



BLSA's Academic Resource Packet
Last Revised September 2022

Tips and Advice

1. **Keep the bigger picture in mind!** This is only the beginning of the journey to your desired career. When you feel doubtful, think of where you want to be five years from now and imagine you are already there. Take a few moments to enjoy the excitement of success before you obtain it. You can and will make it through this experience!
 - a. Ways to visualize your future:
 - ❖ Vision Boards
 - ❖ Guided Meditation Videos
 - ❖ Read Affirmations to Yourself
 - ❖ Think about your future for five minutes at night before bed or the first five minutes in the morning.
2. **Lean on your Community!** When you are feeling down and out. The BLSA community is just one of the many communities available to you if or when you are falling behind whether that be physically, mentally or academically. Venturing through law school without support is not ideal which is why there are clubs, programs, family, teachers, and friends available for support.
3. **Express Yourself!** Throughout your legal career it is important to develop strategic ways to express different points; however, when you require assistance it is important to state exactly what you need. Do not fear asking for help and expressing exactly what you need help with. If you are unsure of what you require assistance with, talk it through with an advisor, mentor, or a peer with a good understanding of the topic. Oftentimes talking

about a subject generally will allow you to conceptualize, produce inquiries and retain understanding of another perspective.

- a. **BLSA community:** is always available for any of its members to lean on. We advocate strongly for open and honest communication in order to create effective solutions. No remedy can be offered to a person who has not made anyone aware of their needs. In order to uphold mental fitness it is best to reach out before things have spiraled out of control. There is always a way to meet your needs; however, time is always of the essence. The earlier you see the signs, the earlier you can seek solutions.
 - b. **Indications You Require Assistance:** Sudden changes in your moods and behavior may be a signal that you require emotional assistance. When your body begins to feel tired and overworked, it is best not to ignore it. It is important to give your body what it needs. Sometimes that may be a 10-20 minute nap. Sometimes it may be essential oils or incense and other days it may be as simple as a drink of water or a bite to eat. Always think about what you are like when you are operating at full capacity and then begin to think of whether you lack the resources necessary to get you there. If the case is that you lack certain material objects to operate in an efficient manner, do not hesitate to reach out to the available channels to obtain them. There is almost always a way to obtain what you need when you ask!
 - c. **When to reach out:** Try to reach out early on; nonetheless, anytime is a good time to reach out for help. There is no statute of limitations on acquiring assistance. Confronting the fact that you require assistance is an arduous task for some, especially when you are used to processing information on your own. Reaching out does not mean you are inefficient or incapable, it means you are going the extra mile to secure an understanding. Reaching out at some point is a lot better than not reaching out at all so ensure that you reach out before it is too late to gain access to resources or remedies.
4. **Release Your Fears and Jitters!** Do not be fearful of asking questions in class. No question is a dumb question and often times other students share the same inquiries as you. This also counts towards active participation when you demonstrate that you are actively engaging with the material.
 5. **Practice makes Productivity!** Daily practice is the best way to be productive and gain a firm understanding of legal subject matter. We all know that the more you practice something the easier it becomes. While you may not have the capacity to attend to all of the readings assigned daily, it does not exempt you from practicing. Everyone may set their own personal goals but you should strive to do at least 5-10 practice multiple choice questions per subject weekly. This habit enables you to learn the materials and apply

them even when you have not completed the assigned readings. Most quiz manufacturers submit answers to all of the proposed questions, reviewing the answers and why you got it wrong provides an understanding of how to answer correctly the next time you get a similar question. It also helps you to get an early start on studying for finals.

6. Reading Your Materials! Try your best to complete all of the assigned readings. There will likely be days when you cannot read all of the materials. In the event that you can not fully read the text, attempt to skim through the material for a general understanding. Below are suggestions on courses of action to take in the event that you are unable to complete readings in addition to important habits for reading and comprehending.

- Take 15 mins breaks from your screen or reading every 2-3 hours to prevent headaches.
- Only highlighting important information, random highlighting or underlining takes up additional time. The readings are dense and require that you brief them.
- Always attempt to target the Issue, Rule, Answer, and Conclusion.
- Read more than once if need be; however, keep abreast of time. Try not to spend all night stressing over one theory you do not fully comprehend. There are several remedies to gain clarity, starting with your professor.
- Your professor's explanations may not always be the clearest but it is the most important because they ultimately grade your final exam. Always gauge an understanding of the goals and targets presented by the professor to aid the reading process.

