

OLAP
understands
lawyers



OLAP
reaches out
to lawyers

www.olap.ca

LAWYERS HELPING LAWYERS SINCE 1978

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
April 2010, Twenty-third Edition

Inside...

To All of Our Volunteers:

There are new and ongoing programs that we would like to highlight in this edition of the Newsletter. These group programs enhance and expand OLAP services and the range of people we can reach. Volunteers play an important role in all of these programs.

The Lawyers' Group

This group has been meeting on the first and third Wed. of each month since November of 2008. The group is co facilitated by Coulson Mills and Jill Fenaughty. It is a mutual aid group so the purpose is to offer a safe and confidential place for lawyers to meet and share experiences and offer support to each other. It is not a therapy group. If issues come up that require more professional help the facilitators insure that the issue is referred to the right place for follow up. The group is open so any lawyer can attend. There are some regular attendees who attend most of the meetings. Others come once in awhile and some lawyers may attend only once. As with all of our programs confidentiality is essential and people who attend must remember that 'what goes on in the group stays in the group'. We have included a description of the group from one of the attendees in this newsletter—he describes the process better than we could.

The 12 Step Group for Lawyers

This group is specifically for lawyers in recovery from addiction and modeled on AA. The group has been meeting every Monday evening at 7:30 pm at Bellwood Health Centre since February 2010. Terri Wilkinson helps keep the group together. Our volunteers participate and the group offers a special opportunity for lawyers to share their experiences of hope and strength. It is open to any lawyer in recovery or who is ready to seek help with drug or alcohol addiction.

The Women's Work and Wellness Series

This series is our longest running group that meets quarterly. The goal is to offer information and the opportunity to network with other women lawyers. It is part of OLAP goal to promote wellness and balance in the profession.

We hope that you will take the time to attend a group meeting and encourage others to do so. You will be glad that you did. For more information about any of these programs and the services that OLAP offers, please call us.

Upcoming Events

Past Events

Ongoing Events

A Brief Note on
OLAP's Lawyers'
Group

Recent Articles
/Publications



**Ontario Lawyers'
Assistance Program**
5025 Orbitor Drive
Building 2, Suite 220
Mississauga, ON
L4W 4Y5

REMINDER: OLAP ANNUAL VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP July 16, 17

John Starzynski

Volunteer Executive Director

Leota Embleton

Program Manager

UPCOMING EVENTS



www.wlao.on.ca



www.olap.ca



www.oba.org

OLAP WOMEN'S WORK AND WELLNESS GROUP LUNCHEON

DATE: Friday, May 28, 2010
TIME: 12:00 p.m. Lunch/Networking - 12:15-1:00 p.m. Presentation

PLACE: Ontario Bar Association Conference Centre
20 Toronto St., Suite 200 Toronto

We welcome a \$5.00 voluntary payment to help cover costs of the lunch

TOPIC: "Women In Law ~ Exploring the Options?"

PRESENTERS:

Nina Moritsugu, of **Cognition**, will speak on contract in-house counsel positions.

Alison Hurst, of **LSUC**, will speak on the **Contract Lawyers' Registry**.

Deadline for registration is Monday, May 24, 2010

RSVP: Krista Martin Gorelle, email kgorelle@osc.gov.on.ca
Patty deLaat, Women's Law Association of Ontario, email wlaoc@cogeco.ca
Jill Keaney, Ontario Lawyers' Assistance Program, email j.keaney@olap.ca

TAKE SOME TIME FOR YOURSELF~MEET OTHER WOMEN LAWYERS~SHARE IDEAS & STRATEGIES

The 4th Annual SKILL TEACHING WORKSHOP FOR OLAP VOLUNTEERS

SAVE THE DATE(S)

Friday, July 16, 2010 1:00 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday, July 17, 2010 9:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.

At Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre



2325 Liverpool Road, Pickering, Ontario

THE GOAL OF THE WORKSHOP

The Volunteer Workshop provides updated information for volunteers, helps to develop the team, offers opportunity to learn specific skills, updates on addiction and mental health resources and treatment programs and recognizes the contribution of our peer volunteers.

THIS WORKSHOP IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OTHER OLAP VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Manresa is a Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre is a special location that allows for relaxation and learning. Manresa sits on 21 beautiful acres of land featuring open fields, cultivated gardens and forest areas that foster reflection and renewal.

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY NOTICE

DETAILED AGENDA TO FOLLOW

PAST EVENTS

The Women's Work and Wellness Luncheon Series

The OLAP Women's Work and Wellness Luncheon Series provides an opportunity for women lawyers to meet, on an informal basis, to discuss issues of interest to women lawyers. The luncheons are held on a quarterly basis. The series is in keeping with the OLAP mandate to promote wellness and balance in the legal profession. The luncheons are a joint effort of volunteer help, assistance of OBA and the WLAO.

Friday, January 29, 2010



The topic was "**Financial Fitness 2010**" and was presented by **Nancy Edmison, CFP, IG Investors Group**.

