

Ten Tips for Lawyers Dealing with Stress in a New Age



STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

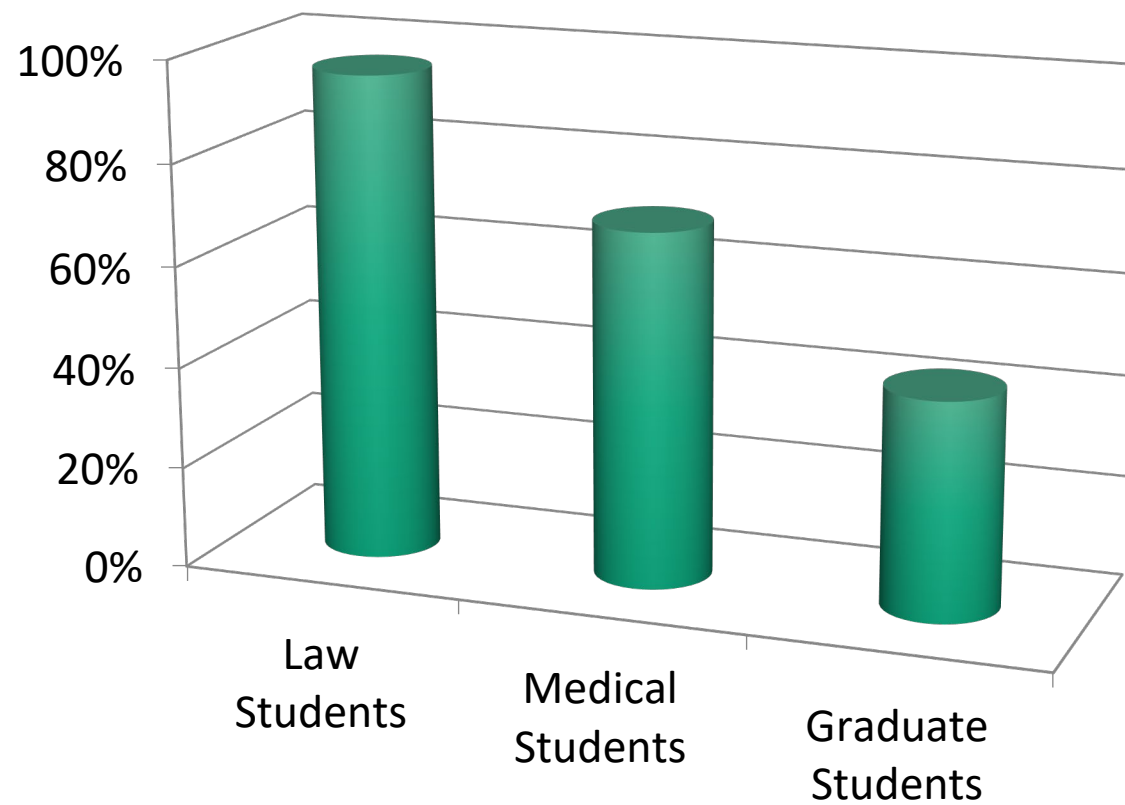
**Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program
Presented by
Erica Grigg, J.D., TLAP Director**

Major Problems for Attorneys:

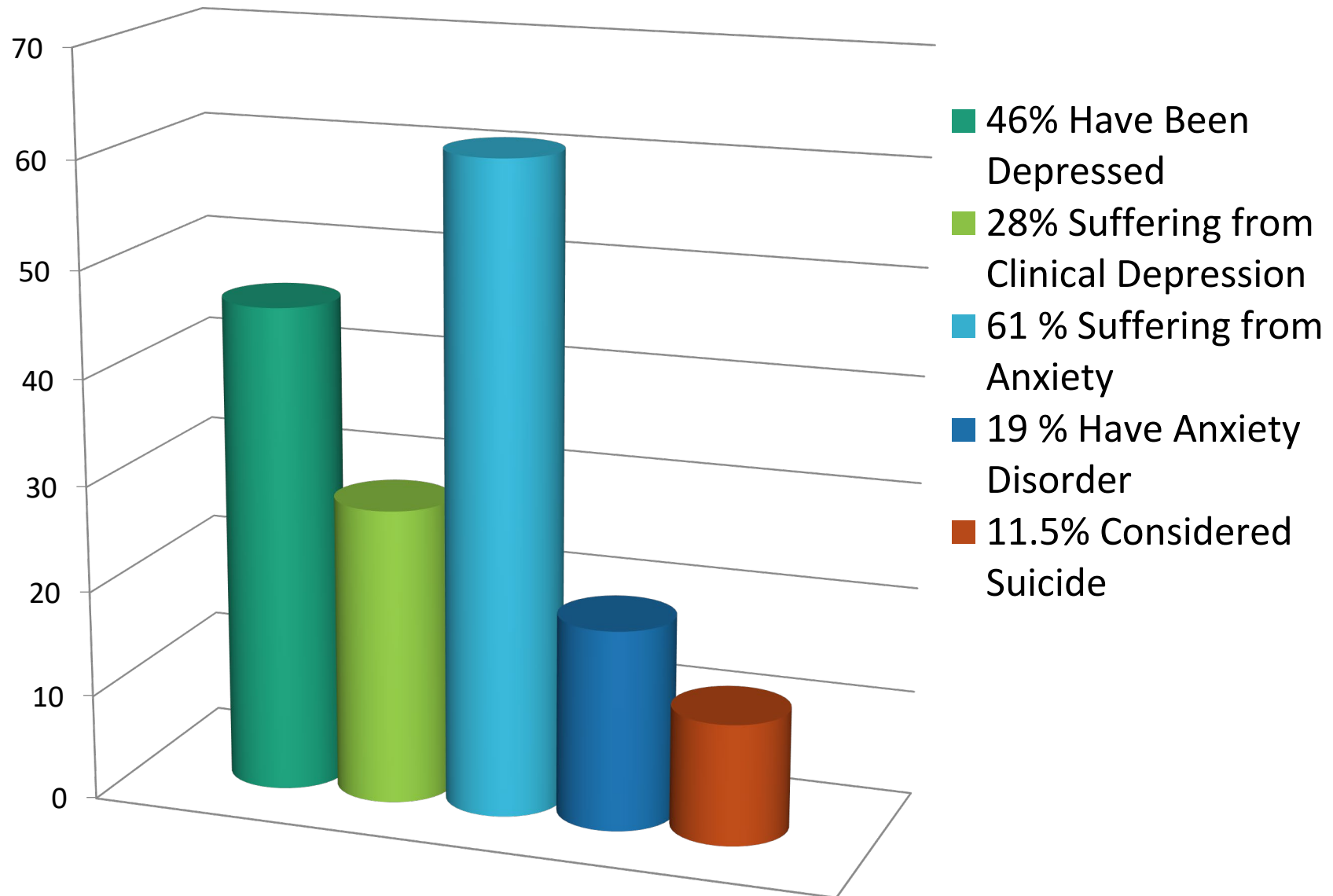
- Stress / Anxiety
- Depression
- Burnout / Secondary Trauma
- Alcohol / Substance Abuse
- Cognitive Impairment
- Suicide
- Gambling and other process addictions

