

No time to lose:

Negative impact on law student wellbeing may begin in year one

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Abstract

Preliminary results of a pilot study of law students suggest that, during the first year of law study, students may experience changes in thinking styles, stress levels, and satisfaction with life. Although further inquiry into the cause of law student distress is necessary, the authors consider certain assumptions underlying the legal curriculum—particularly the conception of a lawyer as adversarial, emotionally detached, and competitive—to be possible sources of the negative impact on student wellbeing. It is suggested that legal educators should re-examine their curricula, particularly their conception of what it means to be a lawyer, and think creatively about ways that law schools may encourage healthier approaches to the study of law.

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