We know that managing finances is one of the biggest challenges for lawyers—especially those in sole practice. You will feel better and less stressed if you are managing your finances effectively. This presentation offered:

- How to separate business and personal finances
- How to structure your cash flow situation
- The ins and outs of Critical Illness Insurance
- How to identify any gaps in your financial plan

nancy.edmison@investorsgroup.com

Thursday, March 25, 2010



The topic was "**Nobody's Dirty Laundry: Shining the light on Mental Illness**" and was presented by **Karen Liberman**, President of the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario. Lawyers often face the complexities of mental health issues in practice and in personal life. The issues of depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder are never far from mind. Karen presented, with a passion, her inspiring story of dealing with mental health issues and offered a perspective that will help with practical tips, things to say and do when dealing with a difficult situation and prevention of possible problems related to mental illness. She is a shining example of hope and recovery.

www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

On April 7, Robert Girvan, an Ontario Lawyer called to the bar in 1990, gave an inspiring lecture about his experiences as a lawyer. Robert, was an idealistic young student who wanted to "do good", and was disillusioned with law after his articles in Vancouver, so took a year off. Law seemed to be too much about the money. Robert took time to be with his two children and begin writing a book. He returned to law as a criminal law defense counsel. He has practiced as a sole practitioner, a senior Crown Attorney and currently works as a criminal law defense counsel. Robert continues working with a great mentor and doing work he values and in which he finds meaning. He has been successful in balancing his professional, creative and family interests. Along the way he had his moments of doubt and anxiety but he has been able to manage his fears and to learn from his mistakes and to live authentically. His experience shows that there are many options in the practice of law, and ways to balance law and life.

Robert's message is. ***"...there can be great depth and meaning in the practice of law....we just have to find it."***

ONGOING EVENTS

12 Step Group for Lawyers

People often ask if there is a lawyer specific AA group available. OLAP has taken the initiative to start a 12-step group for lawyers! It is held every Monday at 7:30 p.m. in Room LL5 (lower level 5) at Bellwood Health Services Inc. at 1020 Mc Nicoll Road in Scarborough. Bellwood has generously offered the use of this room for the meeting. The group's initial meeting was on February 1st and it has been meeting successfully every Monday since then. This is a small discussion group. It is based upon the 12 steps, but is an informal group. To date, the attendees have found this group to be extremely helpful and stimulating. All of the attendees vary in their degree of recovery from the member lawyer in treatment, to the newcomer, to the senior (in years of recovery!) attendee. Men and women attend the group. There is a special level of trust and anonymity in this group that makes it different from the large, "non occupational" 12 step groups. There is usually coffee and cookies but that is not the reason to join us. Join us for the exceptional support this group offers us in our recovery journey, no matter what stage you are at in the journey. And bring someone with you!

Contact Terri Wilkinson at terri@olap.ca or 905 238 1740.

Self Help Group for Lawyers **12 Step Group: Lawyers Helping Lawyers**

The concept of lawyers helping lawyers is the foundation of
Ontario Lawyers' Assistance Program.

To strengthen this aspect of our program, we have established a
12 Step Group for Lawyers to offer an additional "safe place" and
the fellowship of other lawyers who are in recovery.

LOCATION: Bellwood Health Services
1020 Mc Nicoll Avenue, Toronto

TIME: Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Lawyers at any stage of recovery are welcome.

Contact Terri Wilkinson, OLAP,
for more information about the group.

terri@olap.ca

(905) 238-1740

1-877-576-6227

The Lawyers' Group

A Description of the Lawyers' Group :

There is no better way to describe something than through the eyes of a participant. The following is a description of the experience of one of the lawyers who attends The Lawyers' Group. We hope that it will encourage others to attend and find support and relief from some of the lawyer stress.

The group facilitators Jill Fenaughty and Peer Volunteer Coulson Mills will make you feel welcome.

Reminder: The Lawyers' Group is held on the first and third Wed. of every month at the OBA Conference Centre 20 Toronto Street from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

INTRODUCING

The Lawyers' Group

A support group for Lawyers

If you're dealing with family pressures, practice or career stress, mental health and addiction, you're invited to join colleagues in a confidential, supportive environment to offer and receive support.



ALL LAWYERS ARE WELCOME

The group is facilitated by OLAP Volunteers with the support of OLAP staff.

Time: The first and third Wednesday of every month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (*refreshments served*)

Location: Ontario Bar Association, 20 Toronto Street, Toronto

Join us and Bring a Friend.

You are not alone. Let your colleagues prove that to you.



A Brief Note on OLAP's Lawyers' Group By Pei-Shing Wang

Struggling to survive is hard, but struggling to survive on your own is harder. After a rocky start of my own private practice, I struggled through challenges largely on my own, such as complaints to the Law Society and extremely difficult clients. After one particularly hectic day in court, I felt exhausted and hopeless. The troubles never seemed to end, and I didn't have a clue how to straighten things out.

I called OLAP, the Ontario Lawyers' Assistance Program. To my surprise, the case manager said that I'm not the only one facing troubles.

