



ALLARD SCHOOL OF LAW

# WELLBEING PRESENTATION

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*The Student Wellbeing Program*



PETER A. ALLARD  
SCHOOL OF LAW

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# DEFINITIONS OF COMMON WELLBEING CONCERNS

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- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use
- Trauma

# STRESS

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- A normal human state.
- A physiological response of the body to any demand placed upon it.
- A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

## **Chronic stress /Burnout**

- Disrupts nearly every system in your body: suppress your immune system, upset your digestive and reproductive systems, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, and speed up the aging process.
- It can even rewire the brain, leaving you more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems.

# ANXIETY

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- A normal human emotion. • a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

## Anxiety Disorder

- Unexpected, unhelpful and intense feelings of worry and fear that seriously impacts our lives, including how we think, feel, and act (includes phobias, panic disorders, social anxiety, OCD).

# DEPRESSION

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- A normal human emotion. • a state of general unhappiness or despondency

## **Depressive Disorder**

- Feelings of severe despair over an extended period of time. Signs of depression include feeling sad, worthless, hopeless, guilty, or anxious.

# SUBSTANCE USE

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- A normal human behaviour.
- The use of drugs or alcohol, and includes substances such as cigarettes, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, inhalants and solvents.

## Substance use disorder

- Generally involve behaviour patterns in which people continue to use a substance despite having problems caused by its use.
- Affects a person's brain and behaviour and leads to an inability to control the use of a legal or illegal drug or medication.
- Substance use problems can lead to addiction.

# TRAUMA

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- A normal human reaction.
- An emotional response to a terrible event.
- Immediately after the event, shock, and denial are typical

## **Post-traumatic Stress Disorder**

- Involves exposure to trauma which causes symptoms such as re-experiencing, vivid nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, and avoidances
- Can make people feel very nervous, 'on edge', startle very easily, numb, detached and have a hard time concentrating

# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Look for changes from your normal.
  - These changes may vary but are usually seen over an extended period of time.
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- If your normal causes negative impact in your daily life,
  - Eg, normally anxious but it stops you from achieving academic success because of a fear of public speaking so you don't take part in class discussions.



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# THINK OF FUNCTIONING IN FOUR CATEGORIES:

## PACE

- Physical
- Action
- Cognition
- Emotion

Be aware and check in with your pace regularly

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# EXAMPLES OF PACE:

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## Physical

Heart racing, muscle tension, fatigue, nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath, stomach aches, headaches, sweating, trembling, etc

## Action

Procrastination, increase in alcohol/coffee/comfort foods, avoidance, etc

## Cognition

Trouble concentrating or remembering, unhelpful thinking habits, obsessive thoughts, etc

## Emotion

Anxious, crying, depression, irritability, hypervigilant, angry, frustrated, etc

# MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

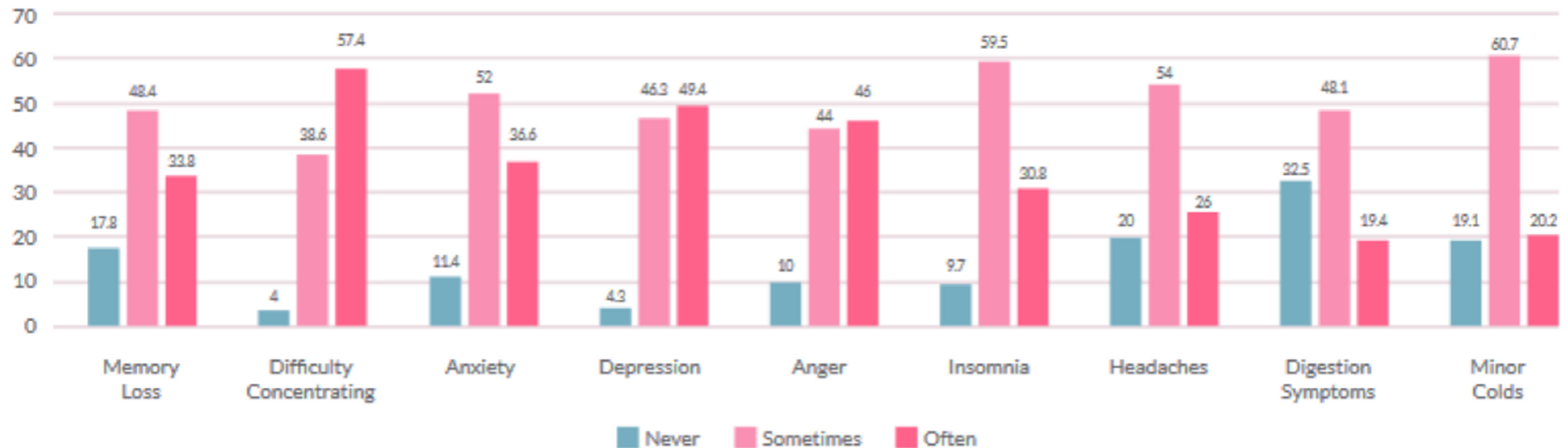
**If you think you are have a concern, you are not alone.**

