



# Breaking the Silence: Addiction, Recovery, and Leadership in the Legal Profession

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Relief → Habit → Dependence → Isolation → Exhaustion



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Vulnerability can feel radical  
in a profession that rewards perfection.




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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

# The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys

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20.6% problematic drinking

28% depression

19% anxiety

23% stress

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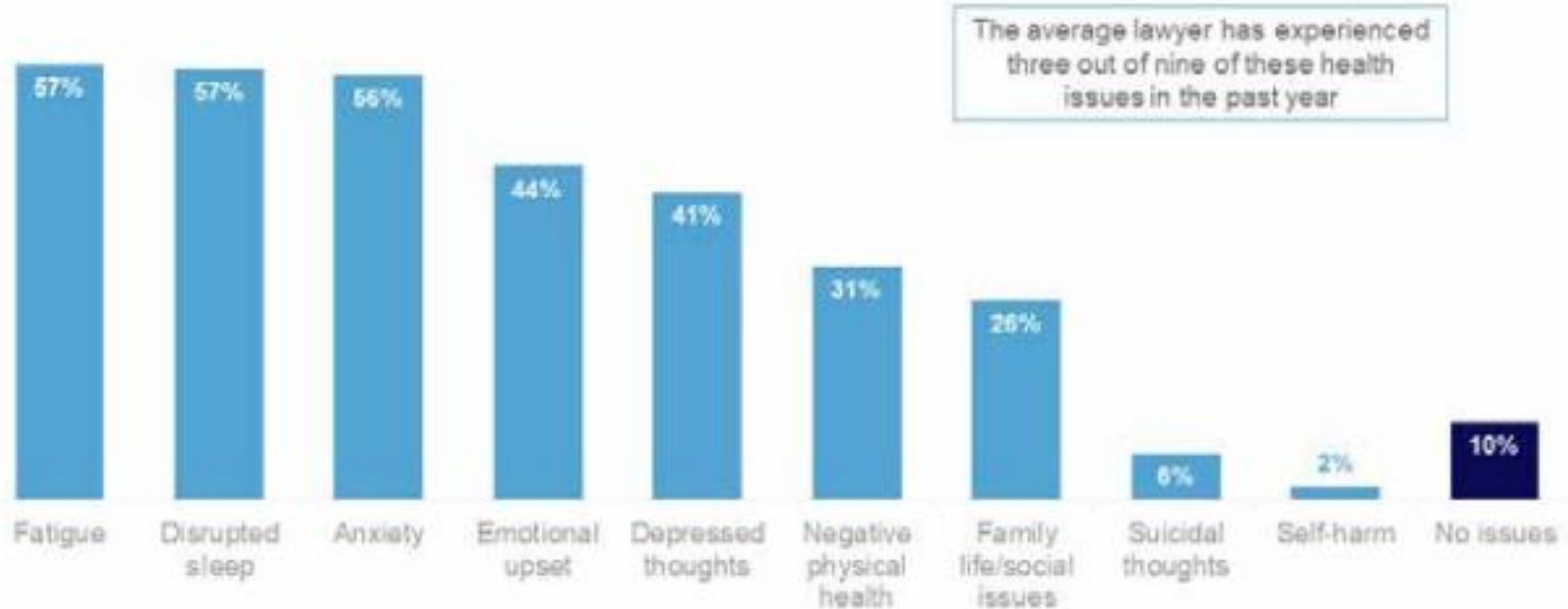


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# IBA Mental wellbeing in the legal profession: a global study

## Experienced health issues

Fatigue, disrupted sleep and anxiety experienced by over half in the past year



# IBA Mental wellbeing in the legal profession: a global study



## Impact of stigma:

41 per cent would not discuss mental wellbeing concerns with their employer for fear it may have a negative impact on their career.

## Reasons why people don't speak out:



**32.1%**

Fear of being treated differently as a result



**24.1%**

Employer does not sufficiently recognise mental wellbeing issues



**17.2%**

Fear of not being believed/taken seriously

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# People, Professionals, and Profit Centers: The Connection between Lawyer Well-Being and Employer Values

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Furthermore, the importance of providing clear and regular feedback is obvious from our findings since the lawyers reporting the highest levels of stress and worst mental health are those who either feel undervalued or do not know what their employer values most about them. Employers would be well-served in heeding the lessons contained in these novel and actionable findings. Recognizing and seeking to disrupt self-defeating management practices—such as valuing productivity above skill, talent, and human worth, or failing to provide meaningful feedback and make employees feel valued—would be wise pursuits for employers seeking to both improve the lives of their employees and strengthen the organization’s financial performance. For individual lawyers themselves, better understanding the relationship between their own health and well-being and what their employer values most about them should hopefully allow for more informed decisions about the type of work environment they choose.



# Creating a Safer Legal Profession

Speak openly about mental health and recovery

Recognize distress early

Make help-seeking feel safe

Ask people what they need. Don't assume.

Value people beyond productivity

Create spaces not centered around alcohol


Lead with honesty, compassion, and boundaries

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The strongest professionals are not the ones who never struggle.  
They are the ones willing to seek help and  
support others in doing the same.

