Confusion to Fusion: Creating a Balanced and Rewarding Legal Career

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CBA Law Center
New Britain, CT

CT Bar Institute Inc.
CT: 2.0 CLE Credits (General)

No representation or warranty is made as to the accuracy of these materials. Readers should check primary sources where appropriate and use the traditional legal research techniques to make sure that the information has not been affected or changed by recent developments.
As a lawyer I must strive to make our system of justice work fairly and efficiently. In order to carry out that responsibility, not only will I comply with the letter and spirit of the disciplinary standards applicable to all lawyers, but I will also conduct myself in accordance with the following Principles of Professionalism when dealing with my client, opposing parties, their counsel, the courts and the general public.

Civility and courtesy are the hallmarks of professionalism and should not be equated with weakness;

I will endeavor to be courteous and civil, both in oral and in written communications;

I will not knowingly make statements of fact or of law that are untrue;

I will agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time or for waiver of procedural formalities when the legitimate interests of my client will not be adversely affected;

I will refrain from causing unreasonable delays;

I will endeavor to consult with opposing counsel before scheduling depositions and meetings and before rescheduling hearings, and I will cooperate with opposing counsel when scheduling changes are requested;

When scheduled hearings or depositions have to be canceled, I will notify opposing counsel, and if appropriate, the court (or other tribunal) as early as possible;

Before dates for hearings or trials are set, or if that is not feasible, immediately after such dates have been set, I will attempt to verify the availability of key participants and witnesses so that I can promptly notify the court (or other tribunal) and opposing counsel of any likely problem in that regard;

I will refrain from utilizing litigation or any other course of conduct to harass the opposing party;

I will refrain from engaging in excessive and abusive discovery, and I will comply with all reasonable discovery requests;

In depositions and other proceedings, and in negotiations, I will conduct myself with dignity, avoid making groundless objections and refrain from engaging in acts of rudeness or disrespect;

I will not serve motions and pleadings on the other party or counsel at such time or in such manner as will unfairly limit the other party’s opportunity to respond;

In business transactions I will not quarrel over matters of form or style, but will concentrate on matters of substance and content;

I will be a vigorous and zealous advocate on behalf of my client, while recognizing, as an officer of the court, that excessive zeal may be detrimental to my client’s interests as well as to the proper functioning of our system of justice;

While I must consider my client’s decision concerning the objectives of the representation, I nevertheless will counsel my client that a willingness to initiate or engage in settlement discussions is consistent with zealous and effective representation;

Where consistent with my client’s interests, I will communicate with opposing counsel in an effort to avoid litigation and to resolve litigation that has actually commenced;

I will withdraw voluntarily claims or defense when it becomes apparent that they do not have merit or are superfluous;

I will not file frivolous motions;

I will make every effort to agree with other counsel, as early as possible, on a voluntary exchange of information and on a plan for discovery;

I will attempt to resolve, by agreement, my objections to matters contained in my opponent’s pleadings and discovery requests;

In civil matters, I will stipulate to facts as to which there is no genuine dispute;

I will endeavor to be punctual in attending court hearings, conferences, meetings and depositions;

I will at all times be candid with the court and its personnel;

I will remember that, in addition to commitment to my client’s cause, my responsibilities as a lawyer include a devotion to the public good;

I will endeavor to keep myself current in the areas in which I practice and when necessary, will associate with, or refer my client to, counsel knowledgeable in another field of practice;

I will be mindful of the fact that, as a member of a self-regulating profession, it is incumbent on me to report violations by fellow lawyers as required by the Rules of Professional Conduct;

I will be mindful of the need to protect the image of the legal profession in the eyes of the public and will be so guided when considering methods and content of advertising;

I will be mindful that the law is a learned profession and that among its desirable goals are devotion to public service, improvement of administration of justice, and the contribution of uncompensated time and civic influence on behalf of those persons who cannot afford adequate legal assistance;

I will endeavor to ensure that all persons, regardless of race, age, gender, disability, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, color, or creed receive fair and equal treatment under the law, and will always conduct myself in such a way as to promote equality and justice for all.

It is understood that nothing in these Principles shall be deemed to supersede, supplement or in any way amend the Rules of Professional Conduct, alter existing standards of conduct against which lawyer conduct might be judged or become a basis for the imposition of civil liability of any kind.

--Adopted by the Connecticut Bar Association House of Delegates on June 6, 1994
Faculty Biographies

Karen Caffrey, LPC, JD

Counseling Style and Philosophy
My counseling style is genuine, down-to-earth, and caring. Most people feel quickly at ease with me. I believe that positive change happens best in an environment of compassion, trust and acceptance. I am an optimist when it comes to the capacity of human beings to heal: I believe that healing is possible for everyone.

