

LawCare

Supporting the Legal Community

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Being human & being a legal professional



Overview

- Good mental health & wellbeing living alongside Covid-19
- BurnOut/Vicarious Trauma
- Self-Care v Client Care the need for boundaries
- LawCare Guidance & Support

What is Mental Health/Wellbeing?

Mental health (WHO 1948 definition)

“A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and can make a contribution to his or her community”

Wellbeing is about how we feel, how we think, our relationships, and how we find meaning and purpose in our lives

Mental health continuum

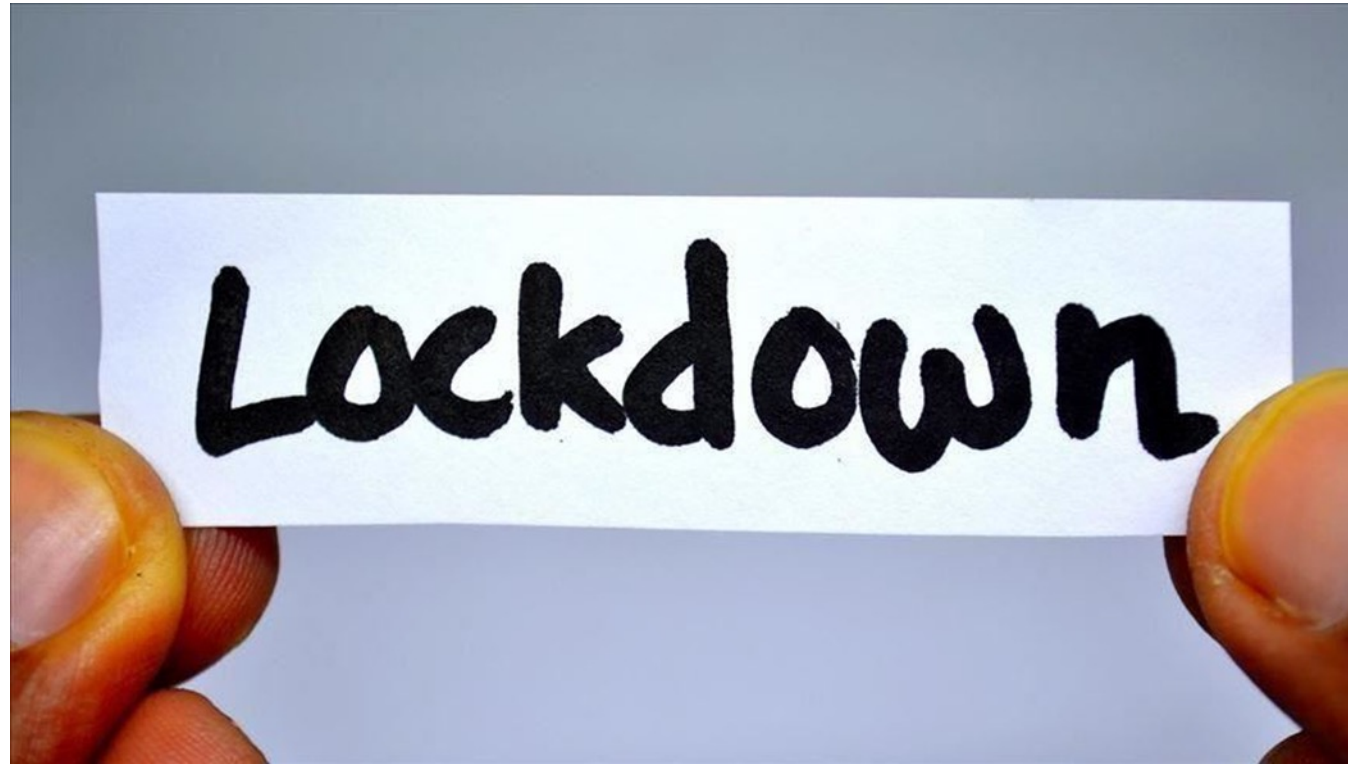


Being well...comfortable, healthy & happy

Wellbeing is about how we feel, how we think, our relationships, and how we find meaning and purpose in our lives WHO



Life pre 23 March 2020 5% WFH and then...



Covid accelerated things: Working life changed overnight

- WFH the only choice for office-based employees
- Home-schooling struggle for many, extra caring responsibilities, vulnerable relatives, health, new regimes, mask-wearing, testing etc
- Technology arrived ZOOM, Teams et al screen-interaction in the virtual world
- Courts closed, clients could not meet, dress-codes disappeared...



LIFE IN THE LAW

2020/21

Burnout



Burnout - Life in the Law, our research study

- Recognised since 2019 by WHO as an occupational phenomenon
- Describes the negative mental state where workers feel emotionally exhausted by and disengaged in their work
- A score above 34.8 indicates high risk of burnout
- As a collective our sample average was 42.2 indicating a high prevailing risk
- Particularly high scores were noted for the exhaustion¹¹ element of burnout



One definition...

What is 'Burnout'?

- EXHAUSTION OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL STRENGTH OR MOTIVATION USUALLY AS A RESULT OF PROLONGED STRESS OR FRUSTRATION.

