

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

JUDGES' ASSISTANCE



A MESSAGE ABOUT JUDGES' ASSISTANCE

The best programs are the programs that help people.

We all have problems from time to time whether resulting from personal issues, everyday stress, or just the circumstances of being human. Helpers and community leaders are often too busy tending to the troubles of others to acknowledge their own needs. Now there is specialized help available for members of the judiciary.

A successful assistance program has been serving the legal profession in New York for fourteen years. Now a confidential program creates a helping hand for judges, including offsite counseling and a special helpline.

Your Judges' Assistance resource is designed for ease of access, utmost confidentiality and guidance to the most effective, economic and convenient helping resources. Participation in Judges' Assistance is free. Help from other professionals may be covered by your health benefits package or through personal arrangement.

Helpline
1-800-255-0569

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTED BY JUDICIARY LAW

Section 499. **Lawyer Assistance Committees** Chapter 327 of the Laws of 1993

1. Confidential information privileged. The confidential relations and communications between a member or authorized agent of a lawyer assistance committee sponsored by a state or local bar association and any person, firm or corporation communicating with such a committee, its members or authorized agents shall be deemed to be privileged on the same basis as those provided by law between attorney and client. Such privileges may be waived only by the person, firm or corporation which has furnished information to the committee.

2. Immunity from liability. Any person, firm or corporation in good faith providing information to, or in any other way participating in the affairs of any of the committees referred to in subdivision one of this section shall be immune from civil liability that might otherwise result by reason of such conduct. For the purpose of any proceeding, the good faith of any such person, firm or corporation shall be presumed.

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AREAS OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Our services include help for a broad range of problems and personal issues such as:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Depression
- Stress and burnout
- Gambling
- Eating disorders
- Balancing work and family
- Referral for other health related problems

A staff member answers the helpline during business hours with prompt response to emergency calls at other times. The New York Judges' Assistance Program services include:

- Early identification of impairment
- Intervention and motivation of judges to seek help
- Assessment, evaluation and development of an appropriate treatment plan
- Referral to appropriate community resources, self-help groups, outpatient counseling, detoxification and rehabilitation services
- Information and referral for depression and stress
- Training programs on alcoholism, drug abuse and stress management

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Judges' Assistance Program of the New York State Bar Association is to assist judges who are affected by alcoholism, drug abuse, stress or depression and to provide collateral services to immediate family members. Its goal is to prevent health, family and work related problems that will develop as a result of alcoholism and drug abuse.

The Judges' Assistance Program is:

- confidential and protected under Section 499 of the Judiciary Law as amended by Chapter 327 of the Laws of 1993.
- guided by the NYSBA Committee on Lawyer Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.
- available to all New York State attorneys, judges, law school students and their immediate family members.

Helpline

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ALCOHOL, MEDICATIONS AND HEALTH

Alcohol and medication problems are often an unaddressed area of health concern. Your Judges' Assistance program staff can provide you with the resources needed to help you.

Problems with alcohol or medications are among the most sensitive issues a person can encounter. Inadvertent and unintended misuse can lead to dependency problems. Your Judges' Assistance Program staff has special skills and understanding to address these problems.

Some modern medications may cause unforeseen hazards needing specialized help. With most substance abuse problems there is a progression involved. The earliest call for help will address the issue before severe social, professional and medical problems result.

Experience proves that outcomes are improved with ongoing help and encouragement. Judges' Assistance combines the most appropriate techniques with thoughtful, skilled support.

Confidential help and ready access to the most effective and convenient resources are a phone call away.

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ABOUT DEPRESSION

Depression is the leading cause of disability in the US, affecting about 10% of the population; two-thirds of those affected never seek treatment and suffer needlessly. No one is completely immune. Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed and treated for major depression. Men, who are less willing to acknowledge depression, may sometimes mask it by using alcohol or other drugs.

Some of the signs of depression are:

- Inability to meet professional obligations
- Persistent sadness, apathy or anxiety
- Trouble concentrating
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Loss of interest or pleasure
- Feeling overwhelmed, confused, isolated and paralyzed
- Thoughts of suicide

The vast majority of people with a depressive illness improve with appropriate treatment. The Judges' Assistance staff can provide a free and confidential screening and consultation while assisting in the referral to appropriate resources.

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STRESS

Stress is an expected part of daily life today. It is also one of the most preventable and treatable causes of many major illnesses. Reducing or managing stress can be challenging, but it can also be life-saving. Recognizing the signs of stress and seeking solutions are the first steps towards avoiding stress-related problems.

Some signs of stress include:

- Headaches, other physical aches, fatigue or sleep difficulties
- Difficulty making decisions or constant worry
- Feeling cynical, apathetic or empty
- Feeling more isolated, lonely and less social than normal
- Feeling nervous, irritable, anxious or short-tempered

Experiencing any of the above may be a reason to call Judges' Assistance for stress management guidance.

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New York State Bar Association

Judges' Assistance Program

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CONFIDENTIAL

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