

# National Research on Lawyer Impairment

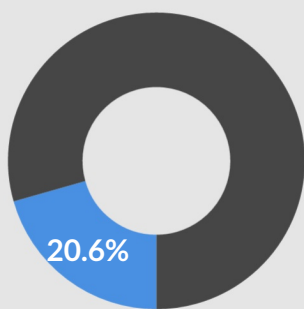
## The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys

### The Study

In collaboration with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs completed national research on lawyer impairment. This is a landmark study as never before has national data been gathered addressing both substance use and behavioral health concerns simultaneously. The results are compelling and the implications for the legal community multifaceted and far reaching.

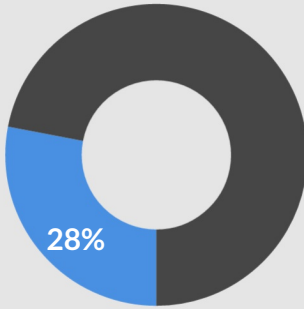
- 15 state bar associations and the 2 largest counties of 1 additional state
- A sample of 12,825 licensed, employed attorneys
- Alcohol use, drug use, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.
- Awareness, utilization and barriers of treatment services

### just some of The Findings



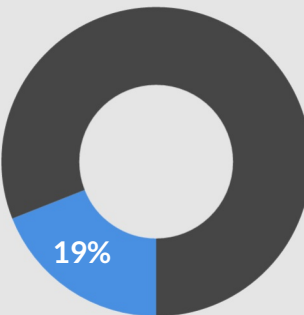
**20.6% of respondents scored at a level consistent with problematic drinking.**

In comparison, 11.8% of a broad, highly educated workforce screened positive on the same measure.



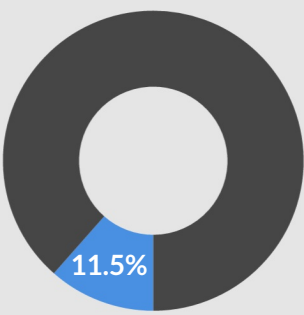
**28% of respondents reported experiencing mild or higher levels of depression.**

46% reported concerns with depression at some point in their career.



**19% of respondents reported experiencing mild or higher levels of anxiety.**

61% reported concerns with anxiety at some point in their career.



**11.5% of respondents reported suicidal thoughts at some point during their career.**

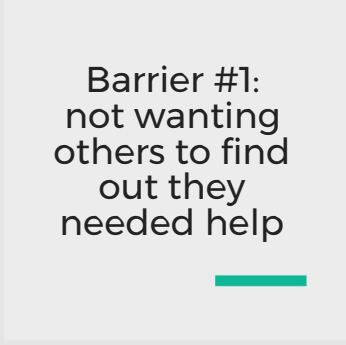
2.9% reported self-injurious behaviors, and 0.7% reported at least 1 prior suicide attempt.



Rates higher for younger, less experienced attorneys



Problematic drinking = higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress



Barrier #1: not wanting others to find out they needed help



Barrier #2: concerns over privacy or confidentiality



### What Can We Do?

- ☒ Invest in lawyer assistance programs and increase the availability of attorney-specific treatment.
- ☐ Engage in public awareness campaigns within the profession to overcome the stigma.
- ☐ The confidential nature of lawyer-assistance programs should be more widely publicized.
- ☐ Provide greater education aimed at prevention, especially for those in the early years of their profession.