

## Helping a Colleague in Recovery

*“I’ve known Jim for some years and know he’s in early recovery. I’d like to be supportive, but I don’t want to say the wrong thing. Maybe I should just say nothing and pretend like I don’t even know that he is in recovery. Anyway, I’m no expert in drug and alcohol recovery and maybe I should just leave these conversations to professionals or close friends and family. But, like me, Jim’s a lawyer, a professional colleague. I’d like to be supportive and maybe I could be of some help.”*

We are often perplexed when we want to support a colleague in recovery from problematic substance use because we don’t know how. There is no simple formula for what to say or how to say it. Every situation is different and, for every recommendation, there are usually exceptions. Let’s start, however, with some general principles that can be helpful to keep in mind.

- People in recovery, especially early recovery, differ in their degree of comfort in talking about it. Some may be very open about their recovery, while others may be more reticent. Certainly, if the person in recovery openly comments about it, they would probably appreciate an offer of support. If the person seems reluctant to talk about or disclose his or her recovery, use discretion. Offering support or assistance in this case, while still perhaps helpful, should be more measured and carefully timed to avoid embarrassment or triggering feelings of shame or guilt.
- People in early recovery are generally much more in need of the support of well-intended others than those in healthy long-term recovery. The latter group has generally managed to develop and take advantage of a supportive community. The former group probably has not. An exception is when the person in long-term recovery has relapsed and is now struggling to regain what is lost. This person is, practically speaking, not unlike the early recovery person; offers of support can be equally valuable to this person.
- You do not have to be a medical professional, professional therapist, or drug and alcohol expert to offer support to those in early recovery – any more than you need to be an expert in chronic medical conditions to be a supportive resource for someone struggling with those conditions.

Three fundamental tools for effectively helping a colleague in recovery include (1) nonjudgmental communication, (2) genuine caring, and (3) healthy boundaries.

*Continued on page 2*

### IN THIS ISSUE

**Helping a Colleague in Recovery • Page 1**

**The Career of a Lawyer: Creating Success at Each Stage • Page 4**

**Leveraging Your Leadership Style • Page 6**

**Lawyers in Transition Presentation Calendar • Page 8**



### OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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**NONJUDGMENTAL COMMUNICATION.** The primary purpose of offers of support is not to advise, persuade, or convince, but simply to convey concern and availability in a clear, simple, and sincere manner. Some examples:

*Heather, I really respect what you are doing in your recovery efforts. If there is anything I can do to help you, please let me know.*

*Bob, while I don't know much about recovery issues and certainly am no expert, please know that I am available to you if you ever want to have coffee and just talk.*

*Jerry, I've had my own challenges with substances in the past. If you ever want to just talk sometime about your recovery, please feel free to let me know. I know it can be difficult at times.*

Listening is an essential part of good communication. Often, we can be most helpful by just listening nonjudgmentally. The colleague in recovery has likely received an abundance of advice, both solicited and otherwise. If the person wants advice, it may be best to wait for him/her to ask for it. Effective listening requires truly focused attention and demonstrated interest in what is being said, the absence of distraction, acknowledgement of the message, awareness of the emotions that may be behind what is being said, reflective feedback (e.g., What I'm hearing you say is . . .), and appropriate questions (e.g., That sounds really challenging. How are you doing with that?). In this context, effective listening says: I care about how you are doing and am available for you.

**GENUINE CARING.** Offering to be of assistance can depend in part on the parties' prior relationship. If there has been no previous relationship or personal contact, it may be not only awkward but counterproductive to suddenly express interest in a colleague's well-being. However, there are two im-

portant exceptions. If the colleague in early recovery has few, if any, significant social connections (e.g., no immediate or extended family, living alone, few friends, and/or absence from 12-step or community support meetings), his/her success in recovery may be problematic. In this instance, it may be especially helpful to reach out to this colleague in a supportive way (e.g., *Nancy, I'm aware we don't know each other well, but I understand you are in early recovery. I know recovery can be challenging. I just wanted you to know that if I can ever be of any help or you would like to have coffee and talk sometime, please know that I'm available.*).