I have great faith that you carry within you the wisdom you need to guide your own life, and that the best kind of help assists you in eliciting this wisdom. I have the utmost respect and regard for you, your strengths and skills, and the challenges you are facing. We will work together to find solutions that are right for you.

Counseling Practice
For over twenty years I have been a counselor for individuals, couples and groups in my psychotherapy practice. I help people recover from anxiety and depression, problems in their relationships, work and life stress, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), trauma, addictions, women’s issues, and general mental health and wellness.

For ten years prior to my career as a counselor, I was a practicing attorney. I practiced law in a Fortune 100 corporation as well as in a private law firm. I have found that my experiences as a lawyer make me uniquely able to understand and empathize with my clients who work in the legal and corporate worlds. I have a keen appreciation of what it is like to try to address your own needs while balancing work, family and community obligations. I also learned that even highly successful, capable people can face life challenges for which they need help.

I also have a specialty in working with adult adoptees, and do this work individually and in groups. I have presented extensively on issues faced by adult adoptees including loss, rejection, anger and identity.

Professional Qualifications
Licensure: I am a Licensed Professional Counselor, licensed by the State of Connecticut (Conn. License #408). My professional training includes a Masters in Counseling Psychology from Lesley College in Boston, Mass. in 1993.

Certification: I am a certified Somatic Experiencing® Practitioner. Somatic Experiencing® is a very powerful, effective but gentle system of healing techniques designed to help you calm down after a stressful event(s), as well as relieve the symptoms of ongoing and chronic stress. (To learn more about Somatic Experiencing®, click here.)

Post-Graduate Training: I have extensive post-graduate training in body-centered psychotherapies, and have also taught these techniques in workshops and training programs. Body-centered psychotherapy helps you access the resources your body, mind, intuition and spirit, which together constitute a deep resource of internal wisdom and strength. Research supports the power of body-centered psychotherapy to help people change and heal. The holistic psychotherapy I practice combines elements of gestalt, bioenergetics, psychodynamics, mindfulness, contemplative psychotherapy, and imagery and communications theory.
Beth D. Griffin has been the Executive Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers-Connecticut, Inc., the Connecticut lawyer assistance program, since February 2006. She comes to the position with many years experience as a practicing attorney in Connecticut state and federal courts in the insurance defense area and as a person in recovery since May 1990. Beth holds B.S. and J.D. degrees from the University of Connecticut and University of Connecticut School of Law. She is a Connecticut native and currently resides in New Britain, Conn.
CONFUSION TO FUSION:

Creating a Balanced and Rewarding Legal Career

Karen Caffrey, LPC, JD
Beth D. Griffin, JD, LCL-CT, Inc.
Annual deaths from alcohol, drugs, and suicide in the US:

- **Total**
- **Drugs**
- **Suicide**
- **Alcohol**

SOURCE Trust for America’s Health and the Well Being Trust. Analysis of data from National Center For Health Statistics, CDC; USA TODAY
Drug overdose deaths have now become the leading cause of accidental deaths in the US with 52,404 fatalities in 2015, according to the American Society of Addiction Medicine; 33,091 of those deaths, which equates to more than six out of ten, involved an opioid.

Overdoses now kill more people than car accidents, more than guns.
2016 Hazelden/ABA Study re: Substance Use and Mental Health in Attorneys

~Survey of 19,000 U.S. practicing attorneys~

20.6% Reported Problem Drinking (approx. 1 in 5)
• 47.7% Problem developed in 1st 15 yrs. of practice

• 28% Reported suffering from depression
• 19% Reported suffering from anxiety
• 11.5% Reported suicidal thoughts
• 0.7% Reported suicidal attempt

63% Reported never seeking help

What’s your score?

- 18-36: Your wellness needs special attention
- 36-54: Your wellness needs some attention
- 54-72: Your wellness is good but could improve
- 72-90: Your wellness is optimal
- Bacon cooking
- Coffee brewing/roasting
- New mown grass
- Balsam forest
- Baby powder
- Bread baking
- Cookies baking
- Brand new car interior
~ Rain on a metal roof/canvas awning
~ Cat purring
~ Wind chimes
~ Baby belly-laughing
~ Pealing of church bells
~ Birdsong
~ Waves crashing on the beach/shore
7 STEPS TO A CLEARER MIND

- STEP 1: INTERNAL CHECK IN
- STEP 2: BREATHE
- STEP 3: WRITE AND LET GO
- STEP 4: REFRAME WITH GRATITUDE
- STEP 5: PLAY
- STEP 6: COMPASSION CHALLENGE
- STEP 7: GOOD VIBES

