

Study Finds Successful Lawyers More Likely to Be Depressed



Summary: A new study found a correlation between lawyer's success and deterioration of their mental health.

Some mistakenly believe that success will lead to happiness, but a new study finds that success in law can actually lead to mental health struggles. According to *The Star*, a study from the University of Toronto suggests that attorneys are more likely to experience depression the more they excel in their field.

The study from the University of Toronto compared two surveys of lawyers in Canada and the United States. Thousands of attorneys participated, and the data showed a correlation between signs of depression and traditional markers of success. Additionally, lawyers who worked at large law firms were the most likely of the legal population to experience mental health problems.

University researchers said that this study disproves the common idea that career success leads to personal success. They said that the findings highlight a need for change in the industry.

"In the population we know . . . that groups that are better off in terms of income are also better off in terms of mental health. But if you zoom in to this specific subgroup of lawyers, that pattern is reversed," study co-author Jonathan Koltai said. "People working in environments with more income on average actually tend to experience more depressive symptoms, and that's because of their higher levels of stress exposure."

Koltai saw that those in the private sector were more depressed than those in the public sector, which typically pays less and is considered less prestigious. He said the reason for these feelings are most likely from the lack of work-life balance that those in big law firms experience.

The Star spoke with attorney Orlando Da Silva, former president of the Ontario Bar Association, who said that he noticed professional wins came at a cost to one's mental health. He said that he was depressed during law school and that his negative feelings continued during his first job at a big prestigious law firm. He shared that in 2008 he had tried to commit suicide by ingesting over a hundred pills, and even during his time recovering in the hospital, he worried what his colleagues would think of him.

"I was so afraid the stigma of mental illness would destroy my career," Da Silva said. "Especially as a trial lawyer where you're supposed to be strong. Certainly strong enough to fight the battles that others can't fight for themselves."

In 2014, Da Silva became president of Canada's bar association, and he said that helping lawyers with their mental health issues was an important cause for him.

"If it can be caught early, if professionals can be made to feel comfortable seeking treatment without fear of scorn, judgment, ridicule, and loss of reputation, it won't get that far," Da Silva said.

The study is slated to be published in *The Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.

- [One in Three Attorneys Are Alcoholics](#)
- [Lawyer Named Miserable High-Paying Job](#)

Source: *The Star*

What do you think of the study's findings? Let us know in the comments below.

