

OLAP
understands
lawyers.



OLAP reaches
out to
lawyers.

www.olap.ca

The **Ontario Lawyers' Assistance Program** is a registered charity and provides assistance at no cost to members of the legal profession in Ontario. **OLAP** assists lawyers, judges, law students and/or their immediate families with issues including addictions, mental health, career challenges, health and well being.

Network

OLAP's Online Volunteer Newsletter
July 2008, Eighteenth Edition

LAWYERS HELPING LAWYERS SINCE 1978

Dear Volunteers

We have been working hard planning the upcoming volunteer workshop on July 24 and 26. The program details are attached and there are a lot of interesting topics and presenters. One of the topics to be addressed is communication. One of the most important communication skills for volunteers is *listening* and you will find a list of listening skills on page 4 of this newsletter.

Our case managers Doron Gold and Terri Wilkinson play a very important role in listening to concerns of people who call OLAP. It is their role to determine how to best support and help a caller. Often the help includes connecting a caller with one of you. You may not have met Doron or Terri but most of you have talked with them on the phone.



Our Case Managers at Work (*Terri Wilkinson, Doron Gold*)

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions or ideas. We look forward to seeing you at the workshop.

John G Starzynski
Volunteer Executive Director

Leota Embleton
Program Manager

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2008 Volunteer Skills Workshop Agenda

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WOMEN’S WORK AND WELLNESS LUNCHEONS

DATE: May 30, 2008
 TOPIC: “Pilates-O: Breaking New Ground in Wellness”
 SPEAKER: Jan Murray – Pilates Coach, Osteopath and Registered Massage Therapist

Lawyers work at jobs that involve relatively limited physical demands, yet they can experience significant levels of physical and mental stress. Our busy work and family schedules may distract us from taking some simple steps to maintain or improve our well-being. Jan Murray understands these competing priorities. She has designed Pilates-O to address concerns she has heard from clients over the years - that they need a program that they can do by themselves, for themselves and on their own time. Pilates-O combines techniques from Pilates and Osteopathy, with accents from fitness training and general wellness. Jan introduced us to her Pilates-O program and explained how some very small steps can make a very big difference. More information about Jan can be found [here](#). She can be reached at janmurray@sympatico.ca

LAWYER SPECIFIC SUPPORT GROUP

OLAP staff have been working hard to develop a support group for lawyers. Our aim is to focus on mental health issues, stress, addiction or career adjustment. We have identified several facilitators – OLAP volunteers that have offered to assist with the management of the group – all of whom have attended training at the Ontario Self Help Network (OSHN).

The training session was extremely informative, and we will utilize the program models that were suggested therein. We thank everyone that responded to our invitation and look forward to releasing the details of the group as they are confirmed.

OSHN’s mission is to promote self-help/mutual aid awareness. Their website offers listings of self-help groups across the province. To find out what’s available in your area, please see their website at <http://www.selfhelp.on.ca/>

OLAP REVIEW

The preliminary report has been received from the OLAP review. We would like to thank volunteers, board members and LSUC and LAWPRO staff who spent time talking with Ian Aikenhead and Derek LaCroix. In general the report was very positive about the activities, structure and functioning of OLAP.

The Board and staff will be considering the report and its recommendations in the months to come.

Some of the observations were:

- “The Ontario Lawyers’ Assistance Program is working effectively, assisting members in a professional, organized and respectful manner. It is well respected by the legal profession.”
- “Increased efforts need to be made to help create a recovery community within OLAP, particularly current lawyers in recovery who are not active in OLAP.”
- In comparison with other Lawyer Assistance Programs OLAP is under funded.
- OLAP is unique in that it combines the “lawyer helping lawyer” function and the professional counseling services and Employee Assistance Program services.

BOARD NEWS

Board member William A.J. Covello from the Ontario Bar Association has resigned from the OLAP Board of Directors. He had completed his term of office. We thank Bill for his interest in OLAP and commitment to making services available to lawyers in northern Ontario.

