

A basic checklist for identifying illness based impairment, i.e.:

Alcoholism, Drug Addiction, Substance Abuse, Compulsive Gambling, Depression, Anxiety and Stress

Every aspect of an addicted or depressed attorney's life is affected. If you recognize the following warning signs in yourself or a colleague, call The Delaware Lawyers Assistance Program (De-LAP) (302) 777-0124 or toll-free 1-877-24DELAP or e-mail cwaldhauser@de-lap.org.

Attendance Problems:

- Late
- Leaving early
- Taking "long lunches"
- Not returning to work after lunch
- Missing appointments
- Unable to be located
- Ill with vague ailments
- Absent (especially Monday)
- Frequent rest room breaks
- Improbable excuses for Absences
- Last minute cancellations

Relationship Problems:

- Complaints from clients
- Problems with Supervisors
- Disagreements or Inability to work with colleagues
- Avoidance of others
- Irritable, impatient
- Angry outbursts
- Inconsistencies or discrepancies in describing events
- Hostile attitude
- Overreacts to criticism
- Unpredictable, rapid mood swings

Performance Problems:

- Missed deadlines
- Decreased efficiency
- Inadequate follow through
- Lack of attention
- Poor judgment
- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty remembering details or directions
- General difficulty with recall

Unique to the Legal Community:

- Missing checks to be deposited
- Debit card withdrawals
- Incomplete or irregular records
- Pay office expenses from trust
- Pay personal expenses from trust
- "Borrowing" from trust
- Failure to timely disburse
- Incomplete accounting for receipts and disbursements
- Failure to renew law license
- Non-compliance with CLE
- Non-responsive to Discipline
- Lapsed insurance policies
- Failure to file and failure to pay taxes.

Identifying Alcoholic Behavior:

Individual has a high breathalyzer test result

Individual attends office meetings, court appearance, or other functions after drinking

Individual drinks in the morning or during business hours

Individual drinks substantial amounts of alcohol and drinks often

Individual becomes defensive about drinking

Individual experiences memory loss (blackouts)

Individual experiences increased or decreased tolerance

Legal problems in combination

Individual has made past attempts to stop drinking

Individual makes statements about his/her drinking that signals a drinking problem

Early Symptoms of Chemical Abuse/Dependency:

An increase in the frequency and amount of chemicals used with repetitive intoxication

The user recognizes his/her ability to consume more than his/her peers (development of tolerance).

An attraction to suppliers and places where chemicals are readily available (i.e., parties, bars, nightclubs)

Avoidance of activities that do not involve chemicals

Use of chemicals at times or on occasions that are socially unacceptable

Anticipation of the next opportunity to get "high"

Occasional absences from work

The use of chemicals becomes a way of coping with emotional upsets and other problems

The user shifts from one chemical to another in an effort to avoid some of the problems associated with abusive consumption

The spouse may complain that family problems are related to chemical abuse

The individual seeks to blame others for problems related to chemical abuse

The user may experience temporary amnesia (i.e., blackouts).

The user hides the chemicals and abuses alone

The individual may evade or be annoyed by attempts to discuss chemical use

Excessive rationalization to justify chemical use (i.e. finding many reasons, situations, or excuses to indulge)

Source: Alcohol and Drug Administration