

YLDNews

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division

5 Tips to Overcome Anxiety for Lawyer Wellness

BY ANTONIO LEE

Have you ever felt mental pressure when filing an emergency motion to protect your client? Have you been anxious about drafting a dispositive motion on a complex legal issue? Have you ever stressed about meeting a pending deadline? Let's face it, the legal profession can be a demanding call of duty that prompts routine anxiety and stress.

Anxiety can be a normal reaction to uncertainty about the future. However, a 2021 randomized study of 2,800 lawyers found that women in the legal profession experience higher rates of anxiety, stress, and depression than their male counterparts. Those same women made up 25 percent of the participants in the

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Upcoming CLE Deadline and Attorney Wellbeing

BY NICHOL BENSON

It is that time of year again for many of us at least. Attorneys with last names beginning with **A through M** must complete their 30-hour Continuing Legal Education requirement for the current reporting period. CLE must be completed by **June 30** and reported no later than **July 3¹**.

While newly admitted attorneys have special requirements their first year, the rest of the Young Lawyers Division (ISBA members under age 37 or members

admitted to practice under seven years) has more flexibility in selecting CLE programs to obtain required credits.

If you are still completing your requirements for this reporting period, or are working towards compliance for next year, keep in mind the great resources offered by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC). Although we all only need one (1) CLE credit in the area of mental health and substance abuse, the ARDC offers

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study and considered leaving their legal career compared to 17 percent of the male participants. Along those same lines, similar studies found racial minorities manifested higher rates of depression, isolation, and suicidality compared to white colleagues. Mental health experts define anxiety as worry over a threat that is still in the future. Common symptoms of anxiety include a feeling of nervousness, helplessness, or a sense of impending panic. Simply put, it is the body's response to real or perceived danger.

As we journey back to the basics in this newsletter, we must not overlook the importance of our own mental health. This article will provide wellness strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle, assist legal professionals with everyday stressors, and illustrate specific practical solutions to cope with anxiety or stress. Against this backdrop, here are five helpful strategies to protect your mental health.

Suggested Strategies

GET REST. As legal professionals, we have developed a mindset that we must prioritize our careers over rest. Yet, sleep is an essential component of our health. Restorative sleep regenerates brain cells associated with learning, emotions, and memory. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, it is recommended for adults 18 to 60 years of age to receive seven (7) or more hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep is linked to several chronic diseases and conditions including obesity, heart disease, and depression. Signs of poor sleep quality include feeling sleepy or tired even after getting enough sleep. To avoid these pitfalls and achieve this strategic goal, try the following tips:

- Silence all electronic devices.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and relaxing at a comfortable

temperature.

- Be consistent by going to bed at the same time each night and getting up at the same time each morning—including weekends.

GET MOVING. Exercise is a powerful stress reducer as it can help boost your mood and calm your mind. Research shows that a complex chemical cascade occurs inside the body each time a person exercises, even if it's simply going for a run. To improve your mood or reduce stress levels, move your body consistently with engaging activities. Health experts recommend the following tips:

- Set small daily goals that will promote consistency.
- Jog, walk, bike, or even dance three to five times a week for 30 minutes.
- Diversify your exercise experience by incorporating strength training or group classes.
- Find a workout partner.

GET BALANCED. Anxiety disorders are the most common group of mental disorders. One Harvard Health study highly recommended people who struggle with anxiety work towards a well-balanced diet that includes adequate fruits, vegetables, and lean meats. Moreover, adequate hydration and eating regular meals can help prevent hypoglycemic states within the body. Achieving a consistent well-balanced diet is not an easy task, but try the following suggestions:

- Avoid processed foods.
- Cut back foods high in sugar.
- Eat foods rich in zinc, such as whole grains, kale, broccoli, and nuts.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium, vitamin B, and omega-3 fatty acids.
- Cut back on caffeine, alcohol, and smoking cigarettes.

GET FOCUSED. Meditating for even short periods of time may help boost your mood and decrease symptoms of

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stress and anxiety. Practicing mindfulness and minimizing distractions can promote positive effects of greater peace. Studies have also shown that taking breaks throughout the day may help relieve stress, ease tensions, or lessen worries. Below are four tips to help you achieve this goal:

- Breathe more deeply and slowly by using long, slow exhalations.
- Try inhaling for four-counts and exhaling for four-counts for five minutes total. This technique will help slow your heart rate and increase tranquility in the body.
- Pay attention to the present moment with intention and kindness.
- Listen to calming and soothing music.

