20 – 40 %

That’s the percentage of law students with signs of clinical depression.
It’s not just depression---all of these unhealthy ways of being are more prevalent in law students than in the general population.
This does not go away upon graduation. Lawyers suffer anxiety, hostility, and depression at rates 8 to 15 times that of the general population. In a study looking at 104 occupations – the rate of depression was highest among lawyers; we were 5th in incidence of suicide.
Interestingly, encouragingly----NO
Studies tracking folks from before law school and through show that incidence of mental/emotional ill health occurs at the same rate as within the general population UNTIL several months of law school. One study looking at depression, followed a group with an incidence of depression under 10% before law school, and found that incidence over 30% after 1st year
What happens during law school?

- Systemic lack of feedback
- Unbalanced life
  - Neglect health, social & spiritual needs
- Forced change: dreams, aspirations
- Debt, grades, job availability
On a day to day basis------

- Sleep deprivation
- Junk food
- Alcohol/drugs
- Little/no time w/ family friends
- No relaxing time w/ self

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What can you do?

Control what you can
Maintain human connections/outside interests
Think about your values; look for follow students who share; consider avenues of work that match
Seek out classmates who share things OTHER than your approach to law school (hopes, values, view of yourself in the world)
As much as you can concentrate on the work that you can get lost in/stop when you aren’t paying any attention
The bad news is that by and large pessimists are more successful at law school than optimists.
Pessimism can simply translate to realism.
HOWEVER if pessimism is a major organizing force for your whole life . . . .
Learned optimism—credibly dispute pessimistic thinking (ARGUE WITH YOURSELF)
Grades, litigation; winners/losers
Some folks thrive in this set up/most folks not so much
Though you’d never suspect reading cases as a first year—very little of the law is settled through litigation
Fewer than 1 in 5 lawyers
No tricks or magic
Basically, there’s nothing but work
Remember – working hard for you may look different than working hard for your classmates
Everyone is in the same boat
There are undoubtedly a FEW folks who have the peculiar sort of brain that makes “thinking like a lawyer” easier,
And folks who have worked with lawyers, and actually have experience that helps out
Vast majority NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY just as freaked out as you
Variety
Think about what you want
Where you want to live
What sort of demands you want on your time
Begin to think about kind of work you want to do
All will determine definition of success for YOU
Work at making these less true---even a little bit helps

- Sleep deprivation
- Junk food
- Alcohol/drugs
- Little/no time w/ family friends
- No relaxing time w/ self
In lots of studies, these are the traits of work situations that bring the most satisfaction and least stress.
Folks who have some measure of these in their work are generally HAPPY with their work.
Academic Enhancement Program (AEP)

The University of Georgia School of Law is dedicated to providing the tools students need as they undertake the journey of learning to study the law. While that journey is stimulating and fulfilling, it can also be challenging and daunting. As law students, no matter how qualified and prepared they are for the task, they must attempt to master the skills required.

The Academic Enhancement Program (AEP) was created to help students adapt to the unique demands of law school. Law school is a series of academic challenges combining writing, research, oral arguments, and oral examinations. AEP targets skills that cut across the curriculum, such as how to prepare for and manage classes, how to organize and write notes, how to read and understand cases, and how to successfully prepare for and take exams.

AEP also provides one-on-one counseling to students who would like more individualized assistance. Contact the Program Director, Dr. Alexandra Chatfield, for more information or to make an appointment.
Campus resources

- Univ. Health Center (docs, nutritionists, massage therapists)
- [www.uhs.uga.edu/stress](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/stress)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (706 542 2273) (therapy, relaxation and meditation groups)
- Ramsey Center (facilities, classes, trips)
State Bar of Georgia

- Lawyer Assistance Program
- Search: lap ga bar