The second exception is when the person offering help is in longer-term recovery. This fact often transcends the lack of prior relationship. It represents a unique connection that can be especially helpful to someone in early recovery (e.g., *Bob, I know we don't know each other well, but I heard you are in early recovery. I'm in recovery, too, and have been for some years. If you'd like to have coffee sometime, I'd enjoy it very much. Or, maybe we could go to a meeting together. I know some really great meetings.*).

Regardless of prior relationship, sincerely wanting to help is essential to offering meaningful assistance. Often it means no more than being a supportive friend or someone to turn to so the common challenges of recovery can be lessened by simply having someone available to talk with.

**HEALTHY BOUNDARIES.** There are many things one can do to support a colleague in early recovery, including:

- Be available to just talk, listen, and be present (often this is the most valuable support that can be offered);
- Be supportive and encouraging;

## 31ST ANNUAL DINNER FOR LAWYERS AND JUDGES IN RECOVERY

Save the Date!

APRIL 26, 2019 • 6:00 P.M. TO 9:30 P.M.  
HOTEL MONACO, PORTLAND, OREGON

Watch for more information in the next issue of *inSight*. If you would like an email reminder about the dinner, email [jeanneu@oaap.org](mailto:jeanneu@oaap.org).

- Be appropriately curious and interested in what your colleague is experiencing in recovery;
- Have coffee with your colleague;
- Help with transportation (e.g., doctor appointment, support meeting);
- Include your colleague in healthy social events;
- Help your colleague reintegrate into work and social environments;
- Introduce the person to other colleagues;
- Introduce the person to others known to be in recovery;
- Be willing to share one's own recovery story;
- Be sensitive to the fact that your colleague may have shame, guilt, and/or embarrassment surrounding recovery issues;
- Learn about addiction and recovery issues; and
- Remind your colleague about the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP). OAAP attorney counselors provide confidential, voluntary, and free resources to all Oregon attorneys, judges, and law students. The OAAP makes available four recovery meetings every week to our legal community, both those new to recovery and those who have been in long-term recovery. Visit [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org) or call 503-226-1057.

A major challenge when helping a colleague in early recovery is seeking to be a helpful resource without being an unhealthy enabler. As a general rule, it is wiser to help your colleague resolve financial issues than to lend money; help find housing rather than offer your own house; help find legal resources rather than represent him/her; help think through employment and/or relationship difficulties rather than personally intervene. Again, there is no fixed formula. Each situation is different, and there can certainly be exceptions.

The personal and professional consequences of problematic substance use can be extensive; the person needing help may face major life challenges, especially in early recovery. For those in the legal community wanting to be supportive, the natural instinct as problem solvers and advocates can often be to put on our lawyer hats and jump into the fray. What your colleague in early recovery needs most is not unhealthy enabling, but rather to learn for oneself to deal with life's difficulties without resorting to

unhealthy substance use. This is exactly why having personal connection with others is so essential – to let your colleague know there are others who truly care and, within healthy boundaries, are present and available to help navigate life's challenges without drugs or alcohol.

Keep in mind these additional healthy boundary considerations.

- Use discretion in sharing with others the conversations and information learned from a colleague in recovery. The colleague's willingness to accept help generally presumes confidentiality in the relationship.
- The best way to find out how to help a colleague is to ask; get clarity about exactly what kind of help is being requested.
- Be clear about what assistance you are willing and prepared to provide. If the help sought is beyond your ability or, on reflection, would not be appropriate under the circumstances, respectfully decline.
- When you offer assistance to a colleague, it is important to follow through. For example, if you promise to call the person on a certain day, keep the promise. Dependability and reliability are essential to maintaining the helpful relationship.
- Remember that the ultimate responsibility for maintaining healthy recovery belongs to the recovering colleague. It is not the responsibility of others – spouses, friends, or colleagues. This is a fundamental tenet of recovery. Well-meaning others can be immensely valuable and make the process easier, but success or failure rests with the recovering person.

