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Oregon Attorney
Assistance Program

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Well-Being Month in Law: Recapping 2024

By Kyra Hazilla

The OAAP demonstrated leadership, creativity, and our usual dose of originality in creating a month-long program in recognition of National Mental Health Awareness Month and crafting an all new OAAP Well-Being Month in the Oregon legal community. Our team developed content, wrote blog posts showcasing resources and strategies around elements of well-being, hosted seven events, and served **120 participants** in our live programming. Quite a few of these individuals were accessing our programming for the first time.

The OAAP also supported the PLF Wellness Committee by presenting two in-person programs for Bar and PLF staff. The first was a yoga class led by certified yoga teacher and fabulous Attorney Counselor Associate, Kirsten Blume. The second was a one-hour experiential Mental Health / Substance Use CLE identifying 10 research-based strategies for emotional regulation, facilitated by OAAP Director Kyra Hazilla and Attorney Counselor Bryan Welch.

During each of the five Wednesdays in May, we hosted live, drop-in sessions entitled “Well-Being Wednesdays,” corresponding with a weekly theme focusing on a particular aspect of wellness. We are pleased to report that three of these sessions qualified for MCLE credit.

Week 1, we gathered folks from around the legal community to share strategies for incorporating physical well-being into our busy professional lives. Participants volunteered ideas such as joining a sports team, signing up for a gym membership, finding a workout buddy or activity partner, and fitting activities into different times in the day and at different points over the course of a career. Legal professionals found support and validation in the common struggle to move more in our sedentary days.

Week 2, we were joined by special guest and well-being role model Cindy Danforth, an OSB member from Eugene. Cindy shared her own professional journey and the practices she uses to create more joy in her work and her personal life. Attendees shared strategies like creating joy and awe sticky notes and keeping kindness folders for appreciative email and cards that we receive.

Week 3, the attorney counselors were joined by Oregon State Bar President David Rosen. This session presented ideas and opportunities to try mindfulness practices for enhancing professional well-being and fostering a more inclusive community. Those who attended this session earned one hour of Mental Health / Substance Use MCLE credit, as did attendees of the weeks 4 and 5 sessions.

Week 4 offered a lively and interactive CLE opportunity. We discussed the importance of cultivating connectedness in a lonely profession and strategies for meaningful social engagement. Attendees were able to learn experientially, which yielded some positive social experiences.

For **week 5**, we hosted the last well-being Wednesday CLE of the month on emotional well-being. Emotional regulation can increase effectiveness and satisfaction in our personal relationships as well as those with clients and other professionals. Participants were given the chance to learn and practice emotional regulation techniques such as cultivating awareness, practicing acceptance, as well as using social support networks and calming strategies.

The OAAP attorney counselors planned, developed, and facilitated this programming to meet the needs of the Oregon legal community. We have had requests for more support in operationalizing some of the suggestions from the ABA Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, and this month of events, resources, and materials was tailored to our stakeholders, community members, and participants. We are gratified that our efforts translated to record attendance, thoughtful conversations, and a warm reception from Bar members. We look forward to continuing this work and invite input from the legal community on future well-being programming.

– **KYRA HAZILLA**
Director and Attorney
Counselor, OAAP



OTHER WORKS BY KYRA HAZILLA AT OAAP.ORG

inSight

- Fostering Connection in a Lonely Profession (December 2023)
- Meaningful Connections at Work (December 2023)
- Oregon's Well-Being Action (Summer 2023)

Thriving Today

- Well-Being Week in Law: 2023 Preview (April 28, 2023)
- If You Aren't Feeling Buoyed by Resilience, Post-Traumatic Growth May Be on the Horizon (September 1, 2022)
- Move Over Gratitude, It's Time to Try Delight (July 1, 2021)