

## DEPRESSION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Are you:

- Feeling sad, empty, or despondent?
- Losing interest in enjoyable activities?
- Experiencing significant changes in weight or appetite?
- Feeling overwhelmed by guilt, hopelessness, or worthlessness?
- Experiencing sleep disturbances?
- Feeling fatigued, nervous, irritable or moody, or having trouble thinking clearly?
- Encountering conflict with co-workers, and/or over-reacting to situations?
- Repeatedly thinking of suicide or death?

**Seek help immediately if you answered yes to this question.**

Reach out to JLAP for confidential assistance if you answered yes to any of these questions.

**Mission:** The Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc. (JLAP) serves the public, the Bar, and the profession by confidentially assisting lawyers or judges whose professional impairment may result from alcohol, drug abuse, or mental illness.

**Confidentiality:** JLAP is an absolutely confidential method of providing help to an impaired lawyer or judge. Pursuant to La. R.S. 37:221 and La. Supreme Court Rule XIX, Sec. 16(J), any information received by JLAP must remain completely confidential and privileged as a matter of law.

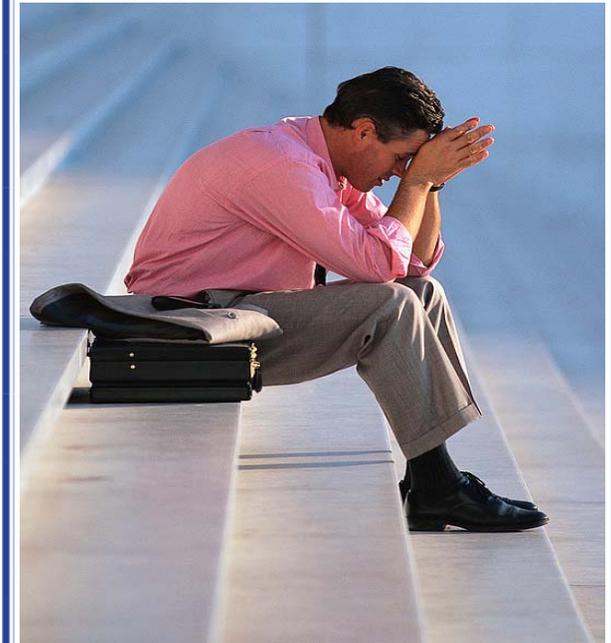
**For more information on JLAP's free and confidential services, contact:**



1405 W. Causeway Approach  
Mandeville, Louisiana 70471

Phone: (985) 778-0571 | Fax: (985) 778-0574  
JLAP@louisianajlap.com  
www.louisianajlap.com

# DEPRESSION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION



www.louisianajlap.com  
(985) 778-0571



## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is not something you can just “snap out of.” It can be caused by an imbalance of brain chemicals, trauma, genetics, or life circumstances.

Depression is a serious mental health condition that requires understanding, treatment, and a good recovery plan.

Depression impacts the whole person. When someone is depressed, their body, mood, and thinking can all be affected. It can feel all consuming, completely enveloping a person’s life.

Often the inability to experience pleasure presents as the primary symptom of depression. Depression causes one to feel hopeless, helpless, sad, or down during most of the day, almost every day. Depression may also manifest as irritability.

Depression is not the result of weakness, moral defect, or deficiency of character. With early detection, diagnosis, and a treatment plan consisting of medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle choices, many people get better.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Depression affects people of all ages and all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Men may feel more shame about their depression and try to “tough it out” or use alcohol or drugs to self-medicate. Untreated depression in men makes them about four times more likely to die by suicide than women. Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed and treated for depression.

## LAWYERS/JUDGES & DEPRESSION

- Lawyers and judges have the highest suicide rate of any profession, six times the rate of the general population.
- Lawyers and judges are twice as likely as the general population to develop problems with substance abuse and other addictive disorders.
- One third of lawyers and judges suffer from depression (the #1 cause of suicide). These problems often begin in law school.
- Out of 105 professions studied by Johns Hopkins University, lawyers and judges top the list in the incidence of major depression, and depression is involved in the majority of all attempted suicides.
- Research suggests that those who suffer from intense perfectionism are at higher risk for suicide. They are driven by an intense need to avoid failure. Does this sound like any lawyers or judges you know?

## TREATMENT

A variety of medications and psychotherapies have proven effective in treating depression. A comprehensive evaluation done by a qualified professional is an important first step in determining the best course of treatment.

## HOW TO HELP

Colleagues, family members, and friends play an important role in recognizing the symptoms of depression and encouraging the person to get help.

If you or another lawyer, judge, law student or family member is experiencing symptoms of depression, contact the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program. All calls to JLAP are confidential and you can call anonymously if you prefer.