7. Missed readings and Supplemental Coverage of Materials If you are unable to complete a reading assignment, do not fret. There are many resources available to aid your understanding of the cases. This is a temporary solution especially because the methods listed do not always reach the points being made by your professors.

1. A. Always browse the name of the case on google or your preferred search engine.
2. If it is a well known case there will be a case brief on it. Review the case synopsis/brief.
3. Continue your search by going to images if you would prefer to see images pertaining to the case.
4. Take a moment to review the videos tab because it offers videos from different sources explaining the cases or related legal theories.
5. If you have a few moments to skim a few pages, seize the opportunity and use the information highlighted in the videos, images, and/or case brief. This allows you to gather some idea of what points may be discussed or what events occurred.

6. Allowing your brain to gather images on what you will learn may help you process the events in class even if you have not gained a full understanding of the case or theory.
7. It is important to remember that even people who have read are confused and seeking clarity. Ask questions, and continue to engage with the material in class even if you did not read. The professor is there to break down the topic and if you understand partial details it facilitates a better understanding in class.
8. Attend office hours or schedule meetings with your professor when you are confused about class materials.
9. Attend office hours with your study group.

Sounds for Focus/ASMR This list intends to give you some ideas of what ASMR or study sounds work for you. There are a plethora of others out there that aid in study productivity.

ASMR

<https://youtu.be/WtjqsUH3iyM> - Background ASMR

<https://youtu.be/3JguX2JqtX8> layered soundscape

<https://youtu.be/7P1pH8lsUfE> - crinkly notebook

https://youtu.be/UrQWS3FED_w - Inaudible Whispers & binaural sounds

<https://youtu.be/Bl02WadHVwg> - Background ASMR (2)

<https://youtu.be/xHTWiVxB-8k> - Nail Tapping & More

<https://open.spotify.com/album/1c9oB9wR3dCiMQXGRtD0ZH>

Rain and Thunder

<https://youtu.be/mPZkdNFkNps>

<https://youtu.be/9OWE7hvF0Y0>

<https://youtu.be/nDq6TstdEi8>

<https://youtu.be/Ag6bjxc29l8> - 24/7 Live Video

Concentration Music / Study Beats

<https://youtu.be/oPVte6aMprI>

https://youtu.be/_4kHxtiuML0

<https://youtu.be/H1qQ5EAUt6s>

Afro & Chill Study Beats

<https://youtu.be/VYqyUfYKfJc>

<https://youtu.be/v8azffjFg5w>

<https://youtu.be/ym05p8vMsqg>

<https://youtu.be/RpyMa1lwKrE>

<https://youtu.be/rA56B4JyTgI>

<https://youtu.be/3VNm3rGXPXs>

https://youtu.be/P1X_onFXrRA

8. Construction of Virtual Binder/Notebook Set Up. While this step is one of the easier ones it is arguably the most important. Your academic set up for the year requires organization. Organizing at the onset of the year allows you to save time studying for finals. There are many different platforms you may utilize to compartmentalize your notes for each subject.

1. Those who prefer written notes should keep a separate notebook for each section
2. Those who prefer computer notes should create a separate folder for each class. One note offers several notebook folders allowing you to allocate a different color for different subjects.
3. After you have broken down each subject, you may either create a general planner or agenda for each course or culminate them in a collective planner. Having an agenda specific to each class helps you to organize exactly what tasks are due for

a specific class, many times there are multiple separate reading pages that are due. In order to keep track of everything you should allocate separate sections in your planner. You may also use google calendar or other digital calendar applications that send alerts, while phone alerts may become annoying or overwhelming they are efficient for its purpose, allowing constant reminders of what needs to be done makes it less likely you will forget to do it.