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague
- 1 in 5 people in Canada will experience a mental health problem or illness
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures <https://cmha.ca/fast-facts-about-mental-illness>

# CANADIAN LAW STUDENTS

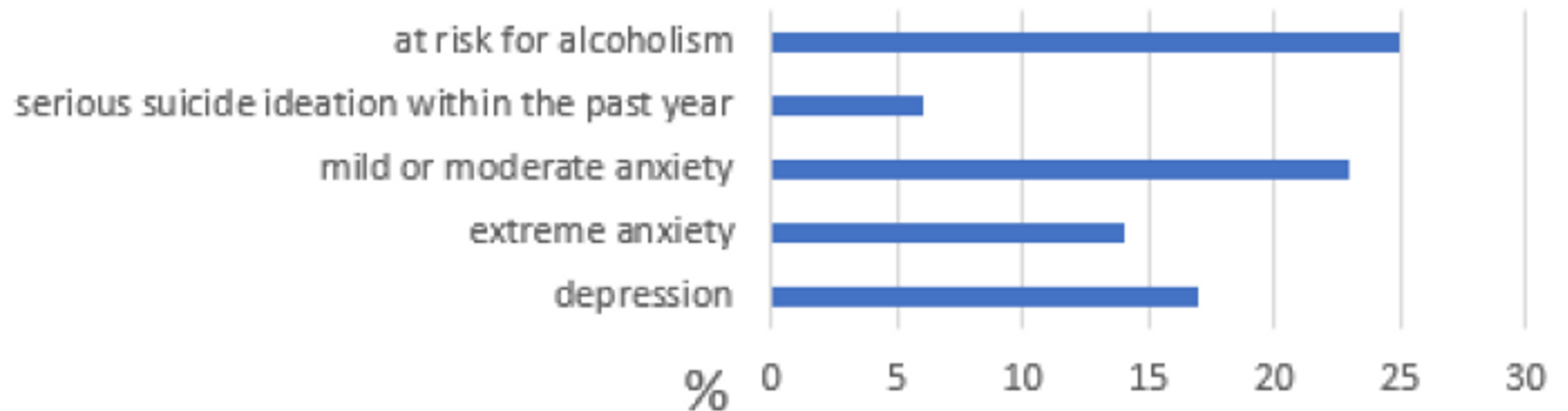
- Allard Law Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 2019 – results pending
- McGill Law Student Study 2017 (<https://www.healthylegalminds.org/mental-health-survey>)