Reported Problems with Stress

Law Students: 96%
Medical Students: 70%
Graduate Students: 43%



2015 ABA Study of Almost 13,000 Attorneys: Attorney Mental Health Issues

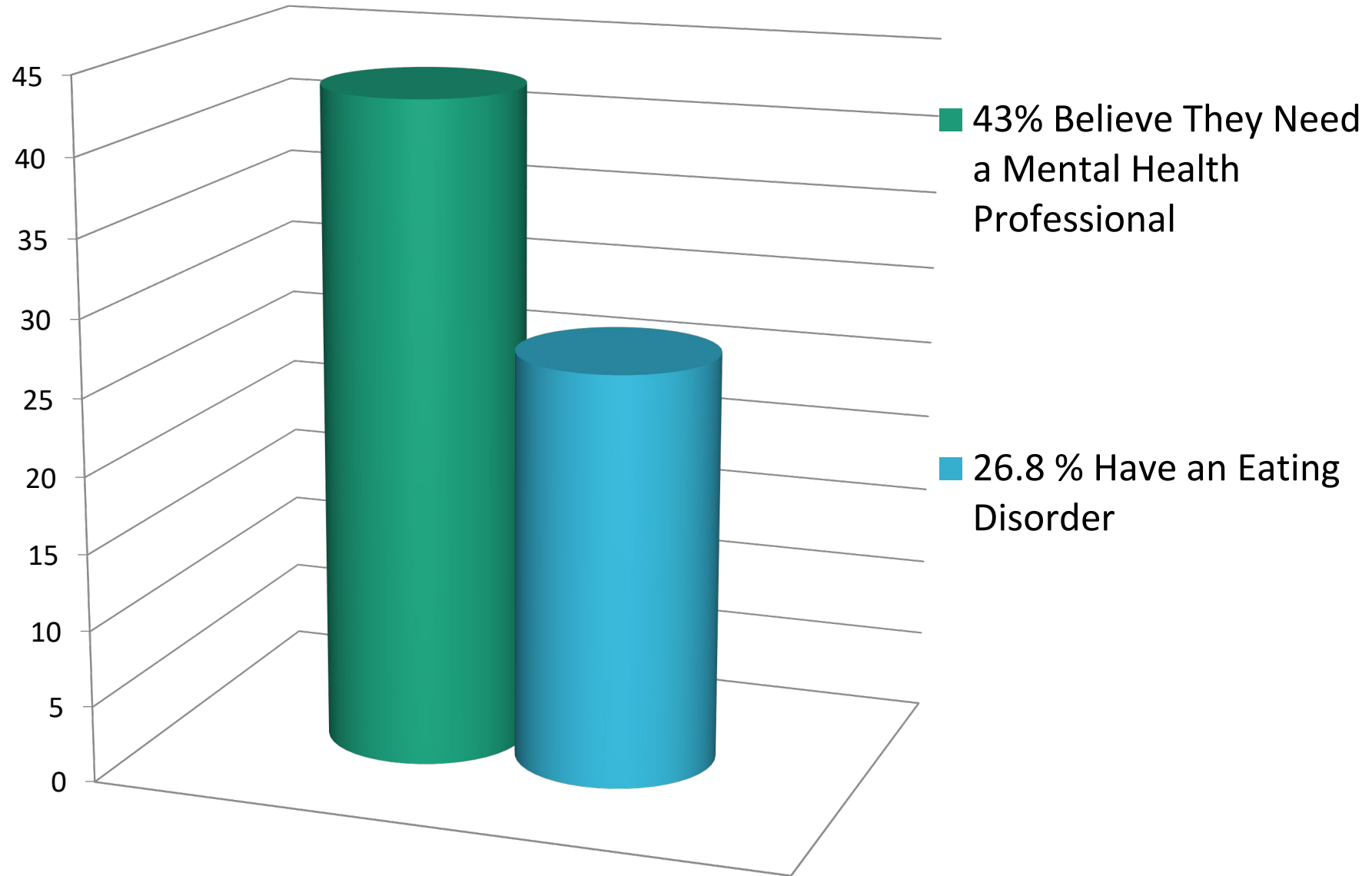


Depression

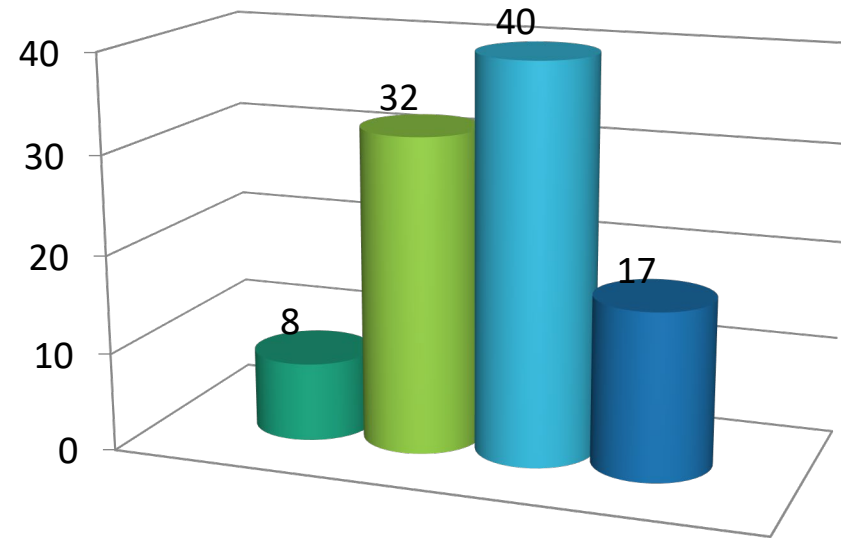
- According to a 1991 Johns Hopkins University study of depression in 105 professions, lawyers ranked number one in the incidence of depression.