GET OUT. Practice self-care and engage in activities that promote an overall positive effect on your emotional well-being. Self-care can be presented in many forms and having meaningful relationships can create a sense of belonging through social connectedness. In return, this can help you become more resilient against any barrier or

adversity. Here are some helpful tips to reset and promote your self-care:

- Take a vacation or staycation.
- Treat yourself to a professional massage.
- Learn a new hobby.
- Read a book.
- Seek a therapist.
- Spend time with family or friends.

Overall, attempts to minimize the consistent stressors of daily life can support your overall mental and physical health. With these strategies, you can prioritize your health despite the demands of your legal career.

In more serious cases, seek professional help. Call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988** if you are experiencing a mental health-related emergency or if you are worried about a loved one. This contact number will allow you to immediately consult with a trained crisis counselor 24/7 if you need support for a mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

As a community, we must continue to

monitor our mental health and promote emotional well-being in the legal profession. It is my sincere hope that the strategies provided in this article inspire you to prioritize your emotional well-being, as we slowly work towards overcoming the daunting mental health statistics that severely impact our profession. ■

ANTONIO LEE serves as the vice president of Committee on Committees of the Cook County Bar Association, board member-at-large for the National Bar Association (NBA), chair of the NBA's LGBTQ Division, lead coordinator for NBA's Economic Empowerment national programming, member of the General Assembly for the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA), member of ISBA's Young Lawyers Division Section Council, chair of ISBA's Agenda Committee, and member of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism's Advisory Council to eliminate bullying in the legal profession. Mr. Lee is a licensed attorney in Georgia, Illinois, and the District of Columbia. He graduated from Ball State University and Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, cum laude.

Upcoming CLE Deadline and Attorney Wellbeing

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four wellness webcasts relating to same, providing three free CLE credits. These below-mentioned programs are great tools whether the credits are needed or not.

- Stress Management & the Practice of Law (.75 hr.)
- Attorney Well-Being: The Intersection of Physical, Spiritual and Emotional Wellness (1 hr.)
- Attorney Wellness, a PMBR module (0.25 hr.)
- Learning the Art of Mindfulness: A Wellness Approach for the Legal Profession (1 hr.)

Along the same lines, please remember to take care of yourselves. Working in the legal field can cause great stress from time to time, especially depending on the area

of law practiced. If you are struggling with stress-management, depression/anxiety, major life events (e.g., death and divorce), drug/alcohol abuse, do not be embarrassed but do seek help. Also keep in mind the Lawyers' Assistance Program. This non-profit organization offers confidential, no-cost, services such as assessments, therapy, and education for attorneys statewide. ■

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Preparing for a Court Appearance: Remembering the Basics

BY SARAH LEROSE

Legal shows and movies like *Law & Order*, *My Cousin Vinny* or *Suits* typically depict lawyers in various trial settings. More times than not, the actor portraying the lawyer is seen in the courtroom, pleading their client's case before a judge or jury, usually in some dramatic or theatrical fashion. Although these movies and shows are entertaining, many attorneys will never set foot inside a courtroom during their legal career. For other attorneys, however, the courtroom becomes familiar territory and almost like a second office.

For younger attorneys, the thought of going to court can be exciting, anxiety provoking, terrifying and more. Sometimes, one cannot help but think of a favorite legal movie or show and hope for that “*Perry Mason*” moment. However, it is important to remember the basics and that not all cases immediately (or ever) go to trial before a judge or jury.

Read Standing Orders

For a first court appearance, either in your career or before a new judge, it is important to remember to read the judge's standing order. A standing order is an order entered by a judge setting forth rules and preferences as to how his, her or their courtroom will run. Typically, standing orders can be found on the court's website under the specific judge's webpage.

For example, the standing order may state that the judge does not accept pleadings over 15 pages without presenting a motion for leave to file same contemporaneously therewith, or you have to include protruding exhibit tabs for pleadings with multiple exhibits, or how far in advance the judge prefers courtesy copies (or even if they are required at all).

This may seem like common sense but the number of attorneys (new and not) who fail to read the judge's standing order before

court is mindboggling. When you appear in a courtroom, the judge expects you to know the courtroom procedures and to have submitted documents in accordance with their standing order. If you fail to read a standing order, you may come off as unprepared and the judge (and other attorneys in the courtroom) may remember you for that going forward, which is not how anyone wants to start off their legal career.