4. Add an additional resource tab under each course section. You will receive many resources throughout the semester from teachers and colleagues, these are useful throughout the semester but most imperative for finals. Having one tab under each section to access all resources related to the course can be a life saver. You may also wish to add another general tab that houses all of your essay and quiz reviews. Having a record of what you got wrong or right allows you to gauge an understanding of where to spend your time studying. This tab may also be used to copy and paste the explanations from questions you scored poorly on; therefore, if you struggle with a similar question, guidance is available in an allocated spot.
9. **Semester Reflections & Evaluating Your Time!** Every semester should end with a full evaluation of what did and what did not work for you. It is okay to change your routine and make adjustments. Keep in mind that you will always have to allocate your time to different areas of your life. There are two things you have to do after reflecting on your semester. The first thing you must do is be honest with yourself, being dishonest is only detrimental to you in the end. The other is to share something you did well with another student you care about. Sharing what worked for you will help those you care about find what works for them. It is important to evaluate yourself in the same manner and share the knowledge when you become an attorney. You may choose to measure your growth in many different ways but the core areas to reflect on to better refine students' habits are health and lifestyle, personal improvement, academic and careers or additional opportunities.

a. Examples of Questions To Evaluate Health and Lifestyle:

- ❖ How did I manage my time?
- ❖ How did I display love for my physical and mental well being?
- ❖ In what ways can I improve on showing love to my physical and mental being?
- ❖ In what ways did I enjoy my social life?
- ❖ In what ways did I embrace myself in solitude?
- ❖ What are some things you were proud you consumed this semester?

(This question entails the physical, spiritual, and mental. You should reflect on things such as what you ate, what you read, what type of media you consumed, the religious text you enjoyed, the physical activities that captivated and elevated you etc.)

- ❖ What do I want to consume less of next semester?

(This question entails the physical, spiritual, and mental. You should reflect on things such as what you would like to eat or drink more of and in some cases less of, what you seek to read more of or cease reading altogether, what type of media you seek to consume more of or less off, how much more or less time do you need for religious activities, or what additional physical activities you would like to try etc.)

b. Examples of Questions To Evaluate Personal Improvement:

- ❖ What are some strengths I have that I discovered this semester?
- ❖ What are some areas I can improve upon for next semester?
- ❖ Am I happy with my life as it is right now?
- ❖ Is it easy for me to appreciate the things that I have?
- ❖ What are some things that I can do to make myself happier?

c. Examples of Questions To Evaluate Academic Progress:

- ❖ What study techniques were most insightful for me?
- ❖ What learning styles allowed me to process information most effectively?
- ❖ What were my grades and what did I expect my grades to be?
- ❖ What subjects did I enjoy the most?
- ❖ What part of the course I disliked did I enjoy the most?
- ❖ What do I look forward to most for next semester?
- ❖ What new strategies do I want to implement next semester?

d. Examples of Questions To Evaluate Career and Opportunities:

- ❖ What other engagements did I partake in this semester?
- ❖ How many school engagements did I attend?
- ❖ Of the engagements I attended this semester which did I genuinely enjoy?
- ❖ What have I learned from my additional engagements?
- ❖ When did I begin to apply for internships?
- ❖ When would I like to begin applying for internships in the future?
- ❖ Which Resume received the most callbacks?
- ❖ Which Cover Letter was most efficient?
- ❖ What companies do I foresee myself being a part of?
- ❖ What kind of business do I foresee myself opening after the knowledge I acquired this semester?
- ❖ What kind of people do I enjoy working with?

Exploring Natural Boosters and Supplements! Case Western Reserve School of Law does not endorse any of the following products. Please thoroughly research the ingredients and side effects of all of the following supplements to ensure that they are safe. CWRU School of Law does not guarantee the safety of the enumerated supplements or natural boosters, as the result of products may vary from person to person. There are many other natural supplements to boost your energy and cognitive function explore one supplement at a time and note what works best for you. Always be sure to read the instructions which provide you the quantity to consume and frequency of consumption. All of the supplements below provide energy and enhancements of cognitive functions. I hesitated to provide additional information about these supplements because it is imperative that you research them and truly understand the benefits or lack thereof before instituting them in your daily routine. Understanding what you consume and how you consume it is an essential part of life.