2014 ABA Study of Almost 4,000 Law Students: Attorney Mental Health Issues

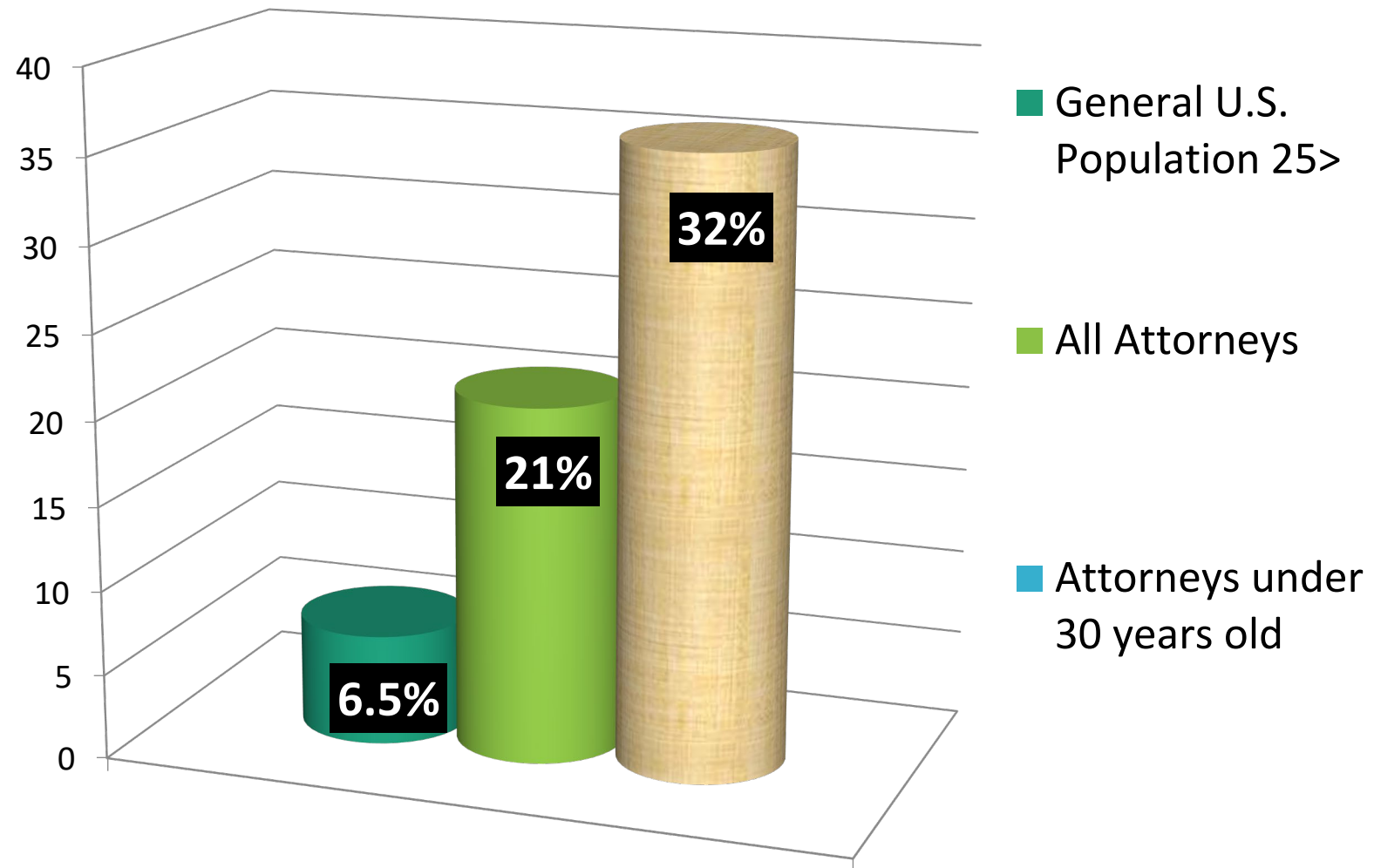


Percentage Suffering From Depression Before, During, and After Law School



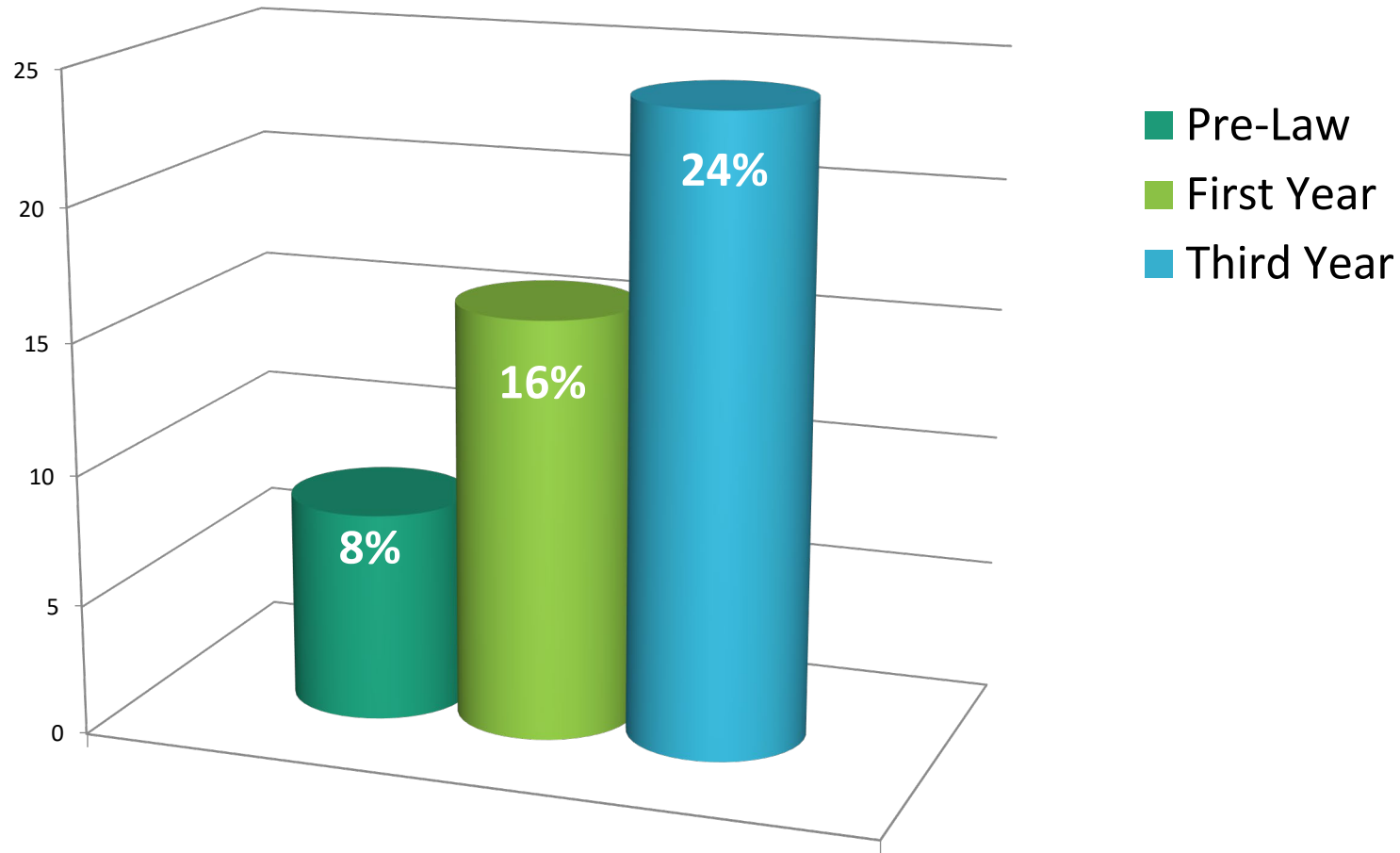
	Percentage Depressed
■ Before Law School	8
■ After First Year	32
■ During Third Year	40
■ After Law School	17

