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**JURY SELECTION IN THE SOCIAL
MEDIA ERA**

**Substance Abuse: Why Education
On This Topic Matters**

Presented By:

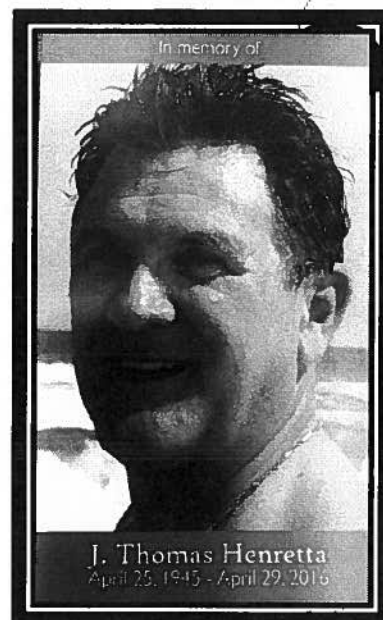
**Attorney Susan Baker Ross
Co-Chair, Lawyers' Assistance Committee**

Substance Abuse: Why Education on this Topic Matters

**Presented by Susan Baker Ross
Co-Chair, Akron Bar Association Lawyer's
Assistance Committee
Magistrate, Akron Municipal Court**

Introduction

**June 19, 1965
July, 1989
November, 1991
Today**



**American Society of Addiction Medicine:
2015 Study Regarding the Prevalence of
Substance Use and other Mental Health
Concerns Among American Attorneys**

- **12,825 Licensed Employed American Lawyers**
- **20% engaged in potentially alcohol dependent drinking**
- **Men higher proportion**
- **30 years and younger more likely to have higher score**
- **20% experienced symptoms of depression**
- **19% experienced symptoms of anxiety**
- **23% experienced symptoms of stress**

Conclusion:

Attorneys experience problematic drinking that is hazardous, harmful or otherwise consistent with alcohol use disorders at a higher rate than other professional populations.

Mental health distress is also significant.

Why? STRESS

- **Position of great responsibility with lives hanging in our hands**
- **Compassion Fatigue/Vicarious Trauma**
- **Financial Challenges – either debt or just maintaining client base and practice – creates pressure to work more hours**
- **Conflicting home and work priorities**
- **Pessimism, collegiality and difficult clients**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Keeping up with the law and the requirements of the various courts**
- **Predisposition and escape**

What happens if no help?

If an attorney is suffering from alcoholism, addiction, stress, anxiety or mental illness, and they receive no help the consequences can be severe.

We often say – its not my problem, I don't want to insert myself into their life, its not hurting anyone, etc.

The result is the lawyer ends up bankrupt, disbarred, jailed, committed, or dead. Untreated these problems can ruin the attorney's life.

So what can we do?

Alcoholism, substance abuse, addictive behavior, and psychological problems are treatable illnesses rather than moral issues.

We have to recognize that we do not blame or shame a person with diabetes or other diseases, and we need to recognize that alcoholism, addiction and mental disorders are illnesses as well.

We need to embrace the concept that the only stigma attached to these illnesses is an individual's failure to seek help. The more we do as a profession to educate the more likely people will be to ask for help.

It is also the responsibility of the legal community to help our colleagues who may not recognize their need for assistance.

Lawyers' Assistance Committee


This committee of the Akron Bar Association provides education and confidential assistance to lawyers, judges and law school students, who are affected by the problems of alcohol or substance abuse, stress, depression or other mental health issues.

Consistent with the mission of the Bar Association, our goal is to assist in the prevention, early identification and intervention of problems that can affect professional conduct and quality of life.

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Confidentiality

Our services are STRICTLY confidential pursuant to Prof. Cond. R. 8.3(c) and each member of our committee, as well as staff, signs an oath affirming their commitment to confidentiality.

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Ohio Lawyer's Assistance Program

OLAP is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping Ohio's judges, attorneys, and law students obtain treatment for substance abuse, chemical dependency, addiction, and mental health issues.

OLAP has existed since 1991 and is active across the state of Ohio.

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OLAP Services

- **Confidential advice about individual problems**
- **Help in arranging and implementing formal interventions**
- **Help in deciding between outpatient, inpatient, and other treatment programs**
- **Monitoring and aftercare services**

OLAP Statistics

OLAP clients include law students, lawyers and judges.

- **20% are substance abuse/chemical dependency**
- **40% are mental illness only, and**
- **40% are dual diagnosis (chemical dependency and mental illness).**

OLAP carries a case load of over one thousand active files. About 70 – 80 of their clients are law students, and they usually are working with about 25 judges.