Psychological and physical symptoms experienced by students in the past 3 months

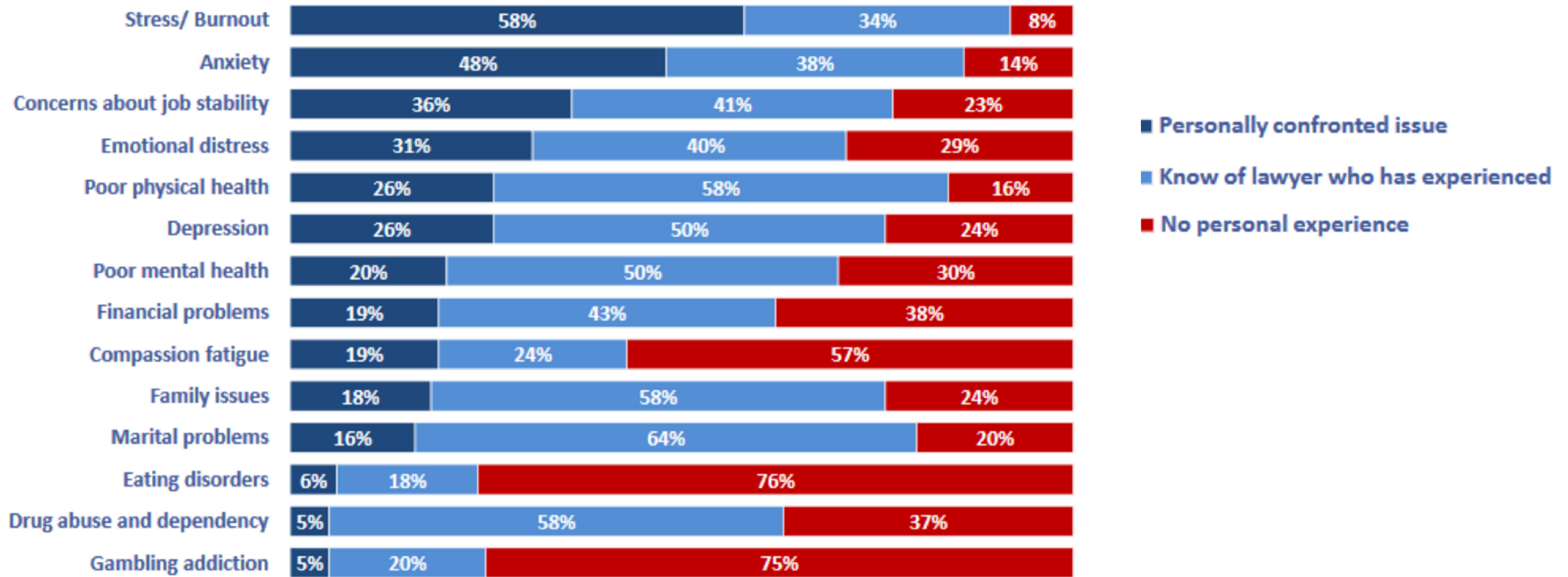


# AMERICAN LAW STUDENTS

- US Student Well-Being Study 2014 – 3,000 students across 15 law schools:



# CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION SURVEY



Q10. Please indicate whether you have personally confronted any of these issues, whether you personally know of lawyers in your practice who have or whether you personally know of lawyers outside of your practice who have.

Base: All respondents n=1180



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# OVERCOMING STIGMA

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# PROMOTION OF STIGMA

Stigma associated with mental health, is generally understood as being composed of:

- A lack of knowledge (**ignorance**),
- Negative attitudes (**stereotypes and prejudice**)
- Excluding or avoiding behaviours (**discrimination**)

Law Society of BC First Interim Report of the Mental Health Task Force 2018 p.8



# REDUCTION OF STIGMA

- **Educate** myself and others about mental illness
  - Know about promotional days e.g., Bell Lets Talk
  - Know and promote the facts/statistics
  - Read the Law Society of BC First Interim Report of the Mental Health Task Force 2018, and “The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change” (“National Task Force Report”) 2017

- **Normalize and Validate** conversation around mental health
  - Encouraging open dialogue
  - Use correct terms
  - Be aware of words, attitudes and behaviours
  - Don't use disrespectful terms or reduce people to a diagnosis, don't say a "schizophrenic" say "a person living with schizophrenia"
  - Challenge media stereotypes§ Don't be afraid of people with mental illness
  - Be a role model
  - Share your story (if you want)

- **Be Non-Judgmental, Be Inclusive, Be Responsive**
  - Give or get support quickly as it can prevent a more serious problem
  - Take positive action promptly towards supporting mental health
  - Know available resources, e.g., Student Wellbeing Counselling, LAPBC