- ❖ Nootropics
- ❖ Caffeine
- ❖ Ginkgo Biloba
- ❖ Bacopa Monnieri
- ❖ Lion's Mane Mushroom
- ❖ Rhodiola Rosea
- ❖ Fish Oil/Omega 3 Oil
- ❖ Resveratrol
- ❖ Vitamin B
- ❖ Rosemary

Academic Resources

- A. Please access the Outline Bank provided by BLSA students and faculty
- B. Case Western Reserve School of Law provides access to Quimbee, Barbri, Bloomberg Law, LexisNexis, and Westlaw for case briefs. They also provide additional resources on how to brief cases and begin your outline. You may also utilize Quimbee, Barbri, and Quizlet for legal outlines, quizzes, and essay questions
- C. It is recommended that you utilize these resources weekly, especially in the month leading up to exams to assess what you have retained and what you may need to spend more time on or revisit.

10. Study Regimens. Everyone has their own unique study regime that works for them, once you find it, document it and improve it. Remember there is always room for change and growth. Be open to suggestions from friends and family and take the time you need to analyze and process the study techniques that work best for you. A good study regime can be composed of various learning styles. Do not be afraid to be creative with your learning habits, learning styles do not define you, they are simple recommendations to aid in processing information.

11. Recommended Regimes From BLSA's Guide to Mastering Law School.

- a. Complete reading over the weekend, and wake up early to review readings. Compartmentalize your reading by course and designate a time per weekend day to each course.
- b. Complete Mondays and Tuesdays reading on Saturday and Sunday. On Monday and Tuesday complete Wednesday and Thursdays reading, so all information stays fresh in your mind. Use Friday's to review and orient yourself for the next week.

- c. Review the overarching class materials quarterly, allocating time to quiz, reflect, and evaluate your overall understanding of your learning process and the materials. During your quarterly reviews it may be beneficial to outline the material as well.

12. Recommended Vark Quiz: <https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

13. List of First Year Legal Jargon and Common Terms

Outline You will hear the term “outline” during your first semester. The 2nd and 3rd years may offer you their outline, or you may hear talk of a “commercial outline”. An outline is simply a way of organizing the information for a particular subject or class. There is no “right” way to outline; it can be a traditional outline, a flow chart, graphs, charts, mind maps, flashcards. The important part is that you are organizing, and synthesizing, the information being given to you in class. While you can use commercial outlines, or outlines of fellow students, as a resource, do not use them in place of doing your own, as it’s the process of creating your outline, however it looks, that helps you master the material.

Petitioner One who appeals from a judgment.

Plaintiff the plaintiff is the party that is bringing the lawsuit, or initiating the claim.

Prosecutor In a criminal case, the prosecutor is the lawyer that brings charges against the defendant.

Respondent The party against whom an appeal is taken; appellee.

Reverse When an appellate court overturns a lower court’s decision.

SCOTUS Supreme Court of the United States

Statutory Law Law passed by a legislative body. This is different from common law. Examples of this are the FRCP, UCC. And more.

Study Aid/Supplement A supplement is a collection of books designed to help you understand the law. They are not case books. Your library will have more information on the various types of supplements, and what they are used for. Some, like commercial outlines, help you

Tort A civil wrong. This subject typically involves things like car accidents, and so forth.

TWEN This is a web platform that some professors use in class, and it's associated with Westlaw. They use it to collect assignments, provide course handouts, etc. Your professor will tell you if you need to use it.

UBE The Uniform Bar Exam This is the bar exam administered in roughly 35 states. The reason this is significant is that the UBE score is "portable", meaning you can transfer your bar exam score to other states. Your Academic Support person on campus will tell you more, and it's not something you need to worry about your first year

Remaining Terms can be found at:

<https://lawtutors.net/words-you-should-knowbefore-law-school/#:~:text=1L%2C%202L%2C%203L%3A%20In,to%20as%204Ls%20as%20well.>

CALI Award See Top Paper Award.

Callback Interview The third phase in the application process for a job at a law firm, the first two being sending in a resume and sitting for the first interview, which is often held at the law school. Callback interviews generally are in-depth and lengthy, and can involve meeting all or many of the firm's attorneys at the law firm's offices. Receiving a callback interview is a good sign that the student is being seriously considered for the position. See also On-Campus Interview.

Case See Judicial Opinion.

Case Law See Judicial Opinion.

Case Brief A short summary of the key aspects of a judicial opinion, including the facts, procedural history, holding, and reasoning.