2015 ABA Study of 13,000 Attorneys: Problem Drinking for Attorneys



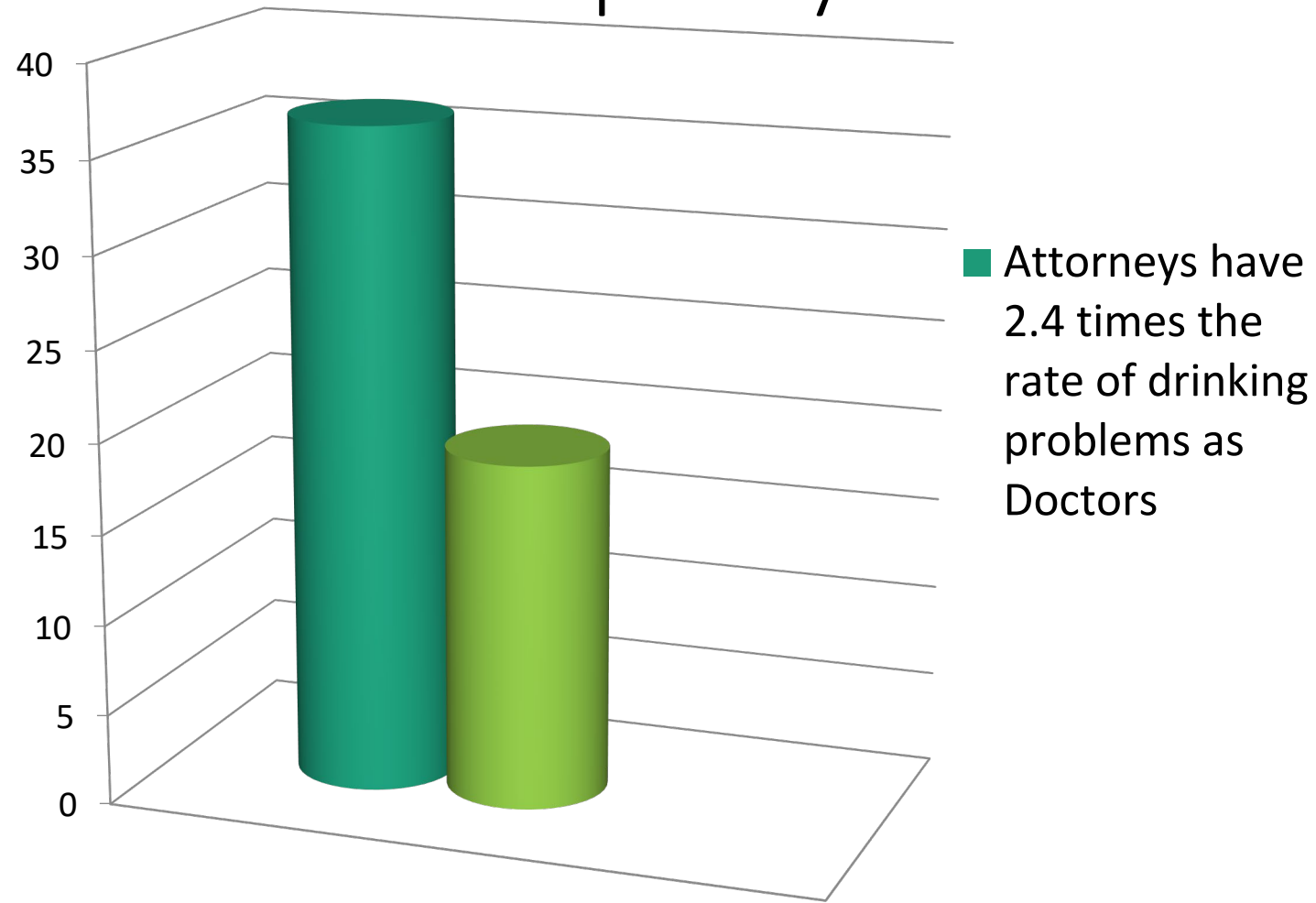
"Problematic Drinking" = hazardous, possible dependence

