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# *Ethical Dilemmas Facing Attorneys with Alcohol and Drug Issues*

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Seminar Topic: This course discusses various impairments identified for lawyers cause by stress. This program presents a view of the life of a typical “Big City” firm lawyer and the rising percentage of impairments identified for lawyers. Stress causes lawyers to turn to substance abuse and they can even suffer mental illness or other disorders.

This program examines the no work/life balance which has lawyers spending little time for themselves, their families and their social activities. How to have a career and a life. What is work/life balance? Why is work/life balance so important? How do I achieve this balance? The conclusion is to set guidelines for a path of balance that will benefit your life and your career knowing that careers last for decades and that work/life balance is not always possible.

This material is intended to be a guide in general and is not legal advice. If you have any specific question regarding the state of the law in any particular jurisdiction, we recommend that you seek legal guidance relating to your particular fact situation.

The course materials will provide the attendee with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify the current legal trends with respect to these issues. The course materials are designed to provide the attendee with current law, impending issues and future trends that can be applied in practical situations.



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Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are not a legal opinion. Every fact situation is different and the reader is encouraged to seek legal advice for their particular situation.

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# *About the Author and Presenter*

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## *Elizabeth Granoff*

Elizabeth Granoff provides a detailed review of the stages of an investigation with guidance on responses, navigating the potential pitfalls and when representation is advised.

For nearly ten years, Ms. Granoff was employed at the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, first as Counsel, and then as Senior Counsel. In this capacity, she reviewed thousands of files for potential ethical violations, prosecuted cases of attorney misconduct, assisted with the resolution of attorney complaints and gave ethical opinions in a wide variety of law.

Since 2001, she has worked in private practice defending lawyers charged with ethical violations and giving legal opinions on ethical issues. Additionally, she has helped initiate preventative measures for lawyers and law firms to avoid ethical violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct and resolved hundreds of potential client grievances against lawyers.

She attended the University of Wisconsin Madison and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science and a Juris Doctorate from IIT-Kent College of Law.

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# Table of Contents

## Contents

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Table of Contents ..... 4

Ethical Dilemmas Facing Attorneys with Alcohol and Drug Issues..... 5

    Depression ..... 5

    Life of a Lawyer ..... 5

    Stress..... 5

    Resources ..... 6

# Ethical Dilemmas Facing Attorneys with Alcohol and Drug Issues

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## Depression

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- Lawyers suffer a high rate of depression. Statistics show over and over that lawyers rank in top five of professions that are the most depressed.

## Life of a Lawyer

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- Lawyers work long hours.
- Big firm lawyer expected to bill 1800 hours a year, sometimes more.
- This is 52 weeks a year, 5 days a week, 7 hours a day. Does not include time for eating, socializing, meetings, reading mail, seeing mail.
- Common for lawyers to take work home, work on weekends, and to not take vacation.
- Vacation doesn't offer a respite; blackberries and other portable devices make lawyers constantly "on call".
- Lawyers strive to become business partners, equity partners, and business development.

## Stress

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- Why is there so much stress in the legal profession?
  - Time constraints and deadlines
  - Expected to be the expert on many subjects
  - Work is always scrutinized by clients, judges, opposing counsel
  - Legal process is conflict driven.
  - Zealous representation leads to injury of other parties.
  - Lawyers assume their clients' burdens, worry about their problems.
  - Lack of professionalism.
- Firms offer little mentorship to newly minted attorneys.
- Lawyers are expected to not only bill but bring in business, make CLE presentations, bar activities, and community service.
- No work/life balance.
- So much time practicing law, little personal time, family time, social activities.
- High rates of divorce and difficulty maintaining personal relationships.
- Lawyers have high rate of burnout.

## Resources

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- Organizations created throughout the country to provide assistance to lawyers, judges, law students whose performance is impaired due to addiction or mental illness.
- In Illinois, the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission reported in 2008 that approximately 50 percent of the