Case Comment A student-written law review article, also called a Case Note, approximately 10–15 pages in length analyzing a recent noteworthy judicial opinion. Students who compete for membership on the law review will often be required to write a case comment as part of the law review's write-on competition. See also Law Review, Write-On Competition.

Case Method The law school teaching methodology by which students learn to analyze law from reading appellate judicial opinions collected and organized into casebooks by subject matter, as distinguished from reading textbooks that explain the law in an expository fashion. The origin of the case method is attributed to Christopher Langdell, a former Harvard Law School dean. The case method works hand in hand with the Socratic method.

Casebook The thick, heavy, and expensive books you will be lugging around and poring over day and night. A casebook is a compilation of appellate judicial opinions in a particular subject matter designed to work with the case and Socratic methods of law school teaching. See also Case Method, Socratic Method.

Cause of Action See Claim.

Cert or Certiorari See Writ of Certiorari.

Circuit Court of Appeal See U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal.

Citation See Citation Style.

Citation Style All written attributions to legal authority (e.g., judicial opinions, statutes, treatises) must adhere to a uniform citation style that is most commonly derived from the Bluebook, but which may also come from the competing ALWD Manual. Citation style is designed to inform readers how to find the source (by giving, for example, the volume, page number, and date) and also to ensure the credibility of the cited source. Most assertions in legal writing require cited authority to back them up. Citation style generally is taught in first-year Legal Research and Writing courses. See also ALWD Manual, Authority, Bluebook.

Civil Law Legal System A type of legal system followed in large portions of the world such as Europe and Latin America, but not in the United States. In civil law systems, the primary source of law comes from “codes,” which are organized books of statutes written by legislatures. In common law systems, such as the United States, the primary source of law is case law or judicial precedent, although that is changing as common law systems continue to place greater emphasis on legislation and regulatory rules. See also Common Law Legal System.

Civ Pro See Civil Procedure.

Civil Procedure Required first-year course covering the rules that govern the conduct of civil (i.e., non-criminal) lawsuits, primarily the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The course is commonly referred to by students as “Civ Pro.”

Claim Any assertion of law and facts that may entitle a party in a lawsuit to a legal remedy (such as money, property, or an injunction). Examples include claims alleging breach of contract or that the defendant’s negligence caused injury to the plaintiff.

CLE See Continuing Legal Education.

Clerkship See Judicial Law Clerk and Summer Clerkship.

Clinic See Legal Clinic.

Closed or Open Book Exam Law school exams may be either open book or closed book or somewhere in between. Some professors allow students to bring in any materials they wish (e.g., notes, outlines, commercial study aids) to an exam (complete open book). Some professors do not allow any outside materials (closed book). Many professors follow an in-between approach where students are permitted to bring in only certain specified materials, such as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for a Civ Pro exam.

Common Law See Common Law Legal System.

Common Law Legal System A legal system in which the primary source of law is judge-made law; that is, law written and developed by judges in judicial opinions. The United States operates under a common law legal system, whereas most countries follow a civil law legal system, in which law comes primarily from books of statutes known as “codes.” Students spend most of their first year studying common law. In upper-level years, students take several courses focusing on statutes, but even in those courses, students usually study judicial opinions interpreting the statutes. See also Civil Law Legal System.

Complaint Document that a plaintiff files with a court to commence a lawsuit. The complaint outlines the plaintiff’s claims and the basic factual allegations supporting the claims. See also Answer, Claim.

Computerized Legal Research Legal research used to be conducted exclusively in thick, musty books, but most modern legal research is done using computer databases. Several of these exist, but two heavyweights dominate the market: LexisNexis and Westlaw. Attorneys must pay considerable sums to use these subscription-based services. Law schools pay institutional bulk rates so that students and professors can use the services without payment. New students immediately become familiar with LexisNexis and Westlaw through their on-campus training and marketing efforts. The latter will result in your consuming a lot of free pizza and acquiring numerous trinkets bearing corporate logos (T-shirts, cups, pens, etc.).

Remaining Terms can be found at Essential Law:

<https://lawhaha.com/legal-glossary-for-law-students/>

Support Black Channels: If you enjoy listening to videos or podcasts there are many legal channels that offer excellent explanations of legal theories and processes. Below find Black Owned Legal Youtube Channels.