Provide Courtesy Copies

In the section above, I mentioned courtesy copies. Courtesy copies are just copies of the pleadings to be presented before a judge on a specific day. They are given to the Judge prior to the court date. They also include orders if the matter is set for hearing. Some judges require courtesy copies by a given date, so they are able to prepare for their court call. Other judges, however, do not want courtesy copies prior to court and their standing order will typically specifically state this.

Courtesy copies really are not rocket science but many times, attorneys forget to provide them. The number of times you will hear a judge say “I didn't receive courtesy copies on this, so we have to continue the case so I have time to review them” will shock you.

Sometimes, time gets away from us and we are unable to deliver courtesy copies timely. When this happens, my best advice is to know that your case may be continued because of this and to act accordingly. Admitting that you failed to deliver courtesy copies timely will go a long way with a judge and sometimes the judge will say something like “it happens but let me see if I can review them today. I'll pass your case until the end” or “thank you for being honest. What day works for a continuance?” Owning your actions speaks volumes about you as a

person and as an attorney.

Reading the File

Again, this may seem like common sense but stay with me here. As a young attorney, you likely will not get a brand-new case for your first courtroom appearance. Instead, you will probably appear on a case that was at the firm before you started and has been in front of the judge before. You may know the opposing attorney, or you may not. There may not even be an opposing attorney but there may be a self-represented litigant or guardian ad litem. Your client may want to appear in court, and you have never met or spoken with them before. Taking time to learn how to set the stage will only help prepare you for court.

You may be thinking that another attorney from the firm will accompany you to court, so if something goes wrong, they can step in. For some of you, sure, that may be an option. For others though, it may not. Either way, who really wants to be saved by the partner or senior attorney on their first court appearance?

Sitting down and taking 10-15 minutes (depending on the size of the file and issues involved) to read the file before appearing in court is crucial. By doing this, not only do you learn who is involved, the names of the parties, the names of the clients, if there are other attorneys involved, the pending issues, etc. but you also have an opportunity to ask any questions to a senior attorney in the firm before court. You are familiarizing yourself with the case instead of appearing in court like a deer in the headlights. Plus, the senior attorney will take note of your preparation and may give you additional understanding as to how the judge has ruled in the case previously.

Please keep in mind that I am not advocating for you to sit down and read the entire file if the file is huge. Sometimes,

a file has been contested for years and the number of documents to review can be overwhelming. You may not need to review certain documents before court, such as deposition transcripts, subpoena responses and the like simply because they are not relevant to the issues being presented in court on a given day. Instead, focus your preparation time on the more relevant information, such as what happened on the last court date and what is being presented on the upcoming court date, along with basic information such as knowing the parties involved. If all else fails, ask the senior attorney what they feel you should focus on for courtroom preparation. By doing so, they not only will narrow your focus, but they may also start a conversation with you about the case, giving you more insight and an opportunity to learn and ask questions.

Zoom vs. In-Person

For many of us, Zoom court remains

an option for routine matters. Appearing in court while sitting in our office seems less scary because we are physically located in a familiar setting. However, more and more judges are ordering in-person court appearances, especially for contested matters.

I am sure some of you reading this have appeared in Zoom court but have not appeared in a physical courtroom. They are very different and learning how to navigate both will only help strengthen your legal skills.

In a physical courtroom, you have to learn the check-in procedure (or if there is one), who the clerks are, how loud your voice needs to be, how the courtroom is set up, and more. Some judges allow attorneys to choose if they prefer to appear in court physically or by Zoom. I always recommend that if you have not been in a physical courtroom, or have only been in one a few times, take the opportunity to appear in-person on a routine matter to get your

feet wet. By doing this, you do not have the added pressure of physically appearing in court for the first time on a contested matter that is probably already giving you anxiety and a million other things to focus on.

Conclusion

Appearing in court is not always as glamorous as Hollywood makes it seem but it can be an exhilarating experience. It takes preparation, diligence and some common sense to get yourself ready for the first court appearance. Whether you have appeared in court 1 time or 100 times, it is imperative to remember the basics, and that they can make all the difference.■

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How to Prepare for Your First Divorce Trial

BY KASSANDRA R. MORFIN

A few days into the new year, I conducted my first two-day divorce trial all by myself! I cannot express how proud I feel having done this at the start of only my third year as a family law attorney. Shout out to my boss, George J. Skuros, whose confidence in me allowed me to achieve this milestone!

