



Federation of
Law Societies
of Canada



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
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Université de
Sherbrooke

Recommendations released from national study on wellness in the legal profession

**For Immediate Release
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Findings from a recent national study on wellness in the legal profession raised alarms regarding the mental health of Canadian legal professionals.

Recommendations from that study have now been published, calling on all stakeholders in the legal community – legal employers, law societies, bar associations, legal educators, the judiciary, and legal professionals themselves – to identify where they can take action to bring about meaningful change.

The report of phase one of *The National Study on the Health and Wellness Determinants of Legal Professionals in Canada* was undertaken by a research team at the Université de Sherbrooke led by Dr. Nathalie Cadieux, with funding from the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the Canadian Bar Association.

The study reported that significantly higher levels of psychological distress, depression, anxiety, burnout and suicidal ideation are experienced by legal professionals compared to the Canadian working population overall, and even greater proportions are reported by younger professionals and members of equity-seeking groups.

The detailed recommendations published today offer stakeholders concrete proposals touching on training and mentoring, work culture, raising awareness and breaking down taboos, wellness support resources, adopting alternative business models, promoting diversity, and committing to work-life balance.

"The Federation welcomes the recommendations from Dr. Cadieux and her research team" said Jill Perry, KC, President of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. "The release of the recommendations marks an important milestone in the ongoing work of the National Wellness Study. The Federation is carefully reviewing the recommendations and looks forward to being a partner as the legal profession charts a path towards concrete and transformative action".

"The data released a few weeks ago sheds a bright light on the heavy toll that our daily work takes on legal professionals," said Steeves Bujold, President of the Canadian Bar Association. "As leaders and professionals in Canada, I call on each one of us to examine the ways in which we conduct business so that together, we can create healthy work environments and remove the stigma around mental health. These recommendations will help guide our continued work in the years ahead, and I look forward to further dialogue on this important issue."

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Dr. Nathalie Cadieux, Ph.D, CRHA, Associate Professor and Principal Researcher with the Université de Sherbrooke's Business School, said "In the end, none of these conclusions are the result of a single action. Therefore, the key message from this report and the recommendations is that moving towards a healthy and sustainable practice of law in Canada will require small steps at all levels, from all stakeholders."

FAQs about the national wellness project have also been published.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the national association of the 14 law societies mandated by the provinces and territories to regulate Canada's 134,390 lawyers, Quebec's 4,200 notaries and Ontario's 10,000 licensed paralegals in the public interest.

The Canadian Bar Association is dedicated to support the rule of law and improvement in the law and the administration of justice. Some 37,000 lawyers, notaries in Quebec, law teachers and law students from across Canada are members.

The Université de Sherbrooke is a large public French-speaking institution in Quebec. Professor Nathalie Cadieux Ph.D, CRHA, is an Associate Professor and Principal Investigator at the Université de Sherbrooke's Business School within the Department of Management and Human Resources Management. The Research Ethics Committee for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Université de Sherbrooke, approved this research project and monitored it for compliance.

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