

CBA Hosts Inaugural Well-Being Summit

On May 3, the first CBA Well-Being Summit was held at the University of Connecticut School of Law. The summit was focused on physical and mental wellness practices and featured a diverse assortment of presentations and activities led by professionals in their areas.

The summit began with a welcome by CBA President Daniel J. Horgan. "Let's face it. Life and careers are stressful, but being attorneys adds unique stresses not shared by many or any professions," stated President Horgan. "How can we be on top of our game for our clients if we don't take care of ourselves? Today's featured speakers will help us understand how we have to start today to take care of ourselves."

CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee Co-Chair Tanyee Cheung began the day's activities by leading attendees in a guided ten-minute meditation. The opening

meditation was followed by the summit's keynote presentation, provided by Heidi Alexander, director of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Lawyer Well-Being. She spoke about the statistics showing high rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts in the legal profession; the current state of well-being in law; and the movement underway to make changes in the profession. "The work that we are doing here today is part of the solution," stated Alexander. "We have to create more awareness of the issues in our profession, the problems, and the barriers



(L to R) CBA President Daniel J. Horgan, CBA Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs Sara Bonaiuto and Tanyee Cheung, and CBA President-Elect Margaret I. Castinado.

Well-Being Summit Attendee Testimonials

The Well-Being Summit was a great experience. It was enjoyable, educational, and important: making space for wellness is crucial. We all know how to tough it out and push through and do more, now we need to learn how to rest, restore, and replenish. There were many surprises, both good (new plant!) and bad (some of the stats on lawyer happiness are ghastly), and a wonderful selection of speakers and attendees. The sound healing was amazing, so heart opening.

– Cynthia Barlow, Public Defender

I really enjoyed the CBA Well-Being Summit. I especially loved how CBA President Attorney Horgan began the event by emphasizing that “maintaining our well-being is part of a lawyer’s duty of competency.” I aim to stress that same lesson with my law students—mindful of their journey as aspiring attorneys and future leaders of the legal profession. The sound bath meditation and planting exercise was my favorite part of the day—it physically required me to put down my phone for more than five minutes. Listening to the singing bowl while potting a plant was a very relaxing experience. I can’t wait for the next Well-Being Summit!

– Ashley Binetti Armstrong, Assistant Clinical Professor
UConn School of Law

The Summit was an amazing testament to the CBA, CBA leadership, and Lawyer Well-Being Committee’s commitment to lawyer wellness. Presenters were varied and offered a nice balance of statistics, practical strategies, and some things that pushed me out of my comfort zone. I am not a successful gardener but loved the guided planting exercise; that, accompanied by sound therapy, and the sound of the presenter’s voice allowed me to chill out and be present in the moment. And my plant is still alive!

– Karen DeMeola, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Belonging and Community Engagement
UConn School of Law

This event was full of some information I already knew, some information I didn’t, and also unexpected surprises and a lot of fun. My plant, remarkably, is still alive.

– Kathy Flaherty, Executive Director
Connecticut Legal Rights Project

I am truly thrilled to see this Well-Being Summit come to fruition! The summit surpassed my expectations and the energy in the room was beautiful. Not to be missed event!

– Margaret I. Castinado, Senior Assistant Public Defender
Office of the Public Defender

The 2023 CBA Well-being Summit was a breath of fresh air to the law community. It was a pleasure to hold space and provide lawyers with an immersive nature-based activity as well as sound healing and mindfulness. Research shows that lawyers are at the top of the list when it comes to stress and anxiety. I implore more lawyers to take steps to be more mindful of their inner well-being while managing their high performing positions. I commend the CBA Wellness Committee for their ongoing efforts in empowering wellness in the workplace. Great leaders invest in wellness.

– Tamar Draughn, CEO/Director of Integrative Medicine
Phoenix Professional Services, LLC

Well-Being Summit



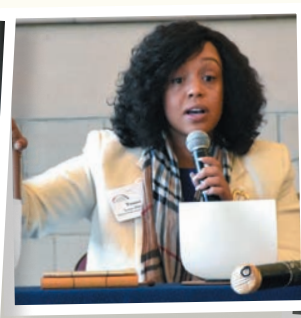
Heidi Alexander

Director of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Lawyer Well-Being Heidi Alexander provided the summit's keynote presentation.



Aaron Zanchi

Presenter Aaron Zanchi provided information on how to assist well-being through nutrition and a balanced lifestyle.



Tamar Draughn

Presenter Tamar Draughn led attendees in a sound healing activity.



Traci Cipriano

CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee member Traci Cipriano presents "Promoting Well-Being and Creating Change: Understanding the Big Picture and Finding Focus" to the attendees.



David Williams

Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers Connecticut (LCL-CT) and CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee member David Williams introduced attendees to LCL-CT's newly redesigned website.

to well-being and how we're going to make those changes. One of the reasons why is because stigma continues to be the number one reason why people don't get help."

Aaron Zanchi, founder and coach of Freedom Foodies & Fitness and owner and coach of Wingman Fitness, presented on the importance of nutrition and stress management as components of

well-being. He identified the importance of a lifestyle prioritizing a diet focused on proteins and plants, proper periods of sleep, and regular daily activity. "If we can maintain those things, it doesn't matter what stressor you come up against," Zanchi remarked. "You will be able to meet it and respond to it and meeting it and responding to it is going to be the most important and valuable thing for your well-being on a consistent basis."

Tamar Draughn, president and director of integrative medicine at Phoenix Professional Services LLC, provided attendees with a sound healing session. During the session, she encouraged everyone present to write positive affirmations and the names of loved ones on clay pots placed on the tables in the room. She continued by asking everyone to add soil to their pot and plant provided leaf cuttings, emphasizing the connection between people and nature.

CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee member, Traci Cipriano, led the presentation "Promoting Well-Being and Creating Change: Understanding the Big Picture and Finding Focus." Dr. Cipriano shared her new model of lawyer well-being, which is the basis of her forthcoming book. She identified resistance from law firms' leaders as one of the most significant impediments to increased well-being in law, stating, "I can give you all the tools in the world in your toolbox, but if you're not being supported and you're in an unhealthy workplace, you're going to burnout."

Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers Connecticut (LCL-CT) and CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee member, David Williams, provided the final portion of the summit, where he introduced attendees to LCL-CT's newly redesigned website and the various services the organization offers to attorneys struggling with issues such as alcohol and drug use, depression, stress, and anxiety.

CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee Co-Chairs Sara Bonaiuto and Tanyee Cheung closed the summit, thanking everyone who attended and encouraging them all to advocate for an increased focus on well-being in the legal profession. ■

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