Divorce is a challenging process.

When parties do not agree on settlement terms and a judge's pretrial recommendations do not convince the parties to settle, divorce trials are scheduled. Most cases tend to settle, but a small percentage proceed to trial. When minor children are involved, the process may be longer and involve third party attorneys, such as a guardian ad litem (GAL) or child representative.

Here are a few tips and pointers I would

recommend when preparing for your first divorce trial:

- **Hire a Court Reporter**

One of the first things you should do when you obtain trial dates is to schedule a court reporter. A court reporter transcribes trial testimony, and a transcript of the proceeding is then filed to be made part of the court record. The court reporter's transcript is essential in cases where a party decides to appeal the judgment for dissolution of marriage.

- **Review the Record**

Review all filed pleadings and entered court orders. While doing so make a list including the date each pleading was filed and the date each court order was entered. When you are prepared with a list of filing and entry dates, you can quickly point out important dates to the judge and

opposing counsel. This is very helpful when determining retroactive monetary awards as financial pleadings may revert to the date of filing if requested. Remember to also identify if a pleading remains outstanding on your list. Some pleadings may have been resolved previously by agreement or after hearing. If something was resolved, note that on your list as well—those terms usually remain in place at the time of trial.

- **Review Discovery and Financial Documents**

Review all discovery in detail. This includes actual discovery answers as well as financial affidavits and supporting documents exchanged as required per local rules. Review both parties' financial affidavits, tax returns, bank and credit card statements, retirement statements, etc. Do you notice any suspicious transactions or

transfers?

- **File Appropriate Trial Motions**

If there's been non-compliance with discovery, motions can be filed requesting that the non-complying party's pleadings and testimony be barred at trial, and judgment entered in favor of your client.

- Review Deposition Transcripts

A deposition allows attorneys to obtain testimony under oath prior to trial while discovery is open. As it is typically a discovery tool, information obtained may or may not be an issue at trial. When a deposition is taken in your case, reviewing the transcript prior to trial is essential, especially in the event a witness testifies at trial differently than what was stated in their deposition.

- **Review GAL Reports**

Divorce cases that involve minor children often involve a GAL if the parties cannot agree as to allocation of parental responsibilities for decision-making and/or parenting time. GALs provide a report to the court detailing their investigation and recommendations. A GAL's opinion and recommendations are taken strongly into consideration by the Court, but the recommendations are not final. The judge has the ultimate decision-making power if the parties do not agree with the GAL's opinions and recommendations. Unlike child representatives, GALs can be called to testify at trial and like any other witness, be examined and cross-examined by the parties.

- **Prepare Stipulations**

Take time to prepare stipulations (statements or facts) with opposing counsel prior to trial. Stipulations narrow the issues to be addressed at trial.

- **Prepare Your Exhibits and Trial Binder**

Arrange all pleadings and orders in chronological format according to your list as mentioned previously in this article. Arrange your remaining exhibits as you see fit and create a table of contents. All exhibits should be clearly labeled. At trial use your table of contents to keep track of the exhibits as they are offered and entered into evidence. Don't forget to review the judge's standing order for compliance on courtesy

copies of your exhibits and trial binder, if not addressed in a case management or trial order.

- **Review the Rules of Evidence and All Relevant Statutes**

Review all rules regarding laying foundation and objecting to exhibits and testimony. Also review relevant statutes that will support your arguments. Keep a printout handy so you can reference the exact statute and paragraph number. I have a 2-page Rules of Evidence cheat sheet, entitled "Foundations and Objections," by Thomas A. Mauet and Francis E. Andrew, that I use and reference (which can be purchased for only \$8, by the way!).

- **Prepare Testimony Outlines for all Witnesses**

The first line of questioning should be basic background, residence, employment, and marriage information. Then, you can get into the substance of the trial and ask questions regarding the outstanding issues.

- **Prepare Your Opening Statement**

Briefly summarize the marriage and outstanding issues to be addressed at trial. Give a brief synopsis of what you are going to prove and how you are going to prove it with the exhibits submitted for trial.

- **Prepare Your Client**

Prior to trial, meet with your client. Discuss possible trial outcomes with your client so they know what to expect or anticipate at trial. Show your client the exhibits you plan to present at trial and prepare your client with questions or subjects you anticipate opposing counsel to bring up in their line of questioning. Explain court etiquette to your client, such as when an objection is made, the client should pause and await the judge's ruling prior to continuing testimony on the subject. Explain to your client that they should answer the question asked of them, and not go off-subject or ramble on. Advise them to try to remain calm and collected even if opposing counsel attempts to fluster the client on the stand. Let the client know it's okay if they do not know an answer to a question asked of them.