*Happy, Not Perfect*  Poppy Jamie  
https://happynotperfect.com/the-app
WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

- **Connection & Belonging** - Supportive relationships and a sense of belonging or fit with groups we care about
- **Mastery Activities** - Continually learning, growing, and gaining confidence in our ability to make things happen
- **Autonomy** - Feeling that our choices are self-authored and aligned with our own preferences. The opposite of feeling controlled, forced, or guilt-driven
- **Helping Others** - Having a positive impact on others or the common good
- **Meaningfulness** - Feeling that our activities are significant within our own values system

From the Wellness Toolkit
13 Healthy Workplace Factors

1. Culture of Trust
2. Mental Health Support
3. Effective Leadership
4. Civility & Respect
5. Good Person-Job Fit
6. Growth & Development
7. Recognition & Reward

8. Involvement & Influence
9. Workload Management
10. Employee Engagement
11. Work-Life Balance Support
12. Psychological Safety
13. Physical Safety
GETTING started as a new lawyer, starting at a new place of work or taking on the role of mentor or supervisor of another lawyer can be stressful, so try to pay special attention to things like this:

- Invite new lawyers to networking events and “shepherd” them through; if you are the new lawyer, say “yes” when an invitation is extended to you
- Recommend professional associations for them to join; maintain or renew your own connections with appropriate professional associations
- Make introductions - to peers, staff, leaders, clients, insiders, etc.
- Invite them to attend hearings, meetings, etc. with you; if you are the new lawyer accept the invitation with thanks
- Offer to observe them in a hearing, deposition, call, etc. and provide feedback; if you are the new lawyer accept feedback graciously
- Mentor them
- Give guidance on developing their reputation; help them learn the firm’s “political” ropes
- Take a strengths assessment together and share ideas about using those strengths at work
- Discuss their goals and how you can support them
Coping with Compassion Fatigue

Exposure to clients’ trauma can be a powerful negative force in a legal career. But you can mitigate the effects this exposure has on you. Here are a few strategies:

- **Debrief.** Talk with another lawyer who understands what you’re going through and can offer support. Debriefing can become a part of the office culture. Remember, this is a discussion about how the case is affecting you as a person, not a rehashing of legal strategies.

- **Take care of yourself.** Eat healthy foods. Exercise regularly. Get enough sleep. Learn relaxation techniques so you can let go of stress and disturbing, repetitive thoughts. Know what truly brings you joy in life and make time for it.
• **Strive for balance and interconnection.** Give up the urge to be all things to all people, including clients. Allow time to connect with friends and family to counter-balance the stresses you feel at work and put everything back in perspective.

• **Come up with a plan.** When compassion fatigue is weighing on you, it can be difficult to get off the treadmill and set a new course. Stop long enough to notice how you’re feeling, reacting, and behaving at work and at home. Develop a plan of action for yourself. What needs to change? Where can you start?

• **Seek help.** If you think compassion fatigue is interfering with your work or personal life, reach out for help.

From *Wisconsin Lawyer*, December 2011 (Molvig, Dianne)
Fill in the Blanks:

• The world is a ________ place.
• Life is _______.
• I am ______ as a human being.
• I want to change ______ about my job.
• I want to change ______ about myself.
• Most often I feel __________.
6 Dimensions Of Lawyer Well-Being

1. **Occupational:** Satisfaction, Growth, Financial Stability
2. **Emotional:** Manage Emotions & Protect Mental Health
3. **Physical:** Healthy Lifestyle, Help-Seeking When Needed
4. **Intellectual:** Learn, Pursue, Challenge, Keep Developing
5. **Spiritual:** Meaning & Purpose
6. **Social:** Connection, Belonging, Contributing
noun: the process or result of joining two or more things together to form a single entity

synonyms: blend, blending, combination, amalgamation, joining, bonding, binding, merging, melding, mingling, integration, intermixture, intermingling, synthesis

- **Emotional Wellness**
  - The ability to deal constructively with reality.
  - The capacity to adapt to change.
  - A relative freedom from symptoms that are produced by tensions and anxieties.
  - The capacity to find more satisfaction in giving than receiving.
  - The capacity to relate to other people in a consistent manner with mutual satisfaction and helpfulness.
  - The capacity to love.

- **Professional Wellness**
  - Practice law with skill and confidence; continue to learn.
  - Build and maintain integrity in the practice.
  - Take pride in one’s work and good reputation.
  - Strive for financial success.
  - Relate to clients with empathy and compassion while maintaining healthy boundaries.
  - Achieve sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with career.