OLAP gets several dozen calls a day from troubled lawyers. In fact, in November 2008, they started a support group for lawyers experiencing difficulties in life – the Lawyers' Group. "The Group" is held every other week and lawyers are welcome to attend to share their experiences in dealing with difficulties.

At first I was reluctant to attend. There was *no way* I could show up and tell a bunch of strangers about my failures. Eventually I summoned the courage and attended the Group. The fact that I didn't know any of the participants helped me to get over my ego. No one knew me, and heck, I didn't even have to use my real name if I didn't want to. I told the group that I'm a new lawyer and a complaint had been registered against me at the Law Society.

To my surprise, people didn't gasp and point their fingers at me. Instead, they embraced my troubles without a trace of judgment. It suddenly occurred to me that it's OK to have problems, and that I don't have to go through them alone. The next day when I woke up, I found something that hasn't been around lately – a ray of hope. T

The courage I thought I had long ago lost returned. Of course, I was still depressed and anxious about my failing law practice, but I was no longer hopeless. My new-found determination carried me on for a few weeks, until the next meeting. In the subsequent meetings I sometimes took a more reflective role in listening to others' troubles. It's surprisingly therapeutic and comforting to support someone through difficulties, knowing that I'm always welcome and can count on the support of others.

While the Lawyers' Group is not meant to be a substitute for psychotherapy, it provides me with a venue to be a friend to others and to myself. A safe harbour in troubled times, the Lawyers' Group is a good place to be.

WORK WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

We appreciate the positive ongoing relationships with Addiction and Mental Health Treatment Centres. This is some information about three centres that we liaise with:

Homewood Health Centre (Guelph, Ontario)

OLAP works with many services and treatment centres in the community to insure the best possible services access. OLAP frequently helps lawyers struggling with a variety of addictions and mental health issues. Homewood offers an intensive in-patient and out-patient program covering many substance and process addictions and also offers an integrated mood and anxiety program and an eating disorder program. Homewood is a hospital and receives subsidies from the Province for the treatment programs.

www.homewood.ca

Bellwood Health Services Inc. (Toronto, Ontario)

This facility treats many substance and process addictions. Bellwood has a treatment program for sex addiction. Bellwood is a private health care facility. Jill Fenaughty meets, regularly, with Intake Staff and Recovery Counsellors to help staff understand the treatment needs of lawyers.

As of February 1, 2010 OLAP launched a 12 Step Meeting Group which is held at Bellwood Health Services Inc. every Monday night at 7:30 p.m.

www.bellwood.ca

Renasant Treatment Centre (Toronto)

Renasant has a centre for men and a centre for women in downtown Toronto. We meet with the Intake staff to help facilitate access to OLAP services and help with aftercare and support for lawyers graduating from the Renasant program. We have an ongoing relationship with Renasant as volunteers answer the LPAC National Helpline.

www.renasant.ca

April 19 -25 National Volunteer Week.

It is another opportunity to thank all OLAP volunteers for the help that you provide to colleagues and the support that you give to OLAP. Much of what you do is done quietly behind the scenes and we want you to know that you are greatly appreciated.



John Starzynski

Volunteer Executive Director

Leota Embleton

Program Manager

RECENT ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS

John and Leota contribute articles on a regular basis to The Hamilton Law Association Journal, The Lawyers Weekly and The Durham Region Law Association Newsletter.

Here are some of the recent articles:

Depression Could Never Happen to Me - I'm a Lawyer, by John G. Starzynski - *The Hamilton Law Association Newsletter (HLA Journal Apr. 2010)*

"It didn't happen all at once. It sort of snuck up on me because of my belief and those of the legal profession that I could not have a problem because I solved them. Depression and recovery have become a way of life for me. So it might help you to hear what and how this illness started."

Comments from lawyers who read this article:

"Just read your piece in the Hamilton Law Association Journal and enjoyed it thoroughly. I respect both your honesty and commitment to help others."

"Thanks for sharing your truth. It was an act of Ministry."



Depression Could
Never Happen To Me

Surviving Being Sued or the Complaint Process, by John G. Starzynski – *The Hamilton Law Association Newsletter (HLA Journal Feb. 2010)*

In the midst of your busy practice, your world comes crashing down. You are served with a claim for negligence and/or a complaint has been filed against you with the Law Society. Here are some tips to deal with this awful and stressful situation



Complaints.pdf

Workaholism Can Have a Negative Impact on Life, by John G. Starzynski – appeared in *The Lawyers Weekly, March 5, 2010*

Workaholism is an addiction with many of the symptoms of other addictions such as alcoholism, drug addiction, Internet addiction, gambling addiction.



Workaholism-2010.p
df

Exploring Career Alternatives, by Leota Embleton, MSW, I.C.A.D.C. - submitted to *Durham Region Law Association Newsletter*

If you are feeling restless, overwhelmed, uncertain about your career choice don't just put up with it. Take some action to look at how to make things better.



Exploring Career
Alternatives.pdf