1990 Study: How Drinking Affects Law Students



Percentage of Law Students Reporting a Problem with Alcohol

2015 ABA Study: Lawyers' vs. Doctors' Problem Drinking Based on Frequency and Volume

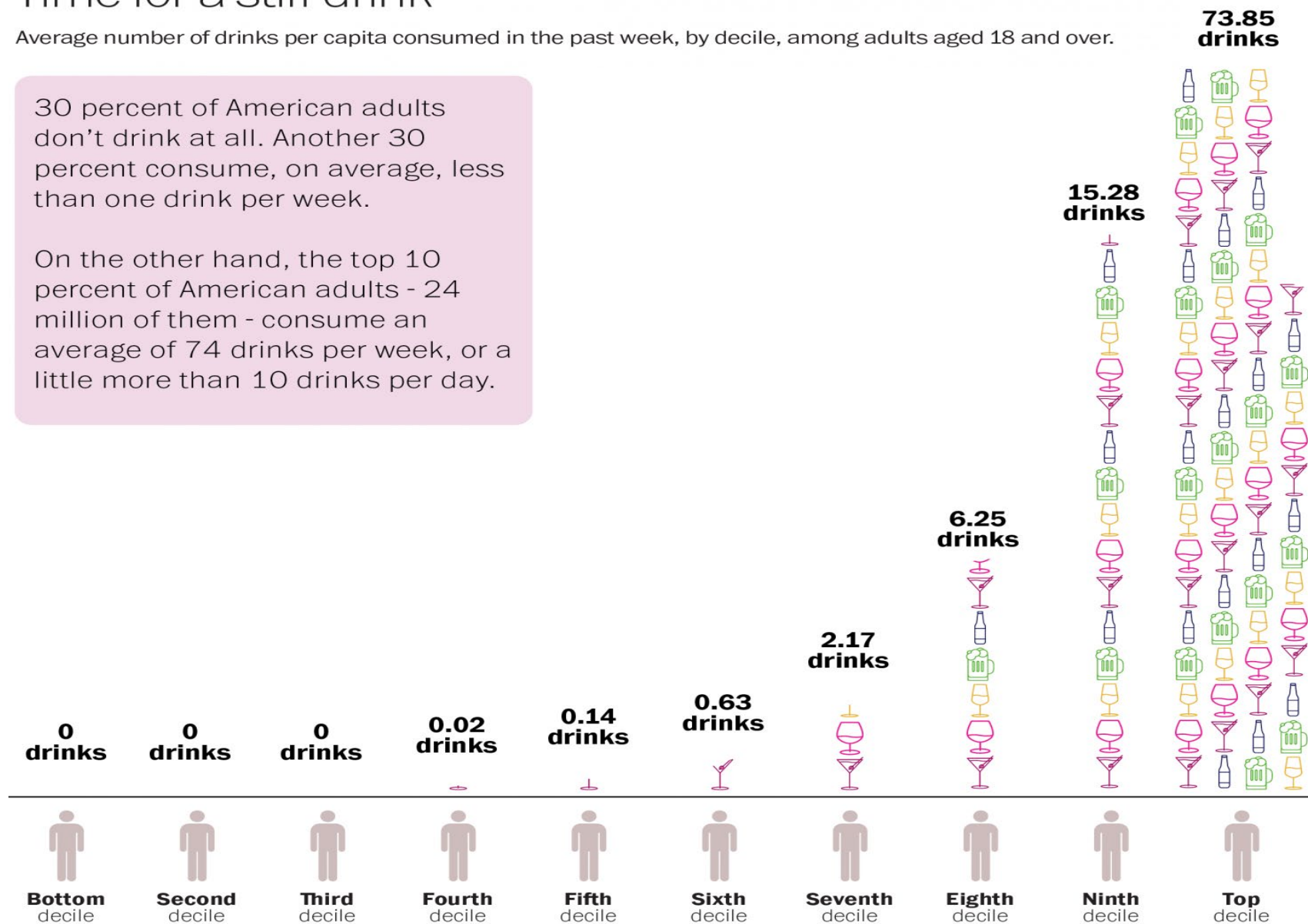


Time for a stiff drink

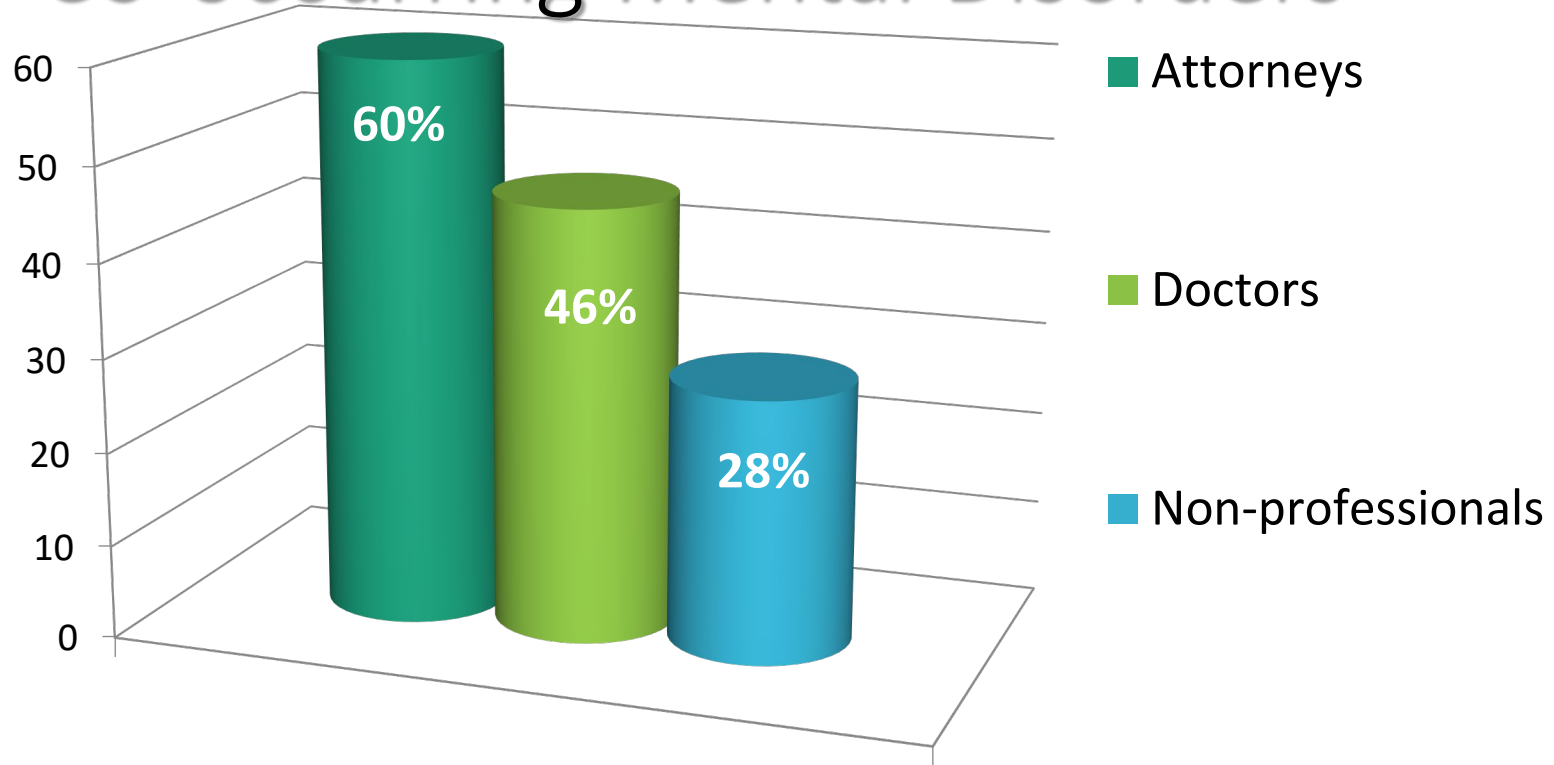
Average number of drinks per capita consumed in the past week, by decile, among adults aged 18 and over.

30 percent of American adults don't drink at all. Another 30 percent consume, on average, less than one drink per week.

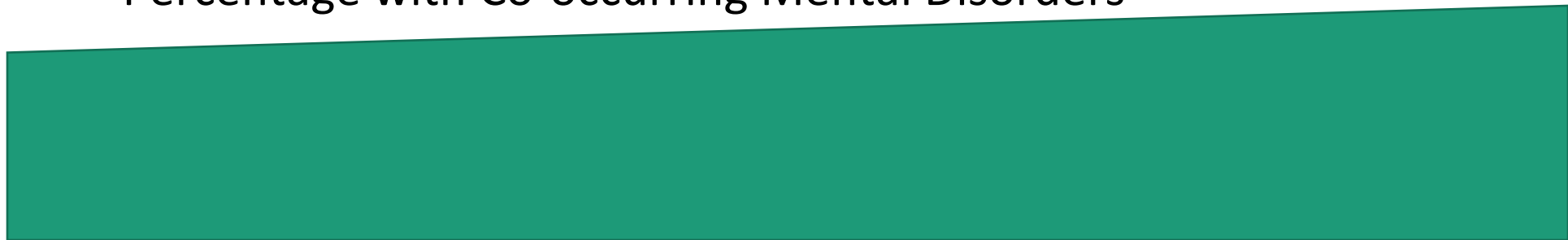
On the other hand, the top 10 percent of American adults - 24 million of them - consume an average of 74 drinks per week, or a little more than 10 drinks per day.



