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IN SIGHT

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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE OAAP

Located at 520 SW Yamhill in downtown Portland, the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP) is staffed by four attorney counselors who provide personal assistance to Oregon lawyers. (See sidebars on pages 3 and 5.) This article gives you a glimpse of the types of help the OAAP provides and how the OAAP attorney counselors spend their time.

7:30 a.m. OAAP Assistant Director Shari Gregory, JD, MSW, meets with a lawyer who is concerned about the drinking pattern of a lawyer in his firm. Shari discusses the OAAP recovery support services and explains the intervention process to the lawyer. She arranges a follow-up meeting with the lawyer, concerned friends, and family members. Shari then returns to the OAAP, where she meets with a lawyer whose family situation makes it difficult for her to continue to work full time. Shari provides her with information about options and resources, including the OAAP's six-week Career Workshop.

9:00 a.m. Mike Long, JD, MSW, meets with a lawyer who is struggling with depression. Mike inquires about what kind of personal support network the lawyer has, whether he has open files that might need attention, and whether he is drinking alcohol or using any prescription or nonprescription drugs. The lawyer leaves with an appointment to see a mental health professional for further assessment and treatment for his depression. Mike refers the lawyer to resources, including OAAP's peer support group for attorneys who are experiencing depression.

9:15 a.m. Meloney Crawford Chadwick, JD, CADC III, NADC II, is in her office organizing materials for the six-week "Getting It Done" group that is scheduled to meet later that week, focusing on issues of procrastination and productivity.

Douglas Querin, JD, MA, CADC I, gets a call from a lawyer who is concerned that she may have a drinking problem. Doug heads for the highway to meet with her in her home town, which is several hours away.

10:00 a.m. Shari reviews materials for a career workshop she is presenting to Willamette University law students in Salem. The workshop is a "law student-friendly" version of the Career Workshop for lawyers and includes self-assessment exercises, a skills analysis, and information on interviewing, networking, and resume writing.

10:30 a.m. Meloney gets a call from the spouse of a lawyer who is concerned that the lawyer may have an addiction problem. The spouse comes to the OAAP office and they discuss intervention and treatment, as well as resources for spouses.

Mike takes a phone call from an attorney who is preparing for retirement and wants to discuss issues about closing his practice. Mike schedules a meeting with the lawyer the following week.

Doug receives a call from an attorney in recovery, confirming that she will come to the OAAP Monday night 12-step group for lawyers-in-recovery. Doug hopes to introduce her to a lawyer in treatment who is looking for a 12-step sponsor.

Noon. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 12-step recovery support groups take place at the OAAP, attended by Doug and Meloney. On Thursdays, Mike and Shari facilitate a "Lawyer in Transition" group that features support and goal-setting for lawyers who have completed the six-week Career Workshop but are still in transition. On the first Thursday of every month, the OAAP holds an open Lawyer in Transition speaker meeting and brown bag lunch, with a speaker discussing a successful transition, such as trial attorney to business owner.

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1:00 p.m. Shari meets a local therapist to learn more about the scope of his counseling practice and whether he will be a good resource for Oregon lawyers. She adds him to the list of referral sources maintained by the OAAP.

1:30 p.m. Mike leaves for a presentation at Lewis & Clark Law School. He will discuss various ways the OAAP can help law students with issues relating to Bar admission and will talk about the other services the OAAP offers to law students, such as recovery support and stress management. From there, he will travel to Medford, where the next day he will meet with a lawyer about her brother's addiction and then will provide a workshop on retirement planning for lawyers.

2:00 p.m. Doug meets with an attorney who is stressed and burned out from the demands of a litigation practice.

Meloney is writing an article on adult attention deficit disorder for In Sight. Her phone rings. It is a lawyer who has been suffering from depression and whose legal assistant just quit. She is concerned about neglecting her practice. Meloney finds the lawyer a referral to a local mental health practitioner and contacts a peer friend for personal support. She also facilitates a call between the lawyer and one of the Practice Management Advisors at the PLF who can help the attorney with office issues.

2:30 p.m. A lawyer walks in, wanting to speak with an attorney counselor. Shari is available and meets with him to discuss his concerns about possibly relocating to another city or changing practice areas.

3:00 p.m. Doug goes to a large law firm and meets with the partners to plan an intervention for a colleague with a substance abuse problem.

Shari meets with her "Inner Peace for Busy People" group, which she facilitates with a local lawyer. The group focuses on finding ways to relax and find calm while juggling the demands of career and family life.

3:30 p.m. Meloney takes a call from a lawyer in the suburbs who is in recovery but feeling isolated. Meloney makes an appointment with the lawyer for lunch and

encourages her to attend a 12-step meeting at the OAAP that evening.

4:30 p.m. Shari returns phone calls regarding the upcoming directors' retreat for the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs.

4:50 p.m. Doug returns to the office, returns phone calls, and then speaks with the other OAAP attorney counselors about a possible site for a recovery weekend to be held next spring.

5:30 p.m. Meloney and Doug meet to prepare for the group on relapse prevention that they will co-facilitate tomorrow evening. Participants in the group will discuss challenges to their recovery and how to identify – and change – their thinking processes that lead to relapse, long before they actually pick up a drink or a drug.

Shari, who is the on-call counselor for the week, receives a call from a lawyer in crisis. Mike prepares material for the workshop in Medford the next day.

As this day and evening of providing assistance to Oregon lawyers comes to a close, rest assured that OAAP's accessible and confidential services will be here again for you tomorrow.