

SUICIDE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



State Bar
of Georgia

Quick Facts

TITLE

Suicide Awareness Campaign

LENGTH

Long version: 24 minutes

Medium version: 11 minutes

Short version: 6 minutes

Lawyer Assistance Program PSA (Courtroom): 30 seconds

Lawyer Assistance Program PSA (Faces): 30 seconds

INTERVIEWEES

- ✦ Robin Frazer Clark
2012-13 President, State Bar of Georgia
- ✦ Charles B. Pekar Jr.
Chairperson, Lawyer Assistance Program Committee
- ✦ Javoyne Hicks White
Member, Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee
- ✦ George W. Martin Jr.
President, CorpCare Associates

Visit www.gabar.org or call the State Bar of Georgia at 404-527-8700 or 800-334-6865 for more information.

Summary

By Robin Frazer Clark

2012-13 State Bar of Georgia President

“In this video, you will meet two Georgia lawyers, both of whom have been personally touched by suicide. One is Javoyne Hicks White, whose husband, also a member of the State Bar of Georgia, committed suicide. Another is Chuck Pekor, who is the chair of the Bar’s Lawyer Assistance Program, whose son committed suicide. You will hear their moving personal stories. You will learn the warning signs of depression that might lead to suicide. You will learn what steps you should take when you think one of your friends or colleagues may be contemplating suicide. You will learn about the Bar’s Lawyer Assistance Program, which offers totally confidential help and treatment.

What is the State Bar’s obligation to try to prevent a member of the Bar from taking his or her own life? I believe that the State Bar has an obligation to use its resources to try to save a member’s life. And I believe we as members of this honorable profession have an obligation to help a friend, partner, colleague or office mate get the help they need if we suspect they may be considering taking their own life.

If the State Bar, with all of its resources can save a life, then that is what we have to do. And we will fight the good fight and keep the faith to do so. While watching, keep this in mind. My challenge to you: What are you prepared to do to save a life?”

Excerpted From the Video

CHARLES B. PEKOR JR.

Chairperson, Lawyer Assistance Program Committee

“All the statistics show that lawyers are six times more likely to commit suicide than members of the general population, which is just astounding. Suicide is literally the third leading cause of death in lawyers. That includes old age. Stop and think about that. That’s scary. For that reason, all lawyers need be a lot more aware of what’s going on with themselves emotionally and with their associates and friends.”

GEORGE W. MARTIN JR.

President, CorpCare Associates

“Depression is an emotional response to the burdens in their life. And it is a very natural response in all of our lives. All of us have been depressed at one time or another. With that in mind, the mistake is not to take some action. And not to take a step in seeking care that can help relieve that misery, that anger within, that state of depression within one’s life.

Things are not hopeless. People can find and regain the sense of hope in their life. To us, when we are successful in helping someone regain that hope in life, then we have saved a life. And that’s our purpose. And that’s our mission.”

JAVOYNE HICKS WHITE

Member, Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee

“Suicide is a permanent answer to a temporary condition. We need to do all we can to make people who are feeling

that depression to recognize that it is not a period; it is a comma, and there's more to the sentence.

We have not had the conversation. We have not told other lawyers that it is OK to feel depressed. Not just feel bad, to be in a state of depression. It is OK. There is nothing wrong with you. I think the lawyers at the State Bar being on the front end of having that conversation makes others go ahead and say, 'Let me get that help.' And if it can keep one person from walking down that road to suicide, it's worth what we're doing."

12 Warning Signs

The Dave Nee Foundation, based in New York and created in the wake of the 2005 suicide of Fordham University law student Dave Nee, lists these 12 signs you might notice in yourself or a friend that may give cause for concern and at least point to a need to talk with someone:

- 1.** Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, depressed mood, poor self-esteem or guilt
- 2.** Withdrawal from friends, family and activities that used to be fun
- 3.** Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
 - ❖ Are you sleeping all the time? Or having trouble falling asleep?
 - ❖ Are you gaining weight or never hungry?
- 4.** Anger, rage or craving for revenge
 - ❖ Sometimes people notice they are overreacting to criticism

5. Feeling tired or exhausted all of the time
6. Trouble concentrating, thinking, remembering or making decisions
 - ❖ Are you suddenly struggling in school or at work?
 - ❖ Sometimes academic or professional performance suffers and grades drop or work product worsens
7. Restless, irritable, agitated or anxious movements or behaviors
8. Regular crying
9. Neglect of personal care
 - ❖ Have you stopped caring about your appearance or stopped keeping up with your personal hygiene?
10. Reckless or impulsive behaviors
 - ❖ Are you drinking or using drugs excessively?
 - ❖ Are you behaving unsafely in other ways?
11. Persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems or chronic pain that do not respond to routine treatment
12. Thoughts about death or suicide

Dealing With Issues?

If you are dealing with one or more of these issues or know someone who is, please take advantage of the State Bar's confidential Lawyer Assistance Program hotline at 800-327-9631. Staffed by trained counselors 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the hotline is for anyone associated with

the legal profession—whether a lawyer, law student, support staff or family member—who has a personal problem that is causing you significant concern. LAP also offers up to six prepaid in-person counseling sessions with a licensed counselor per year. To help meet the needs of its members and ensure confidentiality, the Bar contracts the services of CorpCare Associates Inc. Employee Assistance Program, a Georgia-headquartered national counseling agency.

The State Bar of Georgia appreciates your support of this suicide prevention campaign. If you have any questions, please contact the State Bar of Georgia, 104 Marietta St. NW, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30303-2743; 404-527-8700 or 800-334-6865; www.gabar.org.

NEED HELP?

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800-327-9631

