

Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Suicide Awareness Program

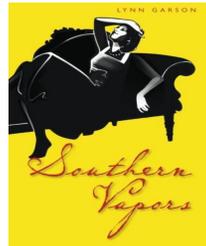
Thoughts from Lived Experience

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BakerHostetler

My Story

- Graduated from Emory University School of Law 1981, Order of the Coif.
- Practiced big law/in house for 30 years, currently BakerHostetler (10 years).
- Issues of depression most of my life, but post-divorce, catastrophic anxiety and “pre-suicidal” ideation as well.
- Went inpatient in 2008 for 10 weeks at Shepard Pratt in Baltimore, then again January 2010 in Atlanta.
- Was told that I would never work again and to apply for Social Security Disability.
- Instead, I got a job as a contract lawyer at Alston & Bird and wrote a book about my recovery – *Southern Vapors*.



Recovery



- **Community.**

A place where people “got” me.

- **Taking responsibility for my own recovery.**

Nobody else can do this work for me.

- **Acceptance.**

For me, there is no magic pill or cure, and I will have times of instability. The goal is to manage and shorten them.

- **Prioritization.**

My mental health is nonnegotiable.

- **Purpose.**

I will suffer less from instability if I have a reason to get up every day that fulfills me.

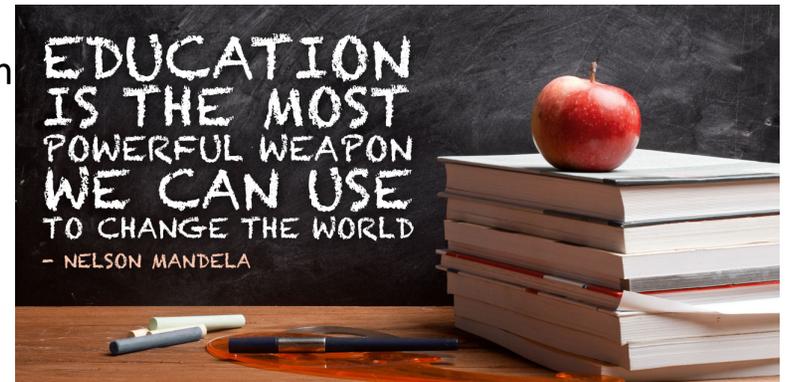
Suicide Warning Signs

Telephone Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" TO 741741

Warning signs are indicators that a person may be in acute danger and may urgently need help.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- **Sudden swing from hopeless to carefree**



Subtleties to Watch For

- Disconnect between what a person says and what he/she means.
 - Often people are afraid to ask for help, so they try to connect in ways that don't make sense.
 - Lynn: "I really shouldn't be driving this car."
 - Translation: "I am not okay; I need help."
- Denial vs. a last rebellious gasp.
 - Sharp pushback against an offer to help does not mean that you shouldn't try again. Sometimes an aggressive pushback indicates that the person is at the tipping point of accepting help. Sometimes it indicates entrenched denial. There is no way to know other than reaching out again.

Lawyer Assistance Program



CONFIDENTIAL LAP HOTLINE 800-327-9631

- 6 Prepaid Counseling Sessions with a Licensed CorpCare Counselor Per Calendar Year.
 - CONFIDENTIAL / No pipeline to Discipline.
 - Counselors cover a broad spectrum from stress, overwhelm and general anxiety to formal diagnosis.
 - You do NOT have to be in crisis or struggling with a mental health/substance use issue to call.

Highlights of LAP Services

- CorpCare intake counselor will refer caller to a licensed counselor convenient to him or her and of a requested demographic, if available.
- CorpCare will make assessment and referral to treatment facility if requested.
- CorpCare will make anonymous outreach calls.
- Telemental health is available.

CALLING THE LAP HOTLINE

1-800-327-9631

When you call the LAP Hotline...

1

Your call will be answered 24/7 by a trained counselor who will ask for your information, but you are not required to provide it. Any information you do provide is kept strictly confidential.

2

You will then be able to explain your need to the counselor, who will refer you to professional counselors in an area convenient for you. If you call after hours, you will receive a call back within 24 hours with referrals.

3

If you decide that you aren't connecting as well as you'd like with your counselor, you can call the LAP Hotline again and be referred to another professional. The goal is for you to find someone with whom you feel comfortable.

Lawyers Helping Lawyers ("Peer" Program)

- Program of peer-to-peer support www.georgialhl.org.
- Online anonymous matches between volunteers and participants based on criteria selected by the participant and sent to encrypted database.

Confidential: all communications are required to be held in confidence other than in case of imminent risk of harm to self or others.



The Peer Program

Practical Application

- Peer can be a “buddy” for check ins to monitor whether the participant is off track.
- Peer can demystify what it is like to seek counseling from a therapist.
- Peer can demystify what it is like to attend a 12-step meeting.
- Peer can identify with and talk through issues.

**GET HELP IF YOU NEED IT
AND
ENCOURAGE SOMEONE ELSE IF YOU THINK THEY DO**