- TXC Tells All
- The Aspiring Boss
- James C Lovett
- ItsKayYvonne
- Sisters in law

- The Saint Yves Law Firm

Black Owned Legal Podcast:

- Yoshi Haynie:
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/hustle-motivate-w-yoshi-haynie-esq/id1544691796?i=1000513135966>
- Black Lawyers Podcast: <https://linktr.ee/theblacklawyerspodcast>
- Caribbean Entertainment and Sports Law:
https://www.feedspot.com/infiniterss.php?_src=feed_title&followfeedid=5054084&q=sit e:https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Ffeeds%2Fvideos.xml%3Fchannel_id%3DU CotdzIngiSckAhwwMO4-C7g
- Black Lawyers Uncensored Podcast:
<https://player.fm/series/the-black-law-uncensored-podcast>
- Holding Court with Ebony: <https://player.fm/series/holding-court-with-eboni-k-williams>
- Sistah's in Law: <https://player.fm/series/sistahs-in-law>

Non Minority Owned Legal Youtube Channels

- Learn Law Better
- Harvard Law School YouTube channel
- Law School Success
- Stanford Law YouTube channel.
- NYU School of Law YouTube channel
- Bloomberg Law YouTube channel
- The University of Law YouTube channel
- Law & Crime Network

Text to Speech! Copy and Paste your reading assignments into these to have it read aloud to you! Still proceed to take notes and pay attention to close details. This is also a good way to get some of the information in the reading when you are driving, cooking, partaking in physical activities, cleaning (etc.) Some of these services require payments after a certain amount of time or text character count limits so feel free to use multiple different text to speech services if necessary.

If you utilize a textbook without a pdf, do not count yourself out of this method. Use your phone to scan pictures of the text you want to transfer into audio and create a pdf of that text. Most pdf apps contain a way to transform the pdf into text that may be easily copied and pasted. Use this method to copy and paste your text into the text to audio apps.

<https://ttsreader.com/>

<https://ttsmp3.com/>

<https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/>

<https://voicemaker.in/>

<https://www.labnol.org/listen/>

<https://intelligent-speaker.com/>

<https://readloud.net/>

<http://www.fromtexttospeech.com/>

Text to Speech Phone Apps for Androids:

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/android-talks-back-4-voice-apps-for-text-to-speech/>

Text to Speech Apps for Iphone: <https://www.makeuseof.com/free-text-to-speech-apps-iphone/>

The following resources are from the American Bar Association's Mental Health Packet Highlighting Particular Indicators of Stress, Substance Abuse, Depression and other attacks to their Mental.

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Use

Ask yourself the following questions, Is my drinking / drug use:

- Interfering with my work according to my clients, associates, or support personnel?
- Filling a need to face certain situations?
- Often done alone?
- Causing me to have memory loss?
- Decreasing my ambition or efficiency?
- Necessary before meetings or court appearances to calm my nerves, gain courage, or improve performance?
- Increasing in quantity/frequency and something I believe I need to hide?
- Causing me to miss closings, court appearances or other appointments?
- Making me feel guilty, depressed and anxious?

- Interfering with my personal relationships: my family, friends and my personal well-being?
- Leading me to questionable environments or acquaintances?
- Causing me to neglect my office administration or misuse funds?
- Forcing me to become increasingly reluctant to face my clients and colleagues?
- Leading me to lie to hide the amount I am consuming?
- Making me feel shaky, sick or fatigued the next day?

Answering “yes” to any one of these questions indicates a serious or potentially serious consequence from use of alcohol or other drugs. Based on your answers you may need to get a professional assessment to help you understand more completely the effects of your use and the healthy ways you can learn to solve personal problems.

For additional resources, please follow [this link to the American Bar Association’s webpage](#).

Additional Substance Use Disorder Self-Screening tools include [DAST](#) and [SAMHSA](#).