Healthy social connections are a vital part of successful recovery and help to lessen the stigma that is often attached to chronic substance use. And, importantly, social connections facilitate the transition from an unhealthy lifestyle to a healthy one. Well-intentioned offers to assist a colleague let that person know that others care and are available. With assistance based on nonjudgmental communication, genuine caring, and healthy boundaries, the colleague in early recovery is best positioned to achieve success in that person's recovery efforts.

DOUGLAS S. QUERIN, JD, LPC, CADC I  
OAAP ATTORNEY COUNSELOR

# The Career of a Lawyer: Creating Success at Each Stage

Finding one's niche in the legal profession can be challenging. It is common for lawyers to start their job search by seeking jobs they can fit themselves into rather than seeking a job that best fits them. Whether it is experience or foresight that guides us as lawyers in our job search, one element that is crucial to achieving career change or satisfaction is self-assessment. This year on November 2, 2018, the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program held its all-day career CLE entitled "The Career of a Lawyer: Creating Success at Each Stage." The focus was on using self-assessment to create success and satisfaction in one's legal career from the early stages through retirement.

Assistant Director and Attorney Counselor Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD, and Attorney Counselor Bryan Welch, JD, CADC I, framed the day by making a "case for self-assessment." They explained the need for considering our strengths as lawyers and becoming more organized in the manner we assess our values, psychological needs, communication style, skills, and job environment.

The morning segment also featured leadership coach and consultant Kirsten Meneghello, JD, PCC, who spoke on "Leveraging Your Leadership Strengths." Kirsten shared one self-assessment tool that can be used by lawyers to attain greater self-awareness, the Everything DiSC Workplace (see article, "Leveraging Your Leadership Style" on page 6). Although we do not always view ourselves as leaders, the nature of our legal work often calls us

to step into leadership roles in which our expertise, influence, and capacity to make decisions are relied on by those we serve. Kirsten informed us that we can leverage the characteristics we prioritize based on our DiSC style depending on the situation we face at work and achieve better outcomes. Using our strengths in this way allows us to excel as leaders in our workplace. Toward the end of the morning segment, the OAAP presented a diverse panel of attorneys: Nathan Morales, JD; Myah Kehoe, JD; and Jacqueline Alarcon, JD. These inspiring attorneys each shared their journey into their current careers. They discussed some of their challenges and successes during their five to ten years in the practice of law.

The afternoon segment featured career coach Susanne Aronowitz, JD, ACC, who guided us through "Successfully Navigating Lawyer Career Crossroads at Midlife." She explained that our path to achievement using time and effort is not always a linear process but can follow a chain of "s curves." We find "hacks" to accelerate our learning, and we develop new skills in advance of us "plateauing on [our] existing ones." The key is not to allow fear to constrain us so we can jump from one curve to the next. To help overcome our fear when confronted by crossroads in our careers, Susanne relayed five steps: (1) identify the focus of our curiosity; (2) identify areas of dissonance; (3) understand the context for our resonance/dissonance; (4) apply context to our situation; and (5) design an action plan. She also introduced us to the concept of "SCARF" (sta-

## CARING FOR SELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

The OAAP is offering a lunchtime, brown bag series that will cover effective ways of caring for yourself while taking care of others. The programs will be held on Mondays from noon to 1:00 p.m. at the World Trade Center, Mezzanine 5, 121 SW Salmon Street, Portland, Oregon 97204:

- Monday, January 28, 2019: Cultivating Lawyer Well-Being
- Monday, February 4, 2019: Mindful Parenting
- Monday, February 11, 2019: Unhealthy Behaviors and Substance Use in the Family
- Monday, February 18, 2019: Holiday (session will not be held)
- Monday, February 25, 2019: Aging Parents and Family Members

For more information, please contact Karen A. Neri, JD, at [karenn@oaap.org](mailto:karenn@oaap.org), or 503-226-1057, ext. 11.



tus, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness) as another way of addressing our stress response system. All five aspects of “SCARF” activate the primary reward system in our brain, and when any of these areas are threatened, we experience a threat to our life. When we are unable to make a decision or change, it is important to consider the aspect of “SCARF” involved, its impact, our “SCARF” goals, and how we may blend our interests with the areas of “SCARF” that are threatened so we can move to our next “s curve.”