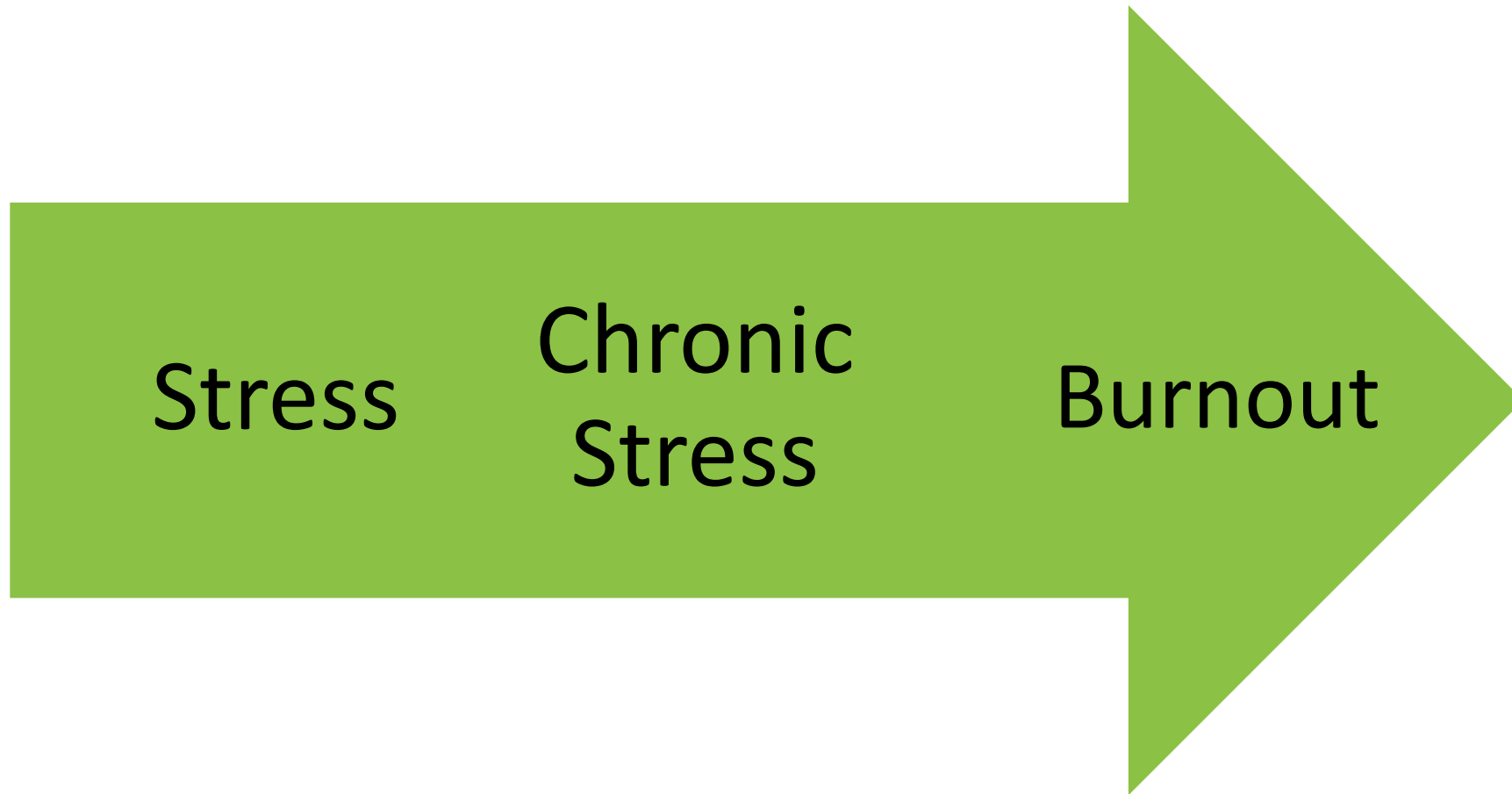
Co-occurring Mental Disorders



Percentage with Co-occurring Mental Disorders



Stress Continuum



Wisconsin Study: Direct Exposure to Clients' Hardships Causes Harm

- At risk of depression:

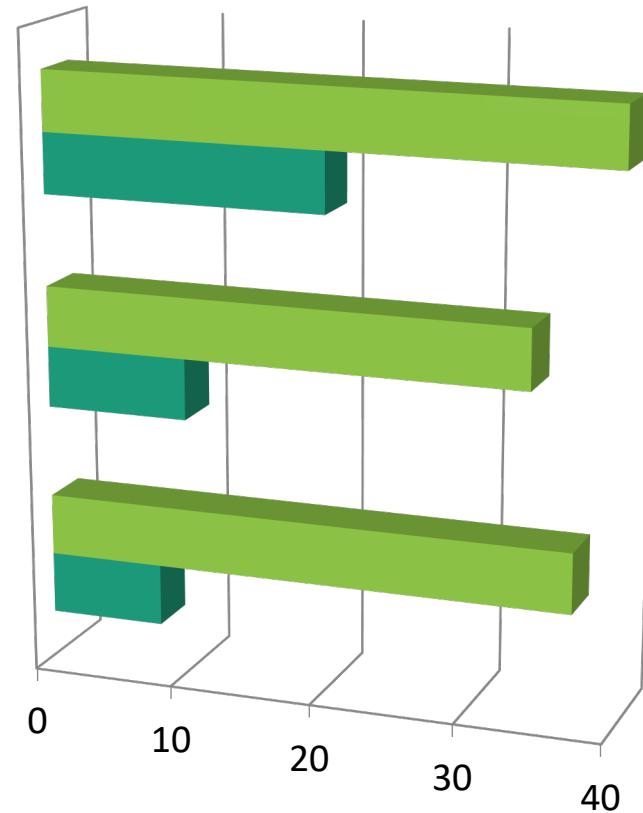
- Lawyers 40%
- Staff 20%

- Compassion fatigue:

- Lawyers 34%
- Staff 10%

- Burnout:

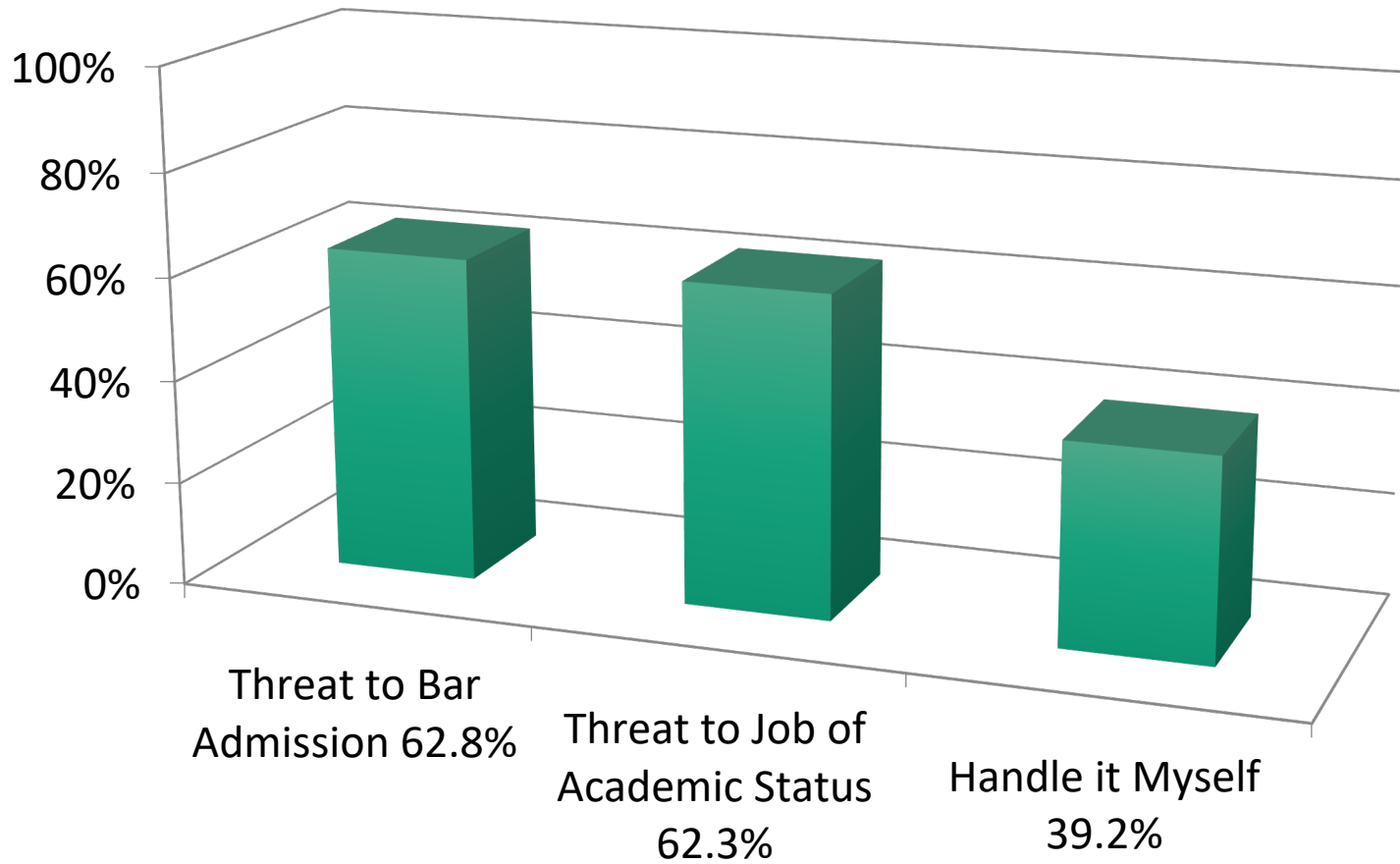
- Lawyers 37%
- Staff 8%



TLAP Provides:

