
 - See if your law school has a walking or running club.
- Diet Focus on a nutrient-rich diet to properly feed your body and brain. Drink plenty of water. Drink Alcohol in moderation and stay away from illicit drugs. While these may offer you some temporary relief, you do not want to become dependent on alcohol or drugs to cope with the stress of law school.
- Sleep: Prioritize getting enough rest to keep your mind and body sharp.

5. Find Connection

- Just like your body needs food and water, you have a basic need for connection. Connect with other law students, your classmates know firsthand what you are experiencing.

6. Practice Mindfulness

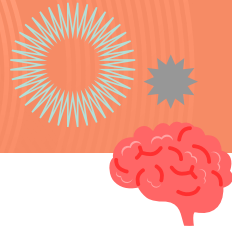
- Mindfulness is the practice of staying present and grounded in the current moment. Research suggests that mindfulness can significantly reduce stress and improve concentration.
 - TLAP's Guide to Mindfulness Meditation:
https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Past_Issues&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=30504
- Try practicing mindfulness or meditation exercises for just 10–15 minutes a day. Whether through meditation, mindful breathing, or even mindful eating, these practices help lower cortisol levels (the stress hormone) and promote a sense of calm. <https://www.uclahealth.org/uclamindful>

GET HELP - IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING, ACT.

Reaching out for help early on is crucial for long-term success in both law school and your future career. Take advantage of the resources TLAP has to offer.

- TLAP Support Toolbox:
<https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=articles&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=57458>
- TLAP Support Videos:
<https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=articles&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=57445>
- Follow TLAP on Facebook: [@TLAPhelps](https://www.facebook.com/TLAPhelps) for wellness programming, local event updates, and online presentations.
- Call TLAP: TLAP's experienced and professional staff is available by phone 24/7 to answer your questions about substance abuse, mental health and wellness issues. Your calls will be to attorneys with resources and helpful ideas to better your life. You can call TLAP at any time at 1-800-343-TLAP(8527). By statute, all communications are confidential.
- In an emergency, call 911.

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CHECK OUT THE WELLNESS RESOURCES YOUR LAW SCHOOL OFFERS

- Baylor Law: <https://law.baylor.edu/students/student-life/health-wellness>
- St. Mary's School of Law: <https://law.stmarytx.edu/student-services/health-and-wellness/>
- SMU Dedman School of Law: <https://www.smu.edu/law/students/student-resources/student-wellness>
- Texas A&M University School of Law: <https://www.law.tamu.edu/blog/topic/wellness.html>
- South Texas College of Law: <https://www.stcl.edu/current-students/student-support/>
- Texas Tech School of Law: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/law/studentlife/student-support/index.php>
- University of Houston Law Center: <https://law.uh.edu/wellness/>
- UNT Dallas College of Law: <https://www.untDallas.edu/sa/counseling-wellness-center/>
- University of Texas at Austin School of Law: <https://law.utexas.edu/students/wellness/>

OTHER RESOURCES

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: If you're experiencing severe emotional distress, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers free, confidential support 24/7. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text HELLO to 741741 for immediate support.
- ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP): The ABA CoLAP provides national resources for legal professionals and students, with a focus on wellness and mental health. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/
- TYLA Suicide Prevention Guide: <https://tyla.org/resource/tyla-suicide-prevention-guide/>