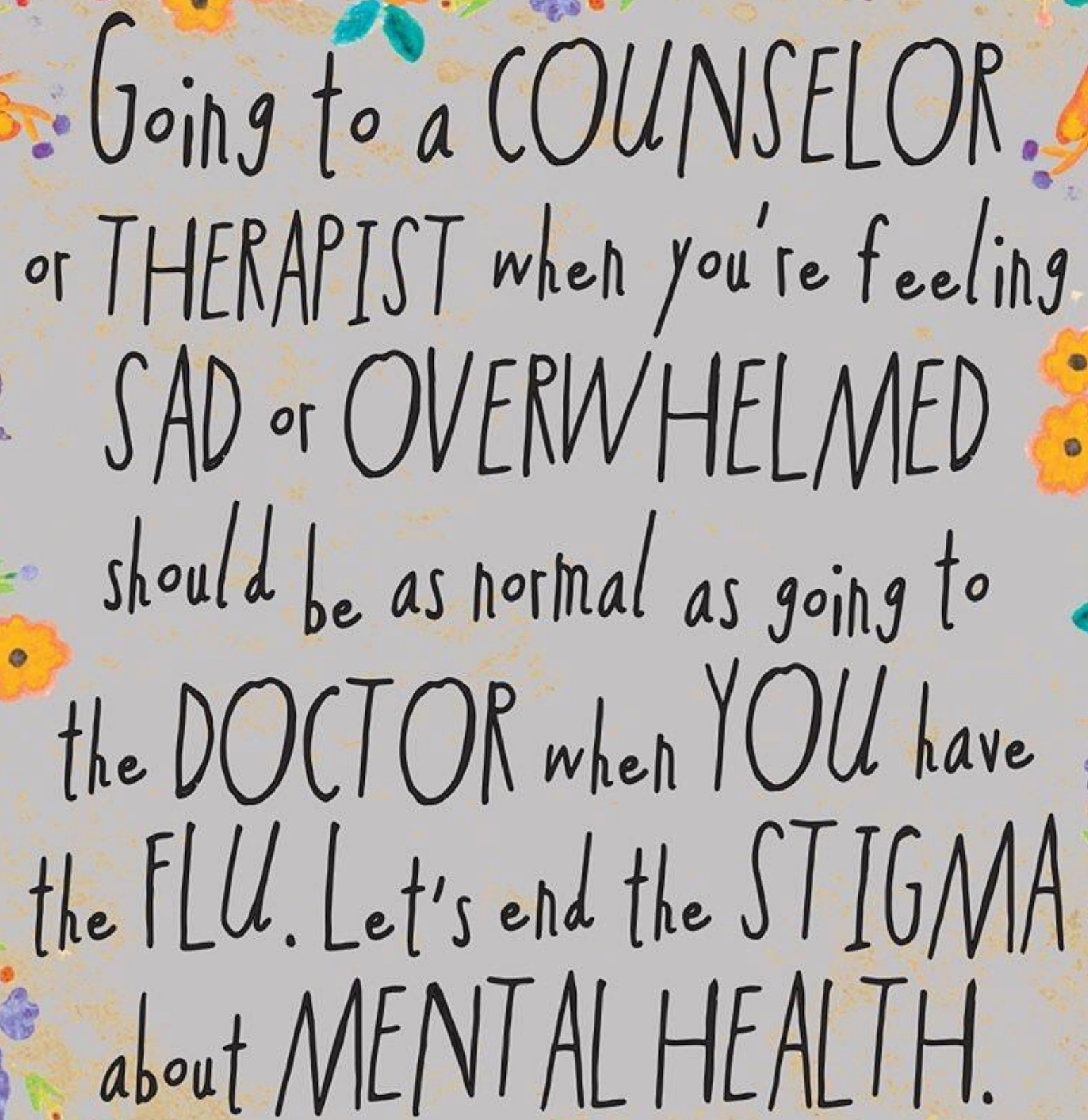
"Justice Gascon's rise through the courts shows that people with mental illness can succeed and excel in the most difficult of professions."

**David Butt (criminal lawyer and former prosecutor)**

"For over twenty years, I have been dealing with a sometimes insidious illness: depression and anxiety disorders. This is an illness that can be treated and controlled, some days better than

others.... I can neither explain nor justify what I understand to have been a panic attack ...." He said he is fully capable of performing his duties as a judge.....that he wishes to thank his colleagues, family, friends and others who have supported him through a difficult time."

**Supreme Court Justice Gascon, 2019**



Going to a COUNSELOR  
or THERAPIST when you're feeling  
SAD or OVERWHELMED  
should be as normal as going to  
the DOCTOR when YOU have  
the FLU. Let's end the STIGMA  
about MENTAL HEALTH.