Shari and Bryan subsequently discussed how we may progress toward retirement using William Bridges’ model of transition. This model is composed of three phases: first an ending; followed by an “in-between” period of exploration and often confusion or challenges for most; and a new beginning. Bryan also shared the utility of cultivating resilience to maintain well-being during this period.

The afternoon segment concluded with Attorney Counselor Douglas Querin, JD, LPC, CADC I, moderating a panel of seasoned attorneys who successfully retired from the practice of law: Scott Jonsson, JD; Nancie Potter, JD, LMFT; and Douglas Hagen, JD. These courageous attorneys shared their own journey toward retirement and how they continue to live with purpose and meaning after retirement.

From our guest speakers and panel members, we learned that it is possible to move beyond fear and uncertainty to change and satisfaction. For those of you still searching for a niche, *what steps might you take toward your own self-assessment?*

A huge thank you to all our speakers and the lawyers who participated at our career CLE. Our event would not have been possible without you.

**KAREN A. NERI, JD**  
OAAP ATTORNEY COUNSELOR

## OAAP/OWLS 12TH ANNUAL WOMEN’S WELLNESS RETREAT APRIL 5 & 6, 2019

Save the Date!

Oregon Women Lawyers and the OAAP will hold the 12th annual Women’s Wellness Retreat for lawyers and judges on April 5 and 6, 2019, at the Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton, Oregon. Watch for more information in the next *inSight*, or contact OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD, at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227, ext. 14, or at [sharig@oaap.org](mailto:sharig@oaap.org).