- Confidential support
- Referrals to licensed professionals with the experience or expertise you need
- Information about local group support and resources
- One-to-one local peer support
- Self-care information
- CLE / Education on Wellness
- Service opportunities

Factors Contributing to Law Students NOT Getting Help...



WHEN YOU CALL:

CONFIDENTIAL
Texas Health and Safety Code Section
467.007:

Strict
Confidentiality

“CONFIDENTIALITY. (a) Any information, report, or record that an approved peer assistance program or a licensing or disciplinary authority receives, gathers, or maintains under this chapter is confidential. Except as prescribed by Subsection (b) or by Section 467.005(c), a person may not disclose that information, report, or record without written approval of the impaired professional or other interested person.”



Connecting
Lawyers
to Funds for
Needed Care

Sheeran-Crowley Memorial Trust

- \$3,000 for outpatient counseling and medication, provided that the Trustees may authorize and pay an additional \$1,000 should the attorney applicant demonstrate need for such additional funds;
- \$4,000 for intensive outpatient treatment and medication; and,
- \$10,000 for inpatient treatment.



Evidence-Based Prevention of and Solutions to Burnout and other Issues

1. Debrief

Debriefing is telling someone about what has happened, or going over an experience or set of actions, to achieve some sort of order or meaning concerning them.



2. Learn to Relax: Activate the Parasympathetic Nervous System.



Autonomic Nervous System

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graph TD; A[Autonomic Nervous System] --> B[Sympathetic system]; A --> C[Parasympathetic system];
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Sympathetic system

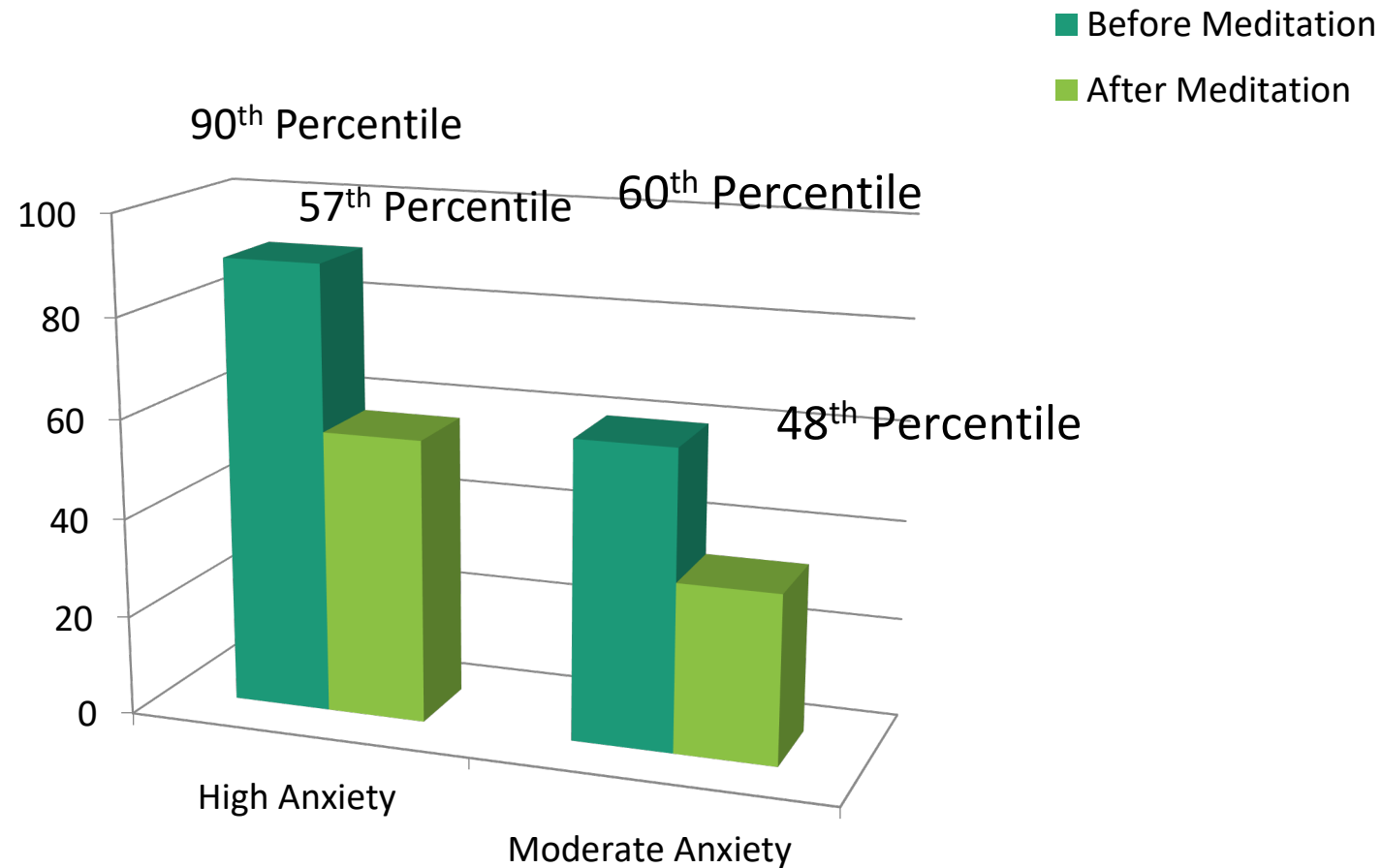
- Heart and blood pressure increases
- Respiration accelerates, blood sugar is released from the liver
- Adrenalin, noradrenalin are released from the adrenal glands.
- **Fight or flight**

Parasympathetic system

- Heartbeat slows
- Blood pressure reduces
- Respiration levels
- Your body experiences visceral responses typical of periods of rest and relaxation.
- **Rest and digest**

