

Letters

A moving story

I read with interest Daniel T. Lukasik's Reflections essay "One Attorney's Depression Story" [July 2007, at 72]. I applaud his bravery in coming forward about his affliction to his colleagues in the American Association for Justice.

Much of my practice involves handling Social Security disability claims, and I have seen firsthand the crushing effect that clinical depression has on some of my clients. I can assure you that clinical depression is a very real and very disabling condition.

I urge anyone who has the symptoms Mr. Lukasik described to contact a health care professional. You may not simply be "in a funk," and clinical depression is not just a phase. But with proper treatment, this condition can be managed.

I compliment Mr. Lukasik on his courage and wish him well. I hope his words are the start, not the end, of our organization's discussion of this topic.

Jeffrey E. Marion
Williamsville, New York

I just read "One Attorney's Depression Story," and I am thankful that Mr. Lukasik had the courage to speak out about this terrible and misunderstood disease.

I have lived with chronic depression for more than 20 years and have only recently begun to experience a "return to sanity" these last few years. Mr. Lukasik's article was insightful, poignant, and helpful. I strongly encourage those who suspect that a colleague is suffering from depression to help the

person get assistance in dealing with this difficult condition.

John Bringardner
Winter Park, Florida

As trial lawyers, we continually confront challenges both in and out of the courtroom. Dan Lukasik and his law partner courageously and openly discuss a challenge that affects many lawyers at some point in their careers—depression. Mr. Lukasik cites the support of family, friends, and law partners during difficult times. He should be lauded for being open with this very personal matter in his effort to help other lawyers.

John Feroletto
Buffalo, New York

I joined AAJ (ATLA) in 2001, during my first semester of law school, and I have continually been impressed by and learned much from *TRIAL* and the *Law Reporter*, as well as the terrific seminars and colleges that I've attended. I have never been as touched by an article as I was by Daniel Lukasik's "One Attorney's Depression

Story." Neither have I been as proud of a member of our profession for sharing his poignant story.

Having done coursework in disability and health law, I am acutely aware that there is much we can and must do to educate members of our profession about this illness. We must learn to recognize the signs—and understand the seriousness—of depression; offer support to clients, colleagues, and others who suffer from it; and work to eliminate the stigma attached to it. Support

for people with alcohol and drug addiction abounds, yet seldom is it acknowledged that substance abuse is merely a symptom of an underlying problem—depression.

I salute the courage displayed by Mr. Lukasik for writing this article and educating others in the profession about this illness. Mr. Lukasik's article serves as a brave strike against the bigotry and apathy often associated with depression.

There, but for the grace of God, go all of us.

Cary N. Daniél
Dallas

Cheers from the front lines

Bravo and thank you for the July issue of *TRIAL*.

I have belonged to AAJ (ATLA) for more than 30 years, and July's issue is an example of what the organization should have been doing all along. Believe me, in states like Idaho we need all the help we can get to rebut the relentless propaganda of tort "reform" proponents like the national Chamber of Commerce. The July issue is full of material to help us do that.

Keep it up.

John R. Tait
Lewiston, Idaho

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