GETTING ASSISTANCE FROM OLAP

By John G. Starzynski

(to appear in the upcoming Ontario Lawyers' Gazette)

The call came in about 10:00 a.m. Monday. He seemed tentative and quiet. He didn't know what to do or who to call. He had read about OLAP in the Gazette and Ontario Reports and decided to give us a try. He started to cry and asked if someone could call back in ten minutes while he composed himself. An OLAP Case Manager called him back and realized that they needed to talk face to face and that the phone was just not good enough. They arranged to meet later that day.

The caller, let's call him Bill, was severely unwell. He had interrupted sleep getting maybe three to four hours a night. Nightmares plagued him. He had recurring stomach aches and chest pains. He had been to his doctor for a battery of tests but everything was clear. He got headaches every afternoon about 3:00 p.m. for which he was taking increasing dosages of Tylenol and Advil. He was very fatigued to the point of exhaustion. He had ceased to eat as he had stomach and bowel problems. Emotionally, he had little left in the way of resources. He was irritable and sad, crying often. He locked the door to his office and stared blankly out the window. He had panic attacks with short breathing, chest tightness and the feeling that his head would blow off the top of his head. He just didn't care anymore about his marriage, his family or his practice. Where he once had a deep belief in a higher power, now he felt dead. In fact, he wanted to die but was too afraid and tired to commit suicide.

The OLAP Case Manager listened to the pain in Bill's story. Bill was asked about alcohol and drugs as he had not offered this information. Bill disclosed that he was abusing alcohol. He got drunk every time he drank because it seemed to ease the pain he was in for a short time. He experimented with cocaine and really loved the high but hated the low and realized that only way to keep the high was to keep using. He did not want to do that.

When asked why he had not asked for help earlier, he said that lawyers solve problems, they cannot have them. Asking for help is a sign of weakness. Getting help means that other lawyers will take advantage of you if they find out.

It was explained that we, as lawyers, are not immune to the challenges that face all humans. We are not super humans. Asking for help in many societies is a cornerstone of wellness and isolation is a sign of weakness. Other lawyers appreciate our human condition and are there to help. For example, our 75 volunteers are there to talk to and lend a sympathetic ear.

They spent almost two hours in earnest conversation and tired silences. Bill was set up for counselling, both individual and family, and matched with a peer support volunteer. Bill has had other lawyers help him with the hump in his practice. He has a long way to go by he believes that he can get there.

This story is an amalgam of stories we hear at OLAP every day. There are many Bills, both masculine and feminine, that need help. OLAP is here to help with issues of stress, burnout, addictions and mental wellness issues. The service is 24 hours and confidential.

If you are a Bill or know someone who is, please contact Leota Embleton, the Program Manager, Doron Gold, Case Manager and Terri Wilkinson, Case Manager, at 1-877-576-6227. To contact John Starzynski, Volunteer Executive Director, please call 1-877-584-6227.

GUIDELINES FOR EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Empathy is when you identify yourself mentally with another person. In other words, you fully comprehend the other person's "experience", "thoughts" or "feelings".

The techniques to be empathetic are:

1. Be attentive. Create a positive atmosphere through non-verbal behaviour. When you are alert, attentive, non-distracted, and have eye contact, the other person feels important and more positive.
2. Be interested in the other's needs. Remember, you are to listen with understanding.
3. Listen from the "OK" (non-judgemental) listening mode.
 - a. Be a sounding board; allow the talker to bounce ideas and feelings off you while assuming a non-judgemental, noncriticising manner.
 - b. Don't ask a lot of questions. Remember, questions can come across as if the person is being "grilled".
 - c. Act like a mirror: reflect back what you think the other is feeling and/or saying to you.
 - d. Because they discount the person's feelings, don't use stock phrases such as:
 - i. Oh! It's not that bad
 - ii. You'll feel better tomorrow
 - iii. It will blow over; don't be upset
 - iv. You're making a mountain out of a molehill
4. Don't let the other person "hook you". This can happen when you get angry, hurt, or upset, allow yourself to become involved in an argument, jump to conclusions, or pass judgment on the other person.
5. Other ways to indicate you are listening:
 - a. Encourage, non-committal/brief expressions: "Hum", "Uh huh", "I see", "Right", "Oh!", "Interesting".
 - b. Use non-verbal acknowledgements: Head nodding, eye contact, touching (if appropriate), facial expression (matching what the talker is saying), body expression or movement that is relaxed and open
 - c. Invite the person to say more, such as: "Would you like to talk about it?", "I'd like to hear what you're thinking.", "Let's discuss it", "Sounds like you've got some ideas about this", "I'd be interested in what you have to say."
6. Ground rules for empathetic listening:
 - a. Don't interrupt
 - b. Don't take the subject off in another direction
 - c. Don't rehearse in your own head
 - d. Don't interrogate
 - e. Don't teach or give advice
 - f. Do reflect back to the talker what you observe and how you believe the talker feels.