Signs and Symptoms of an Episode of Depression

If experienced for two weeks, representing a change from a student's normal mood:

Physical

- Poor appetite or overeating
- Low energy or fatigue
- Sleep disturbances

Psychological

- Feeling hopeless
- Low self-esteem
- Self-critical thoughts
- Feeling that no one values you
- Feeling no purpose to existence
- Recurring thoughts of death

Academic

- Decreased motivation
- Difficulty concentrating

Emotional

- Feeling sad, empty, alone, or hopeless
- Excessive crying
- Excessive worrying
- Feeling more tense or anxious than usual
- Overreacting to situations

Social

- Decreased interest in activities you enjoy
- Decreased trust in others
- Easily irritated
- Wanting to spend time alone
- Difficulty relating to people

For links to depression self-assessment screening tools, please see:

- [Depression Self-Test](#)
- [SAMHSA Screening Tools](#)
- [Depression Test - Online Self-Assessment | Kaiser Permanente](#)
- [MHA - Depression Test](#)

Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety

Physical

- Dizziness or faintness
- Dry mouth/thirst
- Fatigue
- Gastrointestinal problems (diarrhea/constipation)
- Headaches
- Hyperactivity
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Hyperventilation
- Knotted stomach/ tense muscles
- Loss or increase in appetite
- Nausea/vomiting
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Sexual problems
- Shaking hands or tremors
- Shortness of breath or chest tightness
- Sweating (especially of the palms)
- Tingling in extremities (“pins and needles” feeling)

Psychological

- Aggressiveness
- Compulsive shopping
- Difficulty concentrating/inability to focus
- Disruptive eating (over- /under-eating)
- Fear or panic
- Feeling apprehensive or worried
- Hyper-alert (easily startled/jumpiness)
- Impatience
- Inability to relax
- Increased smoking or alcohol consumption
- Irritability
- Isolation
- Reckless behavior
- Restlessness
- Sleep disturbances

For links to anxiety self-assessment tools, please see:

- [Self-Test for Anxiety](#)
- [Self tests](#)
- [Anxiety Test](#)

Signs and Symptoms of Stress

Physical

- Headaches
- Tight muscles
- Back or neck problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Stomach distress
- Change in appetite
- More colds and infections
- Fatigue
- Rapid breathing and heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Dry mouth/thirst
- Sexual performance problems

Thoughts/Cognitive

- Memory difficulties/forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor judgment
- Fears of failure
- Self-criticism

Feelings/Emotional

- Feeling out of control
- Overwhelmed
- Irritated and angry
- Anxious
- Restless
- Helpless
- Trapped
- Hopeless
- Desperate

Behavioral

- Crying
- “Snapping” or picking fights
- Alcohol/drug use
- Skipping or sleeping through class
- Acting impulsively
- Losing things (i.e., cell phone, keys)
- Forgetting important meetings and appointments

For links to anxiety self-assessment tools, please see:

- [Stress Assessments](#)
- [Vulnerability To Stress Test](#)
- [Perceived Stress Scale](#)

Deciphering Between Panic Attacks or Anxiety?

While both panic attacks and generalized anxiety are categorized as anxiety disorders, there are some distinctions; by understanding the differences, you may be better able to make informed decisions about the types of help or treatment needed.

People often say “I panicked” or “I had a panic attack.” However, technically speaking, a panic attack involves an episode in which a person experiences at least 4 of the following symptoms within a 10-minute time period.

- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Real or perceived shortness of breath/smothering
- Feeling choked
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Numbness
- Chills
- Feeling detached from self
- Fear of losing control
- Fear of dying

While panic attacks can be expected or unexpected, they are usually sudden and are very intense. An example of an expected panic attack would be if a person has a phobia or fear such as stage fright. An example of an unexpected panic attack would be if the attack seemed to come “out of the blue.” It is possible that someone who experiences panic attacks may be experiencing clinically significant anxiety. Therefore, it is helpful to monitor the frequency of the attacks and even try to monitor the specific onset for them.

Are panic attacks and anxiety the same thing?

After looking at the above markers of a panic attack, it is helpful to know that anxiety can be a different experience. The differences between panic and anxiety are best described in terms of the intensity of the symptoms and length of time the predominant symptoms occur. While symptoms of anxiety are very similar to the symptoms of panic attacks, anxiety is less intense and often persists for days, weeks, or months and may include: excessive worrying, restlessness, feeling “on edge”, irritability, muscle tension and sometimes sleep disturbances. It is important to

note that the key difference between a regular and healthy amount of anxiety and a possible anxiety disorder is whether or not the anxiety interferes with a person's ability to function. In the case of law students, feeling nervous or worried about an exam is not in and of itself problematic. However, if you as a student have appropriately prepared for the exam yet become so anxious that you cannot actually take the exam, that is an interference with daily functions.