Dave Nee: Feb 1976 – June, 2005



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtdiGNerN-g>

Education & Prevention is Key

In order to help people we need to understand the illnesses and symptoms so that when we see a colleague struggling perhaps we can help them identify the issue

In the limited time we have I want to review the main issues we see as well as describe the brain disorder at play here and offer some solutions.

Mental Illness

A mental illness is a condition that impacts a person's thinking, feeling or mood and may affect his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.

- Anxiety Disorder**
- Bipolar Disorder**
- Borderline Personality Disorder**
- Depression**
- Eating Disorders**
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Depression

Depression is the most common mental health concern, affecting 10% of the general population. Although everyone feels down or blue at some point, depression is different. It occurs when those feelings last longer than two weeks. Depression interferes with daily life and normal functioning. No one is immune from depression, although women are diagnosed with depression more often than men. The good news is that depression is treatable, and resources exist to help individuals experiencing depression.

Symptoms of Depression

- **Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings**
- **Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism**
- **Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness**
- **Irritability, restlessness**
- **Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex**
- **Fatigue and decreased energy**
- **Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions**
- **Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping**
- **Overeating, or appetite loss**
- **Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts**
- **Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment**

What is Alcoholism, AKA Alcohol Dependence?

Alcoholism, also known as alcohol dependence, is a chronic disease. It is a progressive disease and occurs when the body becomes physically dependent upon alcohol.

Individuals who are dependent upon alcohol may not be able to control how much they drink and frequently continue to drink despite serious consequences.

What is Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol abuse occurs when a person is not physically dependent upon alcohol, but does exhibit problems with alcohol. Someone who abuses alcohol may drink too much and experience problems due to consuming alcohol.

It is possible to recover from alcohol dependence and abuse and there are many resources available for help.

Symptoms of Alcoholism/Abuse

Symptoms of alcohol dependence and abuse may overlap. However, someone who abuses alcohol may not experience physical symptoms of abuse and may not have as strong a compulsion to drink. Symptoms may include:

- Being unable to limit the amount of alcohol you drink**
- Feeling a strong need or compulsion to drink**
- Developing tolerance to alcohol so that you need increasing amounts to feel its effects**
- Having legal problems or problems with relationships, employment or finances due to drinking**
- Drinking alone or in secret**
- Experiencing physical withdrawal symptoms — such as nausea, sweating and shaking — when you don't drink**

- **Not remembering conversations or commitments, sometimes referred to as "blacking out"**
- **Making a ritual of having drinks at certain times and becoming annoyed when this ritual is disturbed or questioned**
- **Losing interest in activities and hobbies that used to bring pleasure**
- **Irritability when the usual drinking time nears, especially if alcohol isn't available**
- **Keeping alcohol in unlikely places at home, at work or in the car**
- **Gulping drinks, ordering doubles, becoming intoxicated intentionally to feel good or drinking to feel "normal"**

What is Addiction

Drug dependence, also known as addiction, is a chronic disease. It is progressive, and occurs when the body becomes physically dependent upon a drug. Drug addiction in any form – from cocaine to methamphetamine to prescription pain relievers and stimulants - changes the brain. Individuals who are dependent upon drugs may not be able to control how much they use and continue to use drugs despite serious consequences.

Symptoms of Addiction

Symptoms of drug dependence and abuse may differ, as each drug has different effects. Below are general symptoms associated with drug use:

- Bloodshot eyes or pupils that are larger or smaller than usual.
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or weight gain.
- Deterioration of physical appearance and personal grooming habits.
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing.
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination.

- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school.
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it.
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors.
- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies.
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities).
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude.
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts.
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness.
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or "spaced out."
- Appears fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason.

What is Compulsive Behavior?

Compulsive behavior involves an action that, on its own, is not physically addictive - such as eating, gambling, shopping, internet use, or sex. It is defined as a behavior that is conducted repeatedly due to a strong impulse - often against the best interest of the individual.

The lack of a physical addiction separates this condition from alcohol and drug abuse/dependence, but compulsive behavior can still be very harmful, and should not go untreated.

Compulsive Behaviors

The list of compulsive behaviors is wide-ranging, and can include any day-to-day activity that has become overpowering and destructive in an individual's life.

Compulsive behaviors are a recognized psychological condition in the mental health community, due to the frequency of the behavior and the overall affect on quality of life.

Symptoms of Compulsive Behavior

Symptoms depend upon the type and nature of the behavior. Compulsive behaviors have a disruptive effect and interfere with the ability to function – at work and home.

Someone with compulsive behavior may feel like they cannot control their impulses and may engage in the behavior despite serious consequences. They may not experience satisfaction or pleasure from the behavior but engage in the behavior to escape from other problems.

