

# Mental Health & Well-being for Attorneys

September 2022

# Agenda/Objectives

- Welcome/Meditation
- Identify Stressors
- Depression
- Bio/Psycho/Social Model
- Strategies

# Brief Meditation

# Stress

*What are the stressors in the life of an attorney?*

# An Attorney's Story

*“I just felt blah...Some days I just want to walk away from it all...I'd driven home too many evenings feeling like crap, exhausted and discouraged...when my wife said 'you can't live like this' I knew she was right – I just didn't want to admit I needed help”*

*—Iowa Attorney*

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# Self Assessment - How Are You Doing?

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How have you been  
feeling physically?

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How have you been  
feeling mentally?

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How have you been  
showing up for your  
family and friends?

# What is Depression? Facts & Myths

- Main causes of missing work & disability
- Depression doesn't discriminate
- Adults and adolescents
- Is everyone with depression suicidal?
  - 1 in 250
  - Iowa: 45-69 year olds
- On a continuum - High functioning individuals can be depressed





# PHQ-9 Assessment

- What is it?
- Pen & paper needed



# Self Assessment

## PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE-9 (PHQ-9)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered  
by any of the following problems?  
(Use "✓" to indicate your answer)

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself — or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite — being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3



# Scoring

PHQ-9 Score	Depression Severity	Proposed Treatment Actions
0-4	None-minimal	None
5-9	Mild	Watchful waiting; repeat PHQ9 at follow-up
10-14	Moderate	Treatment plan, considering counseling, follow-up and/or pharmacotherapy
15-19	Moderately Severe	Active treatment with pharmacotherapy and/or psychotherapy
20-27	Severe	Immediate initiation of pharmacotherapy and, if severe impairment or poor response to therapy, expedited referral to a mental health specialist or psychotherapy and/or collaborative management

From Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Psychiatric Annals 2002-32;509-521

## How do you feel about your score?

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# Social - Relationships Matter

- Family
- Friends
- Co-Workers
- Faith Groups
- Isolation=bad

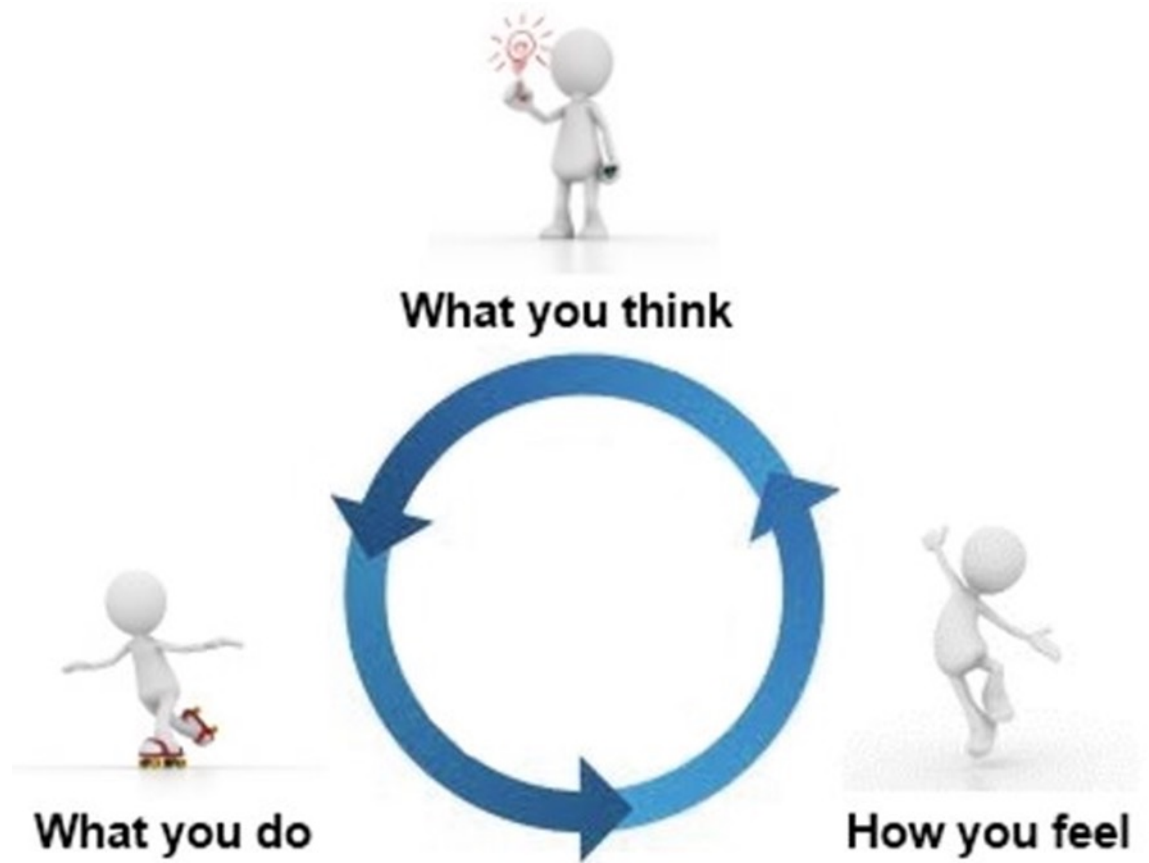




# Biology

- Our head is connected to our body
  - What is your health status?
  - What is your family history
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# Psychology




# Now What?

- Treatment works (think: diabetes not broken leg)
- Early detection and intervention vs. National Average – 10 years to seek help
- Stigma is real – shame
- Tell your story – You are not alone





# Strategies

- **What if I'm feeling this way?**
    - Talk to a colleague, a family member, a friend, therapist, EAP, NAMI Iowa, a pet...
    - It is OK to not be OK!
    - Take a day off - Vacation – Life/work balance
    - Be intentional about how you spend your time outside of work
      - News and phones
      - Outdoors and Exercise
    - You don't need to have all the answers
    - Burnout and mental fatigue are real
    - Sleeping and eating matters
    - Sharing of Highs/Lows
- 



Thank  
you!

