

Student Stress Management Plan

Adapted from Ann D. Foster, *Practicing Law and Wellness: Modern Strategies for the Lawyer Dealing with Anxiety, Addiction and Depression*

Instructions: Please write or type your answers to the following questions. Bring this document to Class 20. You will not be asked to submit this document, so you have the discretion to keep any information private.

1. Take inventory. Draw a circle and divide the circle into wedges representing the time spent on your daily activities. (You can look at today, yesterday, or a “typical” day—or track each day for a week.) Are you happy with the allocation of time and energy? Are there areas where you spend the majority of your time, but wish you’d spend less? Are there areas where you devote minimal or no time, but wish you did? What can you do to reallocate time and energy in a way that better reflects what you want?

2. Identify what is important to you and schedule time for it. Using the circle above, identify a few priority areas you would like to improve, or activities you would like to add, and brainstorm ideas for fitting these into your schedule.

3. Practice saying “no” and “yes” and really meaning it. Boundaries are important to self-care, and you have a right to personal and professional boundaries. Identify situations in your life where you need or want to create boundaries. If this doesn’t apply right now, think about your future career and where you might want to set boundaries.

4. Take a stress inventory and employ effective stress management techniques to help you cope.

- What stressors do you have in your life right now?

- What helps you to reduce stress in your life? Are these techniques healthy or unhealthy? What could you do differently to manage stress?

5. Practice self-care by eating right, getting enough sleep, exercising, and socializing. Evaluate how well you are engaging in these practices, where you need to improve, and how you can achieve these improvements. Be as specific as possible.

6. Get organized. Are there aspects of your life—both personal and professional—that feel disorganized? Brainstorm ideas for improving your organization.

7. Take care of your health. In addition to #5, consider unhealthy behaviors—such as smoking, drinking excessively, or using drugs—and whether these are a problem for you. Try to honestly evaluate whether you have issues in this area and brainstorm ideas for getting help. Also consider other health issues, such as chronic medical conditions, that need attention. Are you taking care of your physical and mental health? If not, how can you improve this situation?

8. Put your financial house in order. Are there financial issues causing you stress? Are there steps you can take now to address these issues, or can you draft a plan for managing these issues in the future?

9. Develop interests outside of the law. Do you continue to pursue non-law interests? What did you enjoy doing before law school? How can you reintroduce some of these interests to your schedule?

10. Give a little back. Try to do something kind for someone else once a week. Brainstorm some ideas for what you might do here.

11. Develop or maintain a perspective on life that will help to guide you in difficult times. This might be religious beliefs, personal mantras or values, wisdom you have learned from others, or trusted people in your life to whom you can turn for advice. Brainstorm ideas here.

12. A sense of humor is critical. Don't take yourself or things going on in your life too seriously; laugh at yourself and life, when appropriate. Try to do one thing per week that is fun and non-competitive. Brainstorm ideas here.