Both panic attacks and anxiety are very treatable with a variety of methods including but not limited to: cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness meditation, deep breathing, and/or medications (in consultation with a medical doctor). If you are not sure if your experience would be classified as panic or anxiety, reach out to a mental health professional who can best guide you, or consider using one of the assessment tools found later in this Toolkit.

(Reference: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, American Psychiatric Association (5th ed., Washington, DC, 2013))

Signs that Someone May Be At Risk for Suicide

- Talking directly or indirectly about suicide or wanting to die
- Creation of a suicide plan – the more specific the plan, the more serious the threat
- Suffering from serious depression
- Experiencing changes in academic or job performance or behavior
- Engaging in other actions that could potentially cause harm to self, including taking too many pills
- Purposely injuring one's self (such as cutting or burning)
- Taking unnecessary or life-threatening risks (e.g., driving recklessly)
- Reporting a history of suicide attempts or gestures
- Saying goodbye to friends or giving away prized possessions
- Shifting from serious depression to sudden happiness – this might be a sign of deciding to “take care of problems” by committing suicide

Prevention strategies do exist for suicide. The most effective strategy is to identify the warning signs of suicide and to take the signs seriously. Once warning signs are identified, the individual may receive professional help, which may include medication or therapy.

Be willing to talk about suicide. Increasing public awareness through dialogue and education helps to eliminate the stigma associated with suicide, encouraging more people to seek help. Suicide victims don't necessarily want to die. Instead, they want relief for their intense psychological pain. They often feel hopeless and that there is no solution. Fortunately, help is available for those at risk of suicide.

If you believe a colleague may be at risk for suicide, encourage him/her to seek help immediately. If you believe someone might be a harm to themselves, contact your local LAP. Additionally, the National Suicide Prevention Helpline recommends the following when someone is threatening suicide:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

If you believe a classmate is in danger of committing suicide:

Do not leave the classmate alone. Call 911 or, if you think you can do so safely, take the classmate to the nearest hospital emergency room. Your dean of students may be able to assist, and may have emergency contact information for the classmate.

If a classmate appears to be thinking about suicide, even if suicide is not an immediate danger, you can:

Encourage the person to seek treatment. Someone who is suicidal or has severe depression may not have the energy or motivation to find help. If your friend or loved one doesn't want to consult a doctor or mental health provider, suggest finding help from a support group, crisis center, faith community, teacher or other trusted person. You can help by offering support and advice — but remember that it is not your job to become a substitute for a mental health provider.

- Offer to help the person take steps to get assistance and support. For example, you can research treatment options, make phone calls and review insurance benefit information, or even offer to go with the person to an appointment.
- Encourage the person to communicate with you. Someone who is suicidal may be tempted to bottle up feelings because he or she feels ashamed, guilty or embarrassed. Be supportive and understanding, and express your opinions without placing blame. Listen attentively and avoid interrupting.
- Be respectful and acknowledge the person's feelings. Don't try to talk the person out of his or her feelings or express shock. Remember, even though someone who's suicidal isn't thinking logically, the emotions are real. Not respecting how the person feels can shut down communication.
- Don't be patronizing or judgmental. For example, don't tell someone, "things could be worse" or "you have everything to live for." Instead, ask questions such as, "What's causing you to feel so bad?" "What would make you feel better?" or "How can I help?"
- Never promise to keep someone's suicidal feelings a secret. Be understanding, but explain that you may not be able to keep such a promise if you think the person's life is in danger. At that point, you have to get help.

- Offer reassurance that things will get better. When someone is suicidal, it seems as if nothing will make things better. Reassure the person that these feelings are temporary, and that with appropriate treatment, he or she will feel better about life again.

(Taken from the Mayo Clinic, [Suicide: What to do when someone is suicidal](#)).

Reference in this academic packet to any specific commercial product, process, or service does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring on behalf of Case Western Reserve School of Law.