

Introduction

Boston college – Social work/LCSW and law – contrast between two professions

Social work

- Mandated supervision, both individual and group
- Built into the curriculum
- Discussions of vicarious trauma, self-care, etc.

DAs Office

- Every day dealing with traumatic images, videos, explicit 911 calls where people are at their absolute worst
- These would trouble any person
- No structured time to discuss trauma, emotions, self-care etc (happens more informally at lunch, walking to court, etc. but COVID has eliminated those things)
- As we know there are consequences when someone continues to bury these traumas or try to box them away
 - Short term – irritability, issues in relationships, lashing out, etc.
 - Longer term - Substance use and MH disorders could develop
 - We know the high rates of SU disorder among lawyers
- MDAO knows my background and asked me to provide some MH resources for the incoming ADA class
- I looked on the lawyers concerned for lawyers website (who I had worked with in law school when I was on the wellness committee) → Emailed to ask about the law student support group → Through discussions learned the group was not meeting at this time and even if it were, not necessarily appropriate for new lawyers / ADAs (more for law student difficulties)
- Met with Barbara Bowe and Susan White to discuss starting new lawyer / ADA support group in July 2020
- Worked with DA Ryan starting in August 2020 who mentioned wanting to include other counties in our pilot group (she got in touch with their DAs and got names of people who may be interested)
- Now we have a group, twice a month with MDAO, Norfolk and Berkshire counties
- Ground rules for group
 - Confidentiality both among group and office (i.e. nothing reported to District Attorney or sharing of information with anyone outside of the group)
 - Effective communication and listening
 - Respect of all group member's beliefs and values
 - Clear start time/end time to respect ADA's training and case work
- Now ADAs have direct access to Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers / Barbara Bowe and can contact her with any individual concerns and to set up an appointment
- Would love to expand group over next few years to include more ADAs or have more than one group session