

Diane Costigan Discusses Embedding a Well-Being Culture in Law Firms at *Thomson Reuters* Fireside Chat

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Diane Costigan, Winston & Strawn's Director of Coaching and Well-Being, participated in a fireside chat sponsored by *Thomson Reuters'* Transforming Women's Leadership in the Law Initiative. Diane was joined by Jami McKeon, Chair of Morgan Lewis, Krista Larson, Director of Employee Well-Being at Morgan Lewis, Robin Belleau, Director of Well-Being at Kirkland & Ellis, and Dr. Larry Richard, CEO of LawyerBrain.

The question the panelists were tasked with answering: How can law firms best embed attorney well-being into the culture of their firms?

The panelists agreed that the first step is recognizing that the nature of being an attorney—the hours, the stressors, and sometimes the isolation—can reinforce negative thinking. Jami stressed that loneliness is an epidemic in the United States and that social isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. As such, firms should connect lawyers and professional staff to each other and local communities through mentoring, affinity groups, service, and pro bono.

Larry highlighted the fact that the way lawyers are trained makes them more likely to experience negativity, as their job requires them to spot problems for clients (which has a side effect of “looking for the bad.”) As a result, focusing on the negative leads to negative thinking, increasing the chances of clinical depression and substance abuse. Panelists suggested that legal employers should help lawyers achieve a healthy outlook by training them to think differently, changing how the profession responds to stressors, giving people tools, and de-stigmatizing asking for help. They also recommended proactive tactics such as mindfulness, meditation, and breathing exercises to reduce stress.

Diane, who has a master's degree in organizational psychology, has contributed to Winston's well-being initiatives, including providing regular mindfulness and meditation workshops and trainings on the emotional freedom technique for attorneys and staff around the world. Diane has also worked with Winston's Human Resources and Talent teams to ensure that the whole firm has access to the Calm app to inspire and guide meditation and relaxation. Additionally, Diane has made a point to incorporate coaching and well-being into attorney business development plans.

“A business development strategy for attorneys that embodies a well-being perspective clarifies the expectations for bringing in business and provides comprehensive and holistic training and coaching support.

The latter is the most important. Developing business is one of the most common stressors for attorneys. Offering customized support based on each attorney's needs can help alleviate the stress," Daine said.

Read more about Diane's panel and the firm's commitment to well-being at Winston in this [Thomson Reuters article](#).

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