NEW RESOURCES

OLAP News & Events: <http://www.olap.ca/news-and-events.html>
2008 OLAP Peer Volunteer Skills Workshop at Manresa Spiritual Jesuit Center

Upcoming publications:

John Starzynski's Article "Getting Assistance from OLAP" will be available online shortly.
Ontario Lawyers' Gazette, Summer 2008 Vol. 12. No 2.

<http://www.lsuc.on.ca/news/b/olg/>

Doron Gold's Article "Debunking the Lone Sufferer Myth Once and For All" will be available online shortly. LAWPRO Magazine, Vol. 7. Issue 2

<http://www.practicepro.ca/LawPROmag/default.asp>

Newsletters: <http://www.olap.ca/newsletters.html>

Warren Shepell's Summer Brain Drain: Encouraging Kids to Keep Learning During the Summer Holidays

Video: *Practicing from the Shadows*, Depression and the Legal Profession, the State Bar of Texas, 2006 – Available at OLAP

Recommended Print: *The Thinking Person's Guide to Sobriety* by Bert Pluymen, St. Martins Press, 1999

2008 OLAP VOLUNTEER SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA

Friday July 25, 2008

12:00 – 1:00 Registration
Moderator: John G Starzynski, Volunteer Executive Director OLAP
1:00 Welcome
Father O'Brien, Director, Manresa Spiritual Retreat
Rod McLeod, President OLAP Board
1:15 – 1:30 Confidentiality Rule and the Duty to Report (6.01.3) as it affects OLAP Volunteers
Naomi Bussin, Head of the Discipline Counsel, LSUC
1:30 -- 2:00 A Volunteer Experience Rule 6.07
Derek Freeman, FREEMANLAW
2:00 – 3:00 Addiction Update
Identifying and Treating Addiction in the Legal Profession
Dr. G. Cunningham, President Homewood Health Centre
3:00 – 3:15 Break
3:15 – 4:15 What is it like to ask for Help?
Doug Millstone, OLAP Volunteer
4:15 – 5:00 Share your experience – all
5:30 – 7:00 Dinner
Moderator: Terri Wilkinson, Case Manager
7:00- 8:00 Ultimate Health: Optimum Health, Kitchener
Dr. David C. Rainham M.D., C.C.F.P.
8:00 – 8:30 Relaxation techniques
Jack Bethune, Bethune Consulting
8:30 Open 12 step meeting

Saturday July 26, 2008

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast
Moderator: Leota Embleton, Program Manager
9:00 – 10:30- Effective Communication:
Christine Delaney, The Coaching Clinic
10:30 -10:45 Break
10:45 – Effective communication and listening Skills cont'd
12 noon - 1:00 Lunch
Moderator: Doron J Gold, Case Manager
1:00 - 1:45 A view of OLAP from the Bench:
The Honourable Mr. Justice Stanley Kershman
1:45 – 2:30 Impact of Addiction on the Family
Marta Durski, Therapist, Bellwood Health Services
2:30 - 3:00 Update: Lawyers and depression
Dan Lukasik
3:00 - 3:15 Break
3:15- 3:30 Volunteer of the Year Recognition
3:30 – 4:30 Examples and Demonstrations
4:00 – 5:00 Wrap up

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