

Attorney Unwellness and Ethical Issues
Serenity Central of New England
April 16, 2026, 3:00 p.m. ET, Jacksonville, VT
In-Person (up to 25) and Zoom (up to 100)

I. The Basics of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues - 15 mins.

Beth Wolfe, Ph.D, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Indian Harbor Beach, FL

After this session, participants will be aware of the prevalence of substance abuse and mental health issues among lawyers, warning signs of those issues, factors contributing to mental health and substance abuse disorders, and potential impacts of those disorders.

II. Rules of Professional Conduct Related to Performance and Attorney Wellness with Case Examples – 15 mins.

Bob Burke, Legal Trainer and Consultant, Longmont, CO

After this session, participants will be aware of Rules of Professional Conduct related to attorney wellness and performance and learn, from case examples, of the impact and consequences of mental health and substance abuse disorders.

III. Strategies for Combatting and Mitigating the Impacts of Mental Health Issues and Substance Abuse – 15 mins.

Beth Wolfe

After this session, participants will be aware of strategies for mitigating the impacts of mental health and substance abuse disorders and their effectiveness, including medication, therapy, social support, and lifestyles activities.

IV. State Bar Resources Related to Unwellness – 5 mins.

Bob Burke

V. Q and A – 10 mins.

VII. Optional 30-min. guided meditation

Bhante Rathana, Buddhist Monk; President, Serenity Central of New England

Faculty - Attorney Unwellness and Ethical Issues

BOB BURKE, JD is a member of the Florida Bar and has been involved, in one manner or another, in the delivery of criminal defense services to the poor for over 35 years. Bob spent four years as an Assistant State Appellate Public Defender in Miami, Florida. For 7 years, he held the position of Senior Attorney in the Defender Legal Services Division of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA). In that capacity, Bob designed and implemented death penalty, trial skills, appellate, sentencing, defender management, ethics and other training events for indigent defense practitioners. He also provided technical assistance to indigent defense professionals, produced publications related to capital defense and the delivery of criminal defense services, and served as a liaison to other organizations interested in criminal justice issues, including the ABA, the ACLU Capital Punishment Project, and the NACDL. Bob served for several years as the voluntary Co-Chair of the NLADA's Defender Trainers' Section.

From March 1998 till October 2015, with a year off for time in Chile and West Virginia, Bob worked with the Defender Services Office, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. For 13 years he worked in the Training Division, retiring as the Chief of that Division. The Division conducted death penalty, trial skills, sentencing skills, sentencing mitigation, ethics, and sentencing alternatives training. Bob is now semi-retired, living in Longmont, CO, and working as an indigent defense and training consultant throughout the U.S., including with the UNC School of Government's Indigent Defense Team. He has also trained in Bosnia, China, Chile, Myanmar, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Burundi for the American Bar Association and International Bridges to Justice. He has been involved in the design and implementation of over 500 legal training events.

BETH WOLFE, Ph.D, LMHC has been a Licensed Mental Health Counselor for 33 years. She is currently licensed in the state of Florida and is a "Qualified Supervisor." She received her doctorate in Counselor Education and master's degrees in "Community and Agency Counseling" from Ohio University and "Student Affairs Administration" from The Ohio State University. Beth began her counseling career working for a community agency providing out-patient and group counseling focused on "dually diagnosed patients" (individuals struggling with mental health and co-occurring addiction issues). She was the Clinical Director for a 90-day Residential program for women in Ohio and Clinical Director of a TANF- funded program for families in rural Georgia. During her career she provided clinical services for psychiatric patients in several emergency rooms, psychiatric inpatient settings and long-term intensive group therapy for dually diagnosed patients. She was an active treatment team member throughout her career, working with psychiatrists to assess patient progress. She also provides ongoing clinical supervision to intern level counselors. Beth has taught at Georgia University (Atlanta, Georgia) and Webster University (Melbourne, Florida). Throughout her career she has presented at the national, state and local levels. She currently maintains a private practice in Florida and provides tele-health counseling in Vermont.

BHANTE RATHANA - Since the age of 13, Buddhism has been the heart of my life and practice. I am Bhante Rathana, originally from Sri Lanka, now residing at Serenity Central of New England in Jacksonville, Vermont, where I teach meditation and guide others in spiritual development through the Buddha's noble teachings. Ordained as a novice monk in 1999 and receiving higher ordination in 2008, I mastered Sanskrit and Pali during my early monastic education. I earned a Bachelors degree in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Kelaniya in 2014. I moved to the United States in 2016, initially serving at a Buddhist temple in Los Angeles until 2021, then spending three years at Bhavana Society in West Virginia. In May 2024, I joined the community here at Serenity Central. Guided by lovingkindness and compassion, I am dedicated to sharing the Dhamma and cultivating peace within myself and others. Vermont's Green Mountains and natural beauty have become a profound source of inspiration in my practice and teaching.