Stress

Stress is a physical, mental and emotional response to life's changes and demands. It is experienced in levels – from low to high. Not all stress is harmful. In fact, moderate stress can be positive, challenging people to act in creative and resourceful ways. When stress is high, however, it can be damaging and lead to serious health problems such as depression and heart disease.

Everyone experiences stress. Any number of factors may contribute to stress, including personality, physical and emotional health, personal relationships, major life changes, and social and job issues. It's not always possible to avoid stress, but it is possible to change your response to stress.

Common Symptoms of Stress

- **Headache**
- **Muscle tension or pain**
- **Chest pain**
- **Fatigue**
- **Change in sex drive**
- **Stomach upset**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Anxiety**
- **Restlessness**
- **Lack of motivation or focus**
- **Irritability or anger**
- **Sadness or depression**

Addiction is a brain disease

The frontal cortex of the brain is where we consciously experience meaning, self, personality, love, morality, decency, responsibility, spirituality and willpower.

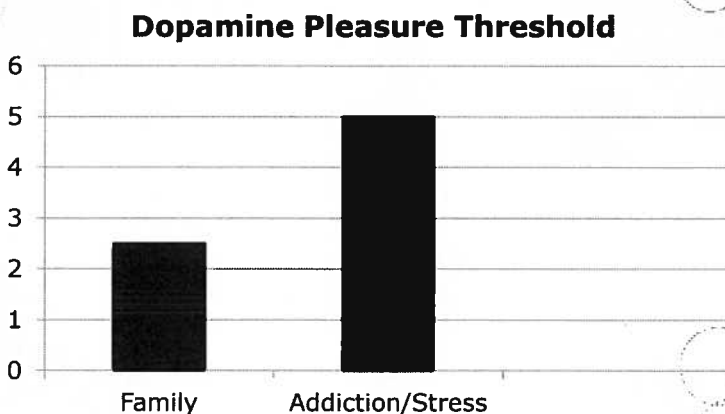
The midbrain does not operate with conscience. It acts immediately without planning or regard for long-term consequences. This is where our survival needs kick in.

Drugs work in the midbrain.

Reward Center of Brain

- Normal day brings happiness and pleasure
- Use of drugs and alcohol and other compulsive behaviors release dopamine
- Continued use raises the reward center balance line
- High stress hormone levels **ALSO** raise the reward center balance line
- The things that used to bring great pleasure no longer bring same happiness

Effect of Drugs/Stress



Back to the Mid-Brain

- **So now the pleasure threshold has been raised.**
- **Increased need for Dopamine**
- **Midbrain thinks it is dying**
- **Craving sets in – physiological response to the chemical deficiency**
- **Craving “hijacks” the frontal cortex**
- **During craving the frontal cortex gets shut off and taken over**

Midbrain Seeks Relief

- **Nothing is higher than survival**
- **No threat of jail, disbarment, divorce, bankruptcy will prevail during the craving.**
- **The use must occur to placate the mid-brain**
- **Once it is satisfied then the frontal cortex is allowed to step in again**

Treatment of Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Treatment strategies vary, based upon the assessment of a healthcare professional.

Treatment may include an intervention, outpatient program or counseling, or residential inpatient program. In addition, support groups are often helpful in the recovery process.

Recovery is Possible

- Development of coping skills that release dopamine**
- Treatment seeks to give the addict realistic tools to manage stress and decrease craving BEFORE mid-brain takes over**
- Treatment seeks to find the thing which is more emotionally meaningful than the drug of choice and replace it with spiritual growth and personal development**
- Treatment seeks to reset the pleasure threshold to a normal level which lowers the risk of relapse**

How to Manage Stress

Although it's not always possible to avoid stress, there are ways to help minimize stress. If you recognize signs of stress, the best way to manage and alleviate stress is to develop coping strategies. Some coping strategies include:

- Avoid controllable stressors
- Plan major lifestyle changes
- Realize your limitations
- Prioritize
- Improve communication
- Share your thoughts
- Develop a positive attitude
- Reward yourself

Additional Healthy Coping Skills

- Exercise and eat healthier
- Get Enough Sleep
- Carve out family and social engagement time
- Meaningful hobbies
- Community Service
- Get a massage
- Practice Mindfulness/Meditation
- Journal/Prayer/Spiritual Development

Resources:

- **Journal of Addiction Medicine, February 2016: The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys**
- **Dr. Nicole Labor, Associate Medical Director of Addiction Medicine, Summa Physicians Inc.**
- **<http://www.akronbar.org/member-center/committee-sections/lawyers-assistance-committee/>**
- **<http://www.ohiolap.org/>**
- **http://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance.html**
- **https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Texas_Lawyers_Assistance_Program1&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=30501**
- **<https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI>**
- **<http://www.daveneefoundation.org/>**