- MERRIAM WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Maria

- 10 years' ppe
- Working 12 hour days and most Saturdays
- Cannot cope with pressure, volume of work
- Has “collapsed” twice and been taken to A & E
- In regular contact with GP



Vicarious Trauma



- **vicarious** = substitute
- ...experienced or realized through imaginative or sympathetic participation in the experience of another
- **trauma**...an emotional response often to a terrible event.
- Vicarious Trauma is a process of change resulting from **empathetic** engagement (with trauma survivors)
- *Source: BMA*

Consider

“Lawyers (YOU) engage **empathetically** and with **compassion** with clients who have experienced **trauma...at risk of a version of what clients have experienced.**” *Professor Peters, Yale Law School*

Where does this all **begin**?

Marta

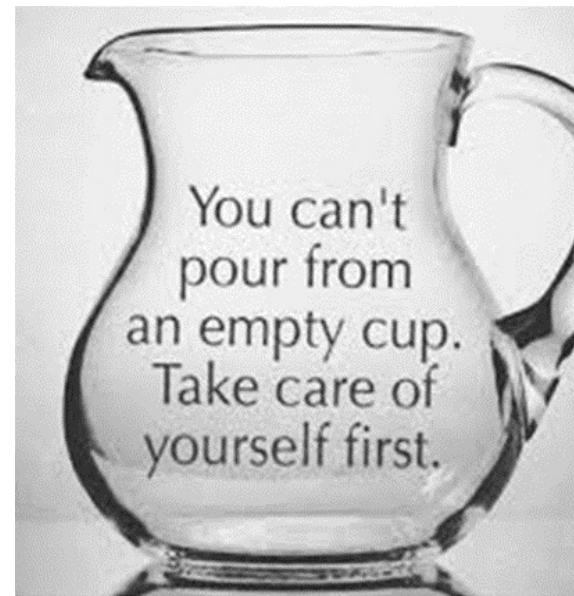
- Working in immigration in a law centre
- Witnessed client banging head off the wall
- Rings helpline as she is shaking, cannot settle, cannot eat
- Talks about many challenging cases/images
- No-one available to offload onto...

How LawCare supported (3 channels helpline, livechat & email)

- **Listened** to their story probably the most important thing we do
- Signposted to other resources including SAS (Solicitors Assistance Scheme) for free legal advice, SRA (Ethics helpline), reminder of GP, ASF (Additional Support Fund), Fact-Sheets on Anxiety, Depression, Counselling + our podcast e.g. BurnOut/Vicarious Trauma/Toxic Productivity
- Chatted through without giving advice, helping to restore perspective through empathy and reassurance in a confidential safe space

Self-Care & Client Care

- We cannot meet the needs of the client when we are overriding our own...



Transition work-life outside work

- Write down outstanding tasks
- Wash your hands
- Lock away everything/put a cloth over your workspace/put up a black out blind
- Pause JUST A MINUTE and Breathe
- Get some fresh air
- Put on different clothes
- Play some music
- Have a shower/bath
- Announce: **The court is closed/All rise!**



Workplace support measures

- Regular catch-ups or appraisals
- Mental health policies that are implemented
- Mental health and wellbeing training
- Signposting to external support EAPs, helplines etc



You are not alone, you are not the only one




LawCare

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LawCare is the *mental wellbeing* charity for the legal community.

We offer free, confidential, emotional support to anyone working in the law



THE LEGAL MIND

LawCare

The Legal Mind Podcast: Toxic Productivity with Adam Carvalho

Podcasts 16 December 2021

Take a proper break this Christmas

Useful research on mental health and the legal profession


Blogs 16 December 2021



Articles, stories, videos, information on mental health & wellbeing

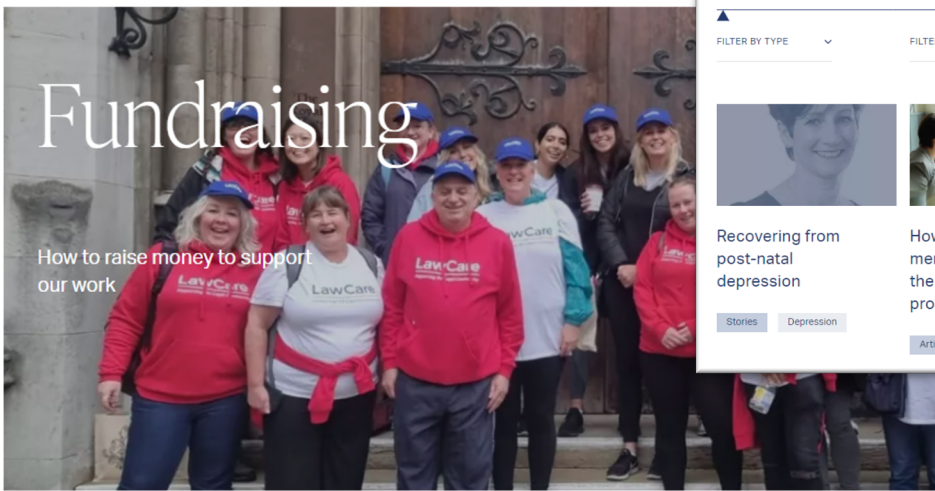
Life in the Law

Read our research study into how the culture and practice of law affect wellbeing.



Fundraising

How to raise money to support our work






FILTER BY TYPE FILTER BY TOPIC

Recovering from post-natal depression

How to talk about mental health in the legal profession

Worried about someone

Stories Depression Article Workplace




Helpline, online chat and email support

Helpline 0800 279 6888 Monday Friday 9am-5pm

Online chat Wednesday 9am-5pm

[Email our support team](#)



What LawCare offers

- Listening and exploring in confidence
- Information
- Signposting
- Peer Support
- Additional Support Fund
(Funding for therapeutic help where necessary)



Thank you!

