

Dear Law Students:

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have been directly affected by the Coronavirus. We wish all of you the best as we work together to keep our community healthy, to help those affected, and then to reflect on a meaning from this shared experience. At this moment, I realize that it is challenging to discover the meaning of this experience especially with so much uncertainty about what lies ahead. For many of us, this uncertainty may lead to heightened levels of stress, anxiety and even despair. Please do not feel that you are alone. These types of feelings are normal and to be expected.

As you work to protect yourself and your family physically, please remember to take care of yourself mentally. In these uncertain times, there are certainly things we can all do to protect our mental health. For additional information, please take a few minutes to read this article for perspective and tips for staying mentally healthy: <https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/>. You will also find valuable mental health information at <http://www.lawlifeline.org/>.

You can and should take advantage of the resources available to you at the law school and in our community. At the law school, we designed a mental health program to provide our students with professional counselors to help manage short term issues, thereby helping our students to function academically at their optimum levels. Through the **STCLH Professional Counseling Program**, we have licensed counselors available to meet with any law student on or off campus. We provide three sessions per semester at no cost to you. Please see the attached document for more information. We encourage our students to utilize this service when their mental equilibrium is impacted by a crisis or any negative event, in the same way we hope that individuals experiencing a legal crisis will seek your legal counsel in the future.

Because of these precarious times, we will increase the maximum number of counseling sessions for students who have already reached their limit for the semester. We will also provide an additional day for on-campus counseling starting next week. Our professional counselors will be on campus to help students develop strategies for effectively managing the stressors associated with this pandemic. **Ms. Ann Weiss will be available on Mondays from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Dr. Jacklin Tawadrous will continue with her scheduled on-campus hours every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** Walk-in appointments are allowed; however, advanced scheduling is encouraged.

The STCLH Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation (CARE) Team is committed to the well-being and safety of all members of the campus community. The CARE Team

seeks to identify members of the community who are in need of support, guidance, or other intervention and to refer them to appropriate campus and community resources. As a self governing profession that takes care of its members, lawyers reach out to their peers in need and refer peers for help. At the law school, we have a mechanism for you to report concerns relating to your peers. A CARE referral can be made through the following link: **online CARE Team Referral form**. By making a referral through this link, the CARE team is immediately notified of a concern. The team is able to make an assessment about the situation and to assist the student.

The State Bar of Texas has dedicated resources to raise awareness about mental health issues, substance abuse, and wellness within the legal community. **The SBOT Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP) also provides crisis counseling, referrals, and peer assistance.** You can call TLAP at any time 24/7 and speak with a professional counselor on call to help with those moments when you are feeling an inordinate amount of anxiety or despair. TLAP's contact number is on our Professional Counseling Program sheet and you can find more information about TLAP on their website: **<https://www.tlaphelps.org>**. Again, you can call any time day or night and speak directly with a professional counselor.

Finally, please do not hesitate to schedule a time to visit with me or Director Lyndsay Garmond. You may contact us at **studentacademicaffairs@stcl.edu** for on-line advising or scheduling an in-person meeting. We will always do our best to listen to your concerns and provide you with some direction.

Please remember, we are in this together and will be ok together. Stay connected and let us know if you need something. Be Well.

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