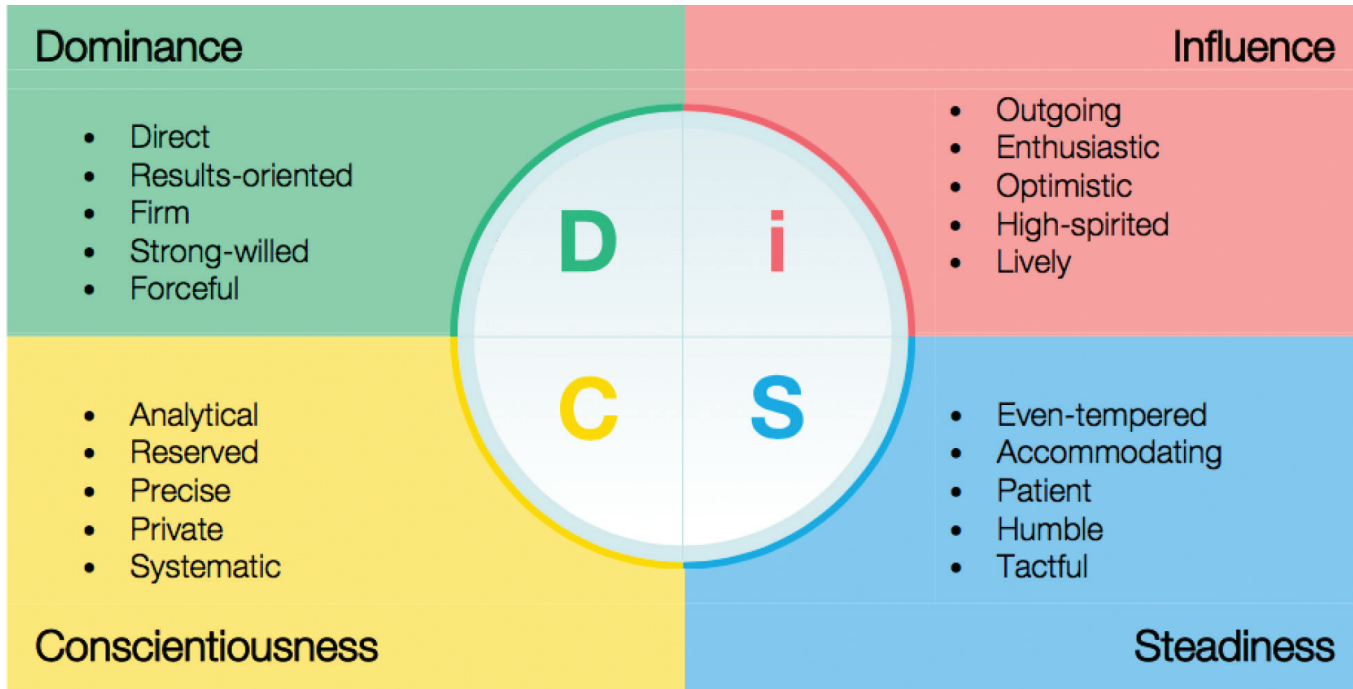
## PROGRESSING TOWARD RETIREMENT

In spring 2019, the OAAP will be facilitating a six-session group to assist lawyers preparing for retirement, examine ways to wind down, and find creative ways of planning for the next phase of their lives.

Participating attorneys can expect to look at important retirement-related issues and topics, including developing new perspectives on their lawyer self-identity, the art of letting go, visions for the future, managing emotions, and creating a self-care plan.

This six-session group will meet on six consecutive Thursdays, 3:00-4:15 p.m., starting in spring 2019. The workshop is free and confidential. Space is limited. The workshop will be facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselors Shari Gregory, LCSW, JD, and Douglas Querin, JD, LPC, CADC I.

To reserve a space or get additional information, please contact Doug (503-226-1057, ext.12 / [DouglasQ@oaap.org](mailto:DouglasQ@oaap.org)) or Shari (503-226-1057, ext. 14 / [ShariG@oaap.org](mailto:ShariG@oaap.org)).



## Leveraging Your Leadership Style

Where can we begin to gain insights into our own leadership style?

Assessments can be a tool to gain greater self-awareness. While there are many well-known and effective self-assessments, one that is very user-friendly is the Everything DiSC Workplace because it measures two dimensions of personality that have a tremendous impact on how we interact in the workplace. It's also easy to determine the DiSC styles of others once you understand the basic framework, unlike other assessments that are not so easy to apply in practice.

Ask yourself these questions to help you to determine your own DiSC style:

1. Are you more **fast-paced and outspoken** OR **cautious and reflective**?
2. Are you generally more **warm and accepting** of others and their ideas OR **questioning and skeptical** of them?

If you selected **fast-paced and outspoken AND questioning and skeptical**, you probably lead with a “D” or “**Dominance**” style and you focus on RESULTS.

If you selected **fast-paced and outspoken AND warm and accepting**, you probably lead with an

“i” or “**Influence**” style and you tend to prioritize ENTHUSIASM.

If you selected **cautious and reflective AND warm and accepting**, you probably lead with an “S” or “**Steadiness**” style and you like to provide SUPPORT.

If you selected **cautious and reflective AND questioning and skeptical**, you probably lead with a “C” or “**Conscientiousness**” style and you put an emphasis on ACCURACY.

See the chart above for more detail about the four main DiSC styles. Our DiSC style informs how we communicate with others, the level of detail we need, the pace at which we like to work, and if we focus on facts or feelings. Even though we are all a blend of the four styles, we tend to lean into some styles more heavily than others. Think about your primary style as your home base, but you are “free to move about the cabin,” as they say on airplanes, and shift into other styles as well.

Depending on the leadership activity you are engaged in, there is a time and place for all of these leadership styles. For example, when a team embarks on a project or a strategic planning process, that is the time for the leader to help the team brainstorm and stay open to possibility. It's important

## How DiSC Style Impacts Leadership

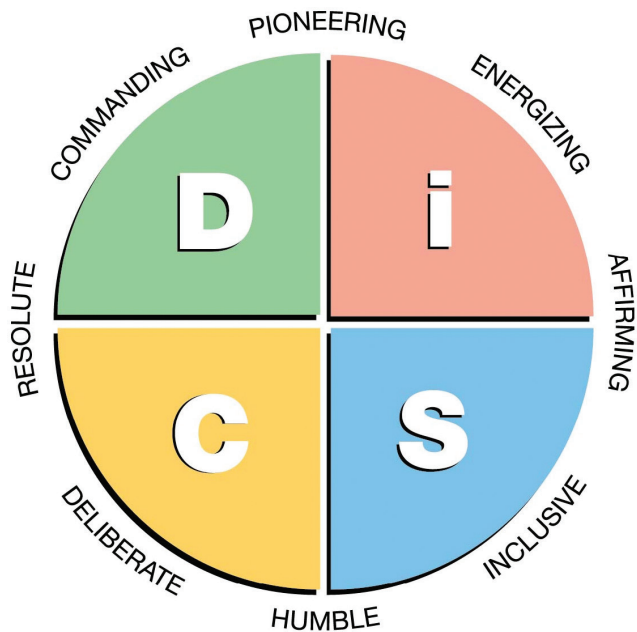
What does DiSC tell us about our leadership style? If you look at the DiSC diagram at right, you'll see eight words around the circumference. These are the eight priorities where leaders focus their energy. One priority or style is not better or preferable to another. Individuals with all DiSC styles can be effective leaders.

