

Snohomish County Bar Member Newsletter



Self-Care for Attorneys: Quick Tips for Maintaining Balance

1. Acknowledge the Pressure

Recognize that stress is a natural part of the job. Knowing when it's overwhelming can help you take proactive steps to manage it before it becomes unmanageable.

2. Set Boundaries

Protect your time by setting clear limits with clients and colleagues. Establish work hours, avoid after-hours communication, and delegate when possible to prevent burnout.

3. Prioritize Mental Health

Seek help when needed, whether through therapy, counseling, or peer support groups. Legal work can be tough, and maintaining mental health is essential for performance and well-being.

4. Engage in Physical Activity

Exercise helps relieve stress and improve focus. Whether it's a quick walk, yoga, or a workout, regular movement boosts both mental and physical health.

5. Practice Mindfulness

Incorporating mindfulness or meditation into your day can reduce anxiety and improve focus. Just a few minutes can help reset your mind during stressful moments.

6. Stay Connected with Loved Ones

Maintain strong personal relationships. Time spent with family and friends helps you recharge, offering emotional support and a break from work pressures.

7. Take Time Off

Don't neglect vacations or days off. Regular breaks from work allow you to recharge, reducing the risk of burnout and improving productivity when you return.

8. Engage in Professional Development

Continuing education can reignite passion for your work. Stay engaged by exploring new areas of law or attending relevant conferences to stay motivated and improve skills.

9. Sleep Well

Prioritize sleep by establishing a regular routine. Aim for 7-8 hours of rest each night to maintain cognitive function, emotional balance, and overall health.



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Bar Calendar

SCBA Board Meetings, 5:00 PM

May Board Meeting Date: 05/12

**The Link for the next Board
meeting will be provide in
next Monday's (5/5/25) Email
Blast**

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Bar News is published monthly by Snohomish County Bar Association, P.O. Box 5429, Everett, WA 98206.

Ads, articles, announcements and changes of address all go to service@snobar.org. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.

Kristin L. Timm

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Tyler Beck

★★★★★ 20 weeks ago

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Title: Responsive Parenting After Divorce: Tools for Clearer Communication and Stronger Co-Parenting

By Jorge Manzanera, Bilingual Co-Parenting Educator and Facilitator, Court-Approved Provider for Snohomish, Skagit, and Island Counties

Introduction: Family Lawyers as Connectors to Parenting Tools and Responsive Parenting

As professionals working within the legal system, family lawyers are often the first and only line of support for co-parents navigating post-divorce life. You don't have to mediate all their issues—but you can be the bridge to parenting resources that make a lasting difference.

We offer free monthly parenting classes and ongoing programs for families in transition. These include bilingual sessions, live Q&A with trained facilitators, and exercises that parents can practice together or separately.

Encouraging clients to take part in these offerings not only helps children—it also reduces the long-term burden on the courts by fostering cooperