



A Professional Law Corporation

RONALD N. HOFFMAN INTRO FOR MCLE PRESENTATION

Ronald Hoffman of the firm, HOFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES, is a criminal attorney who represents clients on all misdemeanor and felony charges. He specializes in the defense of driving under the influence cases. His firm has offices in Los Angeles and San Diego, yet he defends clients in courtrooms throughout California.

The firm also represents national and international clients who find themselves in legal trouble during their stay in California.

Mr. Hoffman possesses formidable courtroom skills honed from over 30 years of protecting clients' rights on a diverse range of legal matters.

He also takes his role as counselor at law very seriously by being proactive in encouraging his clients to raise their awareness about issues in their behavior that contributed to their legal problem. When appropriate, he directs his clients into treatment programs, (like alcoholics anonymous) and psychological counseling to help them live healthier, happier and trouble free lives.

He has recently expanded his knowledge and experience in the field of substance abuse by becoming a MCLE provider and educating attorneys at law firms throughout Southern California.



A Professional Law Corporation

Detection and Prevention of Substance Abuse in the Legal Profession

Presented by Ronald N. Hoffman Attorney at Law of Hoffman & Associates Specializing in DUI and Criminal Defense

Program description

This vitally important program focuses on substance abuse and related issues affecting a disproportionate amount of professionals in the legal community. The purpose of this presentation is to raise the attorneys' awareness about the challenges of identifying the beginnings of problematic behavior which may have crossed the line from normal social use of alcohol, drugs and even prescription medication.

Mr. Hoffman discusses common lifestyle factors including work related stress, family issues, and certain psychological conditions often contributing to the growth of these complex problems. He highlights a discussion of how to spot initial warning signs and symptoms leading to a divergence from an attorney's usual patterns of behavior. Various other forms of addiction include medical marijuana, gambling, food, and inappropriate or unethical conduct.

Mr. Hoffman explores the consequences of an attorney's breach of ethical or legal obligations resulting in possible State Bar sanctions or resulting in criminal convictions. Finally, different treatment options are examined to address the varying degrees of substance abuse, including Alcoholics Anonymous, psychological counseling and drug treatment programs.



A Professional Law Corporation

MCLE: THE DETECTION, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE FOR ATTORNEYS

1. What is substance abuse?

Difficulty of identifying signs that social drinking, recreational drug use, or even prescribed medications have crossed the lines into problematic behavior.

2. What are the most common types of substances being misused leading to problems in the legal community?

- Alcohol
- Illegal Drugs
- Medical Marijuana
- Prescription Medication
- Combinations of the above

3. Challenges to identifying substance abuse in yourself or others.

Important signs of the beginnings of addiction frequently go unrecognized and unnoticed to the individual.

The desire, followed by the increased use, frequency or amount of the substance needed to achieve the desired affect.

4. Common lifestyle factors contributing to the beginning of substance abuse in the legal community.

- Attorneys and work related stress
- Family issues – marriage, children, divorce, death
- Certain psychological conditions – depression, anxiety, and a wide range of other disorders requiring treatment

5. Alcoholism is on the rise among attorneys causing the State Bar's concern for attorneys as well as their clients.

-The State Bar offers confidential no cost programs supportive to California attorneys which address substance abuse issues.

6. Spotting initial warning signs and symptoms of various types of substance abuse among lawyers.

>Divergence from usual patterns of behavior

- Punctuality or lack thereof
- Unusually increasing sick days which are out of character for the individual
- Loss of concentration and dedication to work
- Attorney's job performance starting to waiver
- Attitude and personality swings become more frequent
- Increasing signs of withdrawal or erratic behavior
- Unusual uncharacteristic behavior to the attorney as the addiction takes hold
- Depression, anxiety and other health related issues

7. Other types of common addictions challenging California attorneys and the community as a whole

- Medical marijuana it's use and abuse
- Gambling
- Food (out of controlled eating)
- Unlawful sexual conduct

8. What do we mean when we refer to these various types of addictions as a disease ?

9. Professional consequences for California attorneys suffering from various degrees of substance abuse.

- Actions taken against attorneys who violate their ethical obligations to their clients or other counsel
- Potential loss of valuable employment
- Loss of respect and credibility among colleagues in the legal community
- Potential civil liability for malpractice or breach of an attorney's ethical responsibility
- Significant monetary exposure and legal defense costs for allegations of malpractice
- State Bar action to reprimand, suspend, or disbar attorneys for misconduct causing damages to clients, ethical violations, or criminal convictions

10. Possible criminal consequences of an attorney's illegal action frequently stemming from substance abuse.

- Being arrested for a misdemeanor or felony charge
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (or both) 23152 VC
- Hit and run (misdemeanor or felony) 20002 VC
- Under the influence of a controlled substance (11550 HS)
- Possession of a controlled substance for sale (11350 HS - a felony)
- Sales of a drug or other controlled substance (11351 HS - a felony)
- Theft or fraud (484 PC or 487 PC - misdemeanor or felony)
- Domestic Violence (273.5 PC misdemeanor or felony)

11. Wide range of potential penalties and other consequences for conviction of the above charges.

- Possible jail time or prison time
- Summary or formal probationary supervision
- Alcohol or drug treatment program of various lengths
- Wide range of fines
- Possible loss of driving privileges
- Community service
- House arrest and electronic monitoring
- Attorneys face possible loss of their license to practice law for moral turpitude conviction, especially felonies

12. Potential lifestyle consequences for attorneys caught up in substance abuse

- Divorce usually with significant financial loss
- Negative psychological effects on spouses, children, family and friends

13. Treatment opportunities addressing a very broad spectrum of need in the legal community

- Alcoholic Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous (entry level self help group meetings)
- Intensive outpatient programs requiring attendance 3 – 5 times per week
- Residential treatment program requiring patients to stay 30 – 90 days

These intensive programs focus on not only behavior modification, but also explore frequently discovered psychological factors driving addictive behavior

- Individual psychotherapy addressing underlying issues contributing to addictive behavior

14. Why attorneys and others choose to avoid treatment

- The most common reason is defensiveness to identifying the need for help or treatment
- The resistance to changing or giving up something we like, want or desire
- The lack of motivation required to make significant positive changes.
- Unwillingness to open up in therapy or treatment due to painful past issues very often contributing to the growth of substance abuse

15. Promoting awareness and opening the door to recovery.

- The journey back requires a willingness to seek help
- Dedication and commitment
- A strong desire to return to a healthy and productive life



A Professional Law Corporation

**MCLE PRESENTATIONS TO LAW FIRMS
AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

LOS ANGELES

Jones Day
SheppardMullin
Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP
Greenberg Glusker Fields Claman & Machtinger LLP
Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith, LLP
Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP
Manatt Phelps & Phillips
Tucker Ellis & West LLP
Lewitt Hackman Shapiro Marshall & Harlan
Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP
Morris Polich & Purdy LLP
SulmeyerKupetz
Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP
Wolf, Rifkin, Shapiro, Schulman & Rabkin, LLP
Ballard Rosenberg Golper & Savitt LLP
Arent Fox LLP
Troy Gould
Los Angeles County Bar Association
Beverly Hills Bar Association
San Fernando Valley Bar Association MCLE Marathon
San Fernando Valley Bar Association (Family Law Section)

ORANGE COUNTY

Jones Day
Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear LLP
Provisors Attorney Infinity Group
Fisher & Phillips LLP
American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers



A Professional Law Corporation

SAN DIEGO

SheppardMullin
Seltzer Caplan McMahon & Vitek LLP
Soloman Ward Seidenwurn & Smith LLP
Higgs Fletcher & Mack LLP
North County Estate Planning Council
J. Reuben Clark Law Society
Cassidy Turley
Fish & Richardson

5900 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD STE. 2600 ■ LOS ANGELES, CA 90036 ■ 323-655-3900
RON@HOFFMANLAWOFFICE.COM FAX: 323-315-2412

12707 HIGH BLUFF DR. STE. 200 ■ SAN DIEGO, CA 92130 ■ 760-942-0069 FAX: 760-942-1067