Day of Trial and Closing Argument

Try your best to keep calm and collected.

If the judge catches you off guard by sustaining an objection or asks a question, take a moment to breathe and organize your thoughts before responding. Get back on track with either 1) rephrasing your question, 2) moving onto your next question or 3) providing an accurate and clear answer to the judge's question(s). You will need to pay close attention to keywords or phrases used by adverse witnesses and opposing counsel in their testimony or arguments to prepare your closing statement. Utilize those keywords or phrases in your favor. Summarize all your arguments and points, and recap testimony provided by the parties. ■

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Thinking About Making a Career Move? Here's How to Pick the Right Next Step

BY JUSTIN IAN SIA, ESQ.

Making a career move is not easy. Even the thought of leaving a job can induce anxiety.

But today's youngest lawyers want to take the leap anyway. According to the International Bar Association's Young Lawyers' [Report](#) in January 2022, 54 percent of young lawyers were either leaving or considering leaving their current legal job within five years, citing lack of career progression and little work life balance, among others.

As young lawyers, we often make career decisions based on what others think is best for us. Many people, from senior law firm partners to family members, may be quick to remind us that early career moves are traditionally unfavored.

However, if you are a young lawyer who yearns for a new role, I urge you to listen to yourself and trust your gut. While you certainly should seek external advice, you are the one investing priceless time into your career. You, and no one else, are best positioned to decide how to spend the rest of your career.

As you search for your next role, I recommend starting with these reflection activities, which I have learned from several career advisors over the years:

Think about three jobs or life experiences when you were most fulfilled. What are the common denominators? In what roles do those commonalities exist?

Career fulfillment may be perceived as elusive, especially to young lawyers with only a few years of experience. However, we should not cut ourselves short. Each of us has a variety of life experiences that can help discern what fulfillment means to us.

For example, by working at law firms and in growing up as a person of faith, I found that I am most fulfilled when I make

an impact in my community. This means that I may find fulfillment in a legal role that counsels nonprofits serving disadvantaged populations. Alternatively, other impactful careers include working in philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and policy advocacy.

What three skills do you have that you value most and want to build? In what roles can you refine these skills?

A fulfilling career is also one of growth, especially with skills that one wishes to prioritize. A skill that I highly value is my ability to build authentic, trustworthy relationships. I can build this skill in legal roles that allow me to have meaningful one-on-one interactions with clients. Outside of the law, jobs in business development and community organizing would also allow me to hone my relationship building skills.

There are other factors to consider, but grounding your career discernment in these concepts will provide a solid starting place for your job search and ensure your next career move is aligned with *your* desires.

Career arcs are long and diverse. Lawyers are privileged to hold a degree that opens doors of all shapes and sizes. Young lawyers should capitalize on this versatility. After all, life is too short to stay in a role that is not the right fit, especially as opportunities abound. ■

Justin Ian Sia is an attorney based in Chicago, Illinois. Justin has counseled large corporations and nonprofits on various compliance and transactional matters. He has also served as a voting rights attorney and LGBTQ+ policy advocate.

How to Successfully Manage a Remote Law Practice

BY MARIE SARANTAKIS

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about several changes to the legal landscape. For many of us, our living room was transformed into a courtroom overnight. It ushered in a new era of technology and made us reevaluate how to accomplish our work in a more flexible and efficient manner. The routines that we had unknowingly settled into for years came to a crashing halt and we were given an opportunity to find a new way of doing things. Ideally, a better way.

Many attorneys realized that the brick-and-mortar offices that were once a staple of being a successful attorney weren't quite as important as they used to be. That is not to say that a remote work environment is fitting for each day, all practice areas, or for every lawyer, but for many, it's a liberating idea that never seemed possible in years past. There are now a great number of well-accomplished attorneys that manage incredibly profitable practices who are not confined to specific hours within the same four walls.

Attorneys practicing in Illinois are required to have an actual address which they disclose on pleadings, utilize in advertising, share with professional entities, use for service, etc. and a physical address is still necessary in many ways, but a nine to five schedule and traditional office setting are no longer the only way to operate a law firm.

For those who work primarily from home but miss the traditional office setting every now and again or who need a conference room for occasional depositions and such, there are several ways to periodically utilize a workspace without all of the added expenses of a full-time standalone office. There are now a number of office-sharing companies who will allow you to rent a shared workspace or a conference room by the day or hour

for a small fee. Many of these companies also offer answering services, mailboxes, and professionals on staff during standard business hours. Other attorneys have found sharing spaces with colleagues to be a happy medium. Still others enjoy having their office away from home and their own personal space, but even those attorneys may be working less traditional hours and/or working more often from home and on the go. As an attorney who works from more than one location or has less consistent hours, it is imperative to ensure that clients are able to reach you, you receive your mail on a timely basis, and that you have a registered agent.

Many attorneys find that working from home poses challenges. It is imperative that they are able to keep their records confidential, speak privately with clients, and work without distraction. The more casual setting can make it easy to blend home and work life and this can mean that attorneys are either not as productive, or the opposite, that they never stop working. It's hard to have a healthy work life balance when home and work are in the same place. Physically and mentally, it becomes more challenging to disconnect and may lead to burnout. In order to successfully work from home, you have to be very disciplined and set clear boundaries for yourself and for your clients.

One of clients' most frequent complaints is not being able to communicate with their lawyer. If you are working on the go, it may make sense for clients to have your cell phone. However, having clients be able to reach you at any time and engage in informal communication modalities such as texting can translate into a lack of boundaries. Depending on your office set up, if you don't have staff who are able to answer your phone and take messages, you may want to consider an answering

service. This is a great way to present a more polished image, ensure that you are timely receiving communications, but also maintain a screen between you and your clients.

You also must think about how you will communicate with your clients. While calls and e-mails are likely the most frequent method of communication, will you meet with a current or potential client via video conferencing? Remote video conferencing has become the norm in many courthouses and it's no surprise that it is very popular for client meetings and new client consultations. Wherever you are logging in from in order to conference, be sure that your background is professional. Avoid logging into a video chat from your kitchen table. Display a professional background that communicates that you are serious about the client and their work. Dress as though you would be meeting with them in person. If you are too informal, you risk your clients not having confidence in your work or respect for you as a professional in your field. You are not their friend catching up to shoot the breeze, you are their advocate and entrusted with their major life issues. You have to be conscious of not becoming too casual just because you are in a different environment.

No matter whether it's your home office or on the go, you must have certain tools to be able to work well from any environment. Make sure that you have a quality laptop with security features that protect your client's files and communications. Think about whether you need a scanner, and if so, invest in one of the same caliber that you would use at the office. Make sure that you have a printer that has sufficient printing capacity and a stock of extra ink on hand. Think about what tools you use daily at your office and be sure to have those same tools accessible to you from wherever you work.

Working remotely is not sustainable if you are less efficient or think of it as pseudo-working.

If you have staff, you need to ensure that you are communicating frequently and adequately supervising all of the work that needs to be performed, while setting clear expectations. That can be much more challenging to do when people are working from different locations. There should be shared calendars with court dates and deadlines, systems in place on how to log work performed, and a way to easily exchange communications throughout the day. Make sure that you have a law practice management system that works for you and your business and that can be accessed from anywhere at any time.

Working remotely certainly has many benefits, but it also comes with its own obstacles. Based on your practice area,

location, and personal needs you should assess if and how much of your work can be performed remotely and if it will benefit your practice and your overall quality of life. This is a very fact specific assessment. If you choose to work remotely full or part time, there are a plethora of resources out there that can help you make a more seamless transition. Talk to your colleagues and tap into the resources offered by the ISBA and other bar associations. Keep learning and evolving. If there is one takeaway from the COVID-19 pandemic for lawyers, it should be that we need to remember the importance of being able to adapt to the circumstances in front of us. We need to embrace technology and new ways of doing things. The practice of law continues to change and while as lawyers we live in a world of rules and systems, we need to remain open-minded in assessing our goals

and how to accomplish them in the best way possible for not only ourselves, but also our clients. ■

Marie Sarantakis is the founding attorney of Sarantakis Law Group, Ltd. in Oak Brook, Illinois. She was named as 2023 ISBA Young Lawyer of Year (outside of Cook County) and as a 2023 American Bar Association Rising Star (Top 40 Young Lawyers Under the Age of 40). To learn more about Ms. Sarantakis visit www.sarantakislaw.com.

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