to focus on being “pioneering” and “energizing.” However, when the project shifts into the execution phase and all the details become important, having an “energizing” approach isn’t always warranted – or appreciated. Instead, being “deliberate” and “resolute,” to make sure that the details aren’t overlooked, is important.

A common DiSC style amongst lawyers is the “C” style that puts an emphasis on being “deliberate.” This style values accuracy and objectivity and likes focusing on details. Sometimes, people with a C style will get bogged down in analysis paralysis or not concede a minor point because they don’t want to appear wrong. A leader with this style will benefit from knowing when to focus on details versus when to prioritize the big picture. It’s also easy for this style to slip into micromanagement of others, so more frequent check-ins with employees and clearly defined deliverables and deadlines will help this leader to be successful. Making a point to show empathy and concern for others will also help to build the foundational trust needed for effective working relationships.

As you can see, each style of leadership has inherent strengths and some blind spots or areas for growth. There is no one leadership style that is inherently skilled in all areas. We begin the journey towards self-awareness when we understand what our priorities are, what leadership best practices come naturally in relation to those priorities, and what areas we can strengthen or shore up.

For further reading on leadership styles, please



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consult the book *The Eight Dimensions of Leadership* by Sugerman, Scullard, and Wilhelm.

### KIRSTEN MENEGHELLO, JD, PCC

*Kirsten Meneghello, JD, PCC, is a leadership coach and consultant and the founder of Illumination Coaching LLC. Kirsten coaches leaders and executives, facilitates team communication, and is a Certified Trainer for Everything DiSC and Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team. She can be contacted at Kirsten@IlluminationCoaching.com if you would like to learn about personalized assessments.*

## MINDFULNESS FOR STRESS REDUCTION

Beginning in April 2019, the OAAP will offer an eight-week workshop focusing on using mindfulness practices to transform our relationship with stress. All of the practices are practical, user-friendly, and can be easily adapted into day-to-day living. No meditation or mindfulness experience is required. For more information contact, Karen Neri at [karenn@oaap.org](mailto:karenn@oaap.org) or 503.226.1057 ext 11.



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### **FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK**

The OAAP holds a periodic six-session networking and support group for lawyers making job or career transitions called “Finding Meaningful Work.” The topics are designed to assist lawyers in creating and executing a personalized job search plan; developing a mission statement and elevator speech; learning and practicing networking skills; and honing job search skills. The group is facilitated by OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD. To participate, please contact Shari at 503-226-1057, ext. 14, or at sharig@oaap.org.

### **CAREER SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The OAAP attorney counselors can help you assess your career path and job and career opportunities. If you would like additional information about individual self-assessment, contact OAAP Attorney Counselor Shari R. Gregory, LCSW, JD, at 503-226-1057, ext. 14, or at sharig@oaap.org.

### **LAWYERS IN TRANSITION PRESENTATION CALENDAR**

A “Lawyers in Transition” guest speaker is featured quarterly on Thursdays at noon at the OAAP, 520 SW Yamhill, Suite 1050, Portland, Oregon 97204. These presentations are open for anyone to attend. See the calendar below for scheduled speakers.

TBD

JOEL  
CORCORAN

*Private practice to State  
Counsel and Constituent  
Services Director*

For current information on upcoming Lawyers in Transition speakers and topics, please visit the OAAP website at [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org) and click on Events.