Mindfulness and Breathing Exercises

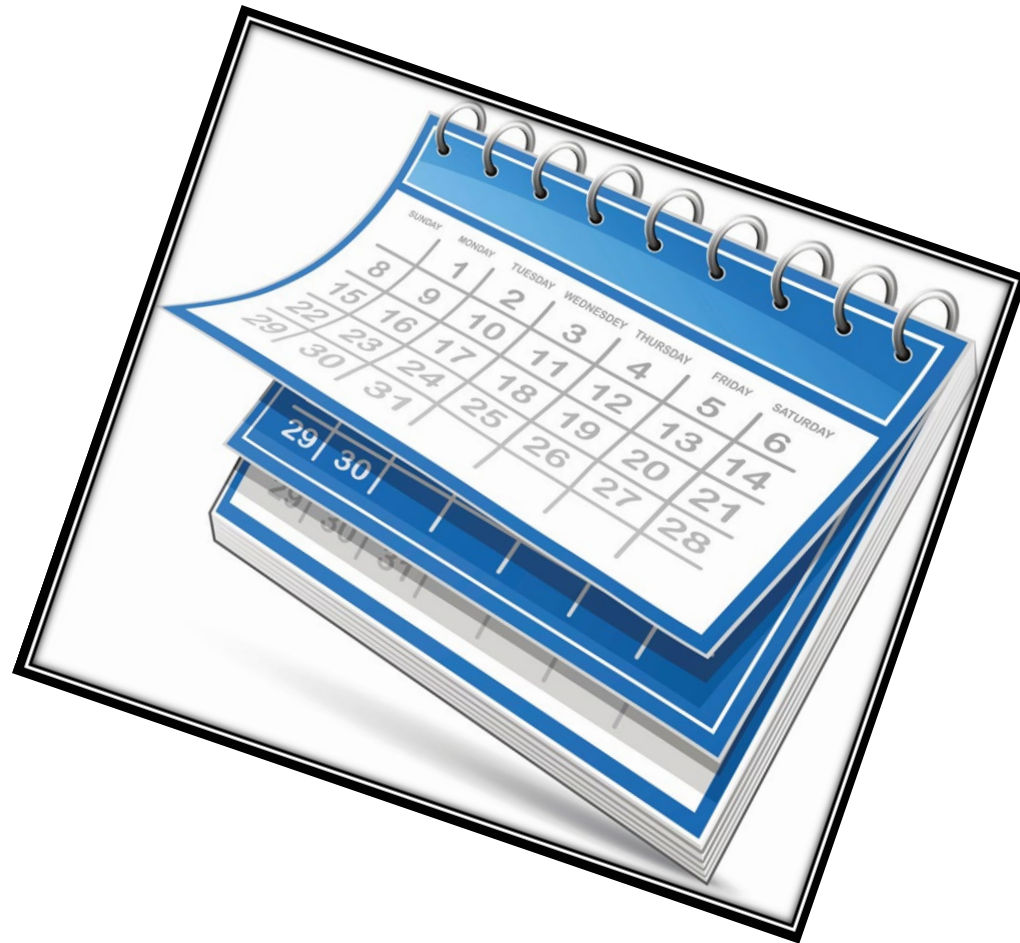
After 2 Weeks of Breathing Exercises



Ways to Activate the Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Running/Hiking/Walking
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Playing a Musical Instrument
- Yoga
- Painting / Creating Art
- Gardening / Working with Hands
- Golfing
- Cooking

3. Set Boundaries.



4. Connect with Others.



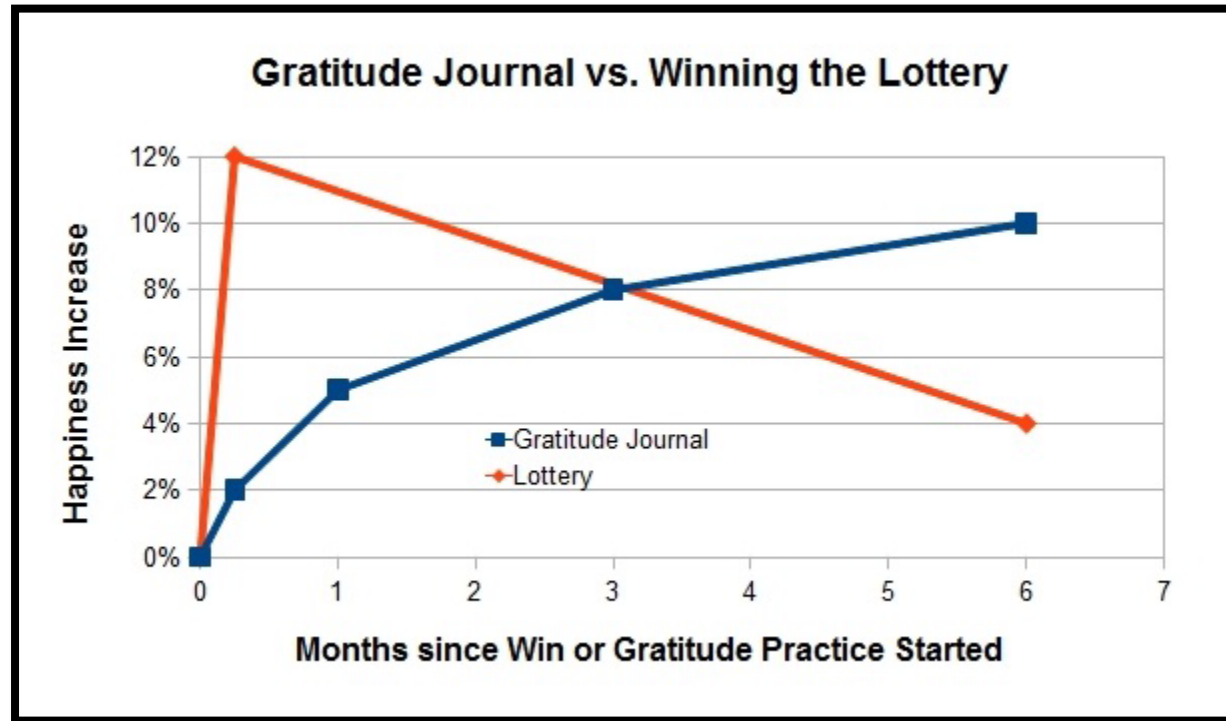
5. Disconnect from Devices.



6. Practice Positive Thinking: Gratitude.



Gratitude Practice



7. Be Kind.



Benefits of Kindness Supported by Research

- deactivates the “fight or flight” nervous system
- helps people deal with negative life events
- reduces the negative effects of difficulties stemming from traumatic events
- helps substantially with motivation
- improves interpersonal relationships
- significantly lowers anxiety
- improves coping abilities
- prevents depression



8. Ask for Help.



9. Expand your Spirituality or Consciousness.



What Makes a Lawyer Happy?

External Factors

(prestige, income, status, honors, fame)

OR

Internal Factors

(integrity, connectedness, meaningful work)???

Impacts on Lawyer Well-being

- External factors are minimal ($r = .00 - .19$)
- Internal factors are critical ($r = .48 - .66$)

Research in Spirituality and Health

- **Mortality:** People who have regular spiritual practices tend to live longer
- **Coping:** Patients who are spiritual utilize their beliefs in coping with illness, pain and life stresses
- **Recovery:** Spiritual commitment tends to enhance recovery from illness and surgery

10. Help Others.



Helping Others



In a 30,000 person study on the affect of stress over 10 years on the rate of death, people who believed that they had a very stressful year and that stress was harmful to their health had 43% higher risk of death than those who did not.



A related study showed that the effect of stress on death rate was **completely offset** where people were regularly helping others.



Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program
TLAPhelps.org
1-800-343-TLAP(8527)
call or text