

MAY PROGRAM EXAMINES 'HARNESSING THE POWER OF STRESS; DEVELOPING GRIT, AND A GROWTH MINDSET'

📅 Apr 28, 2023 👤 By Jim Ash ▶ Senior Editor 📁 Top Stories



Florida Bar members can learn about the “ethical ramifications of working with clients while under acute or chronic stress,” earn free CLE, and help the Standing Committee on Mental Health & Wellness of Florida Lawyers mark “Well-Being Week in Law,” May 1-5.

On May 18, from noon to 1 p.m., the standing committee and its education subcommittee are sponsoring, “Harnessing the Power of Stress; Developing Grit, and a Growth Mindset.”

Space is limited. Register **here**. The program has been approved by The Florida Bar for 1.0 hour of General CLE credit, including 1.0 hour of Mental Health and Wellness CLE credit.

Harvard Law graduate, Illuminating Wisdom CEO, and University of Miami law professor Marcia Narine Weldon will present. Weldon spent several years as vice president and deputy general counsel for Ryder, a Fortune 500 firm.

She specializes in coaching legal and compliance professionals, entrepreneurs, board members and nonprofit executive directors, and has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and NPR.

Her 60-minute presentation covers more than “The ethical ramifications of working with clients while under acute and chronic stress.”

Other topics include such things as “The 13 psychosocial factors for a healthy workplace and what happens when they don’t exist,” “The impact of mental health struggles on client relationships,” and “The difference between ‘stress’ and ‘burnout.’”

Miami lawyer and Standing Committee on Mental Health & Wellness of Florida Lawyers Chair Karl Klein said the CLE is the panel’s major contribution to “Well-Being Week in Law,” which is promoted nationally by the Institute for Well-Being in Law.

“They’ve put together a tool kit, and they encourage the state bars to put out programming, and supplement with their own programming,” he said.

Since 1949, the United States has also recognized May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Dedicating a single week helps the legal profession narrow its focus, Klein said.

Klein was recently elected to fill a vacancy on The Florida Bar Board of Governors and will have to relinquish his title as committee chair. But he intends to continue advocating for better mental health and wellness in the profession.

The Florida Bar was an early adopter, forming a Special Committee on Mental Health and Wellness of Florida Lawyers five years ago, that has since evolved into the standing committee.

The move was prompted by the suicides of prominent South Florida lawyers, and studies by the ABA and Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation that showed lawyers and law students were at elevated risk for substance abuse, depression, and other mental health disorders.

Much progress has been made since then, but more work needs to be done, Klein said.

The legal profession is much better at recognizing the importance of protecting mental health, Klein said.

“The awareness? There’s been dramatic improvement. Some firms have even appointed a partner to be in charge of attorney wellness,” Klein said.

But lawyers are still struggling to balance their family responsibilities with the profession’s 24/7 demands, he said.

“Where there hasn’t been much improvement is the structural practice of law, the long hours, the on-demand nature of emails, cell phones, and client expectations,” he said.

The standing committee will be focusing on those issues next, Klein said.

“There’s only so much meditation and yoga and mindfulness and self-care that you can do, you also have to tackle the systemic route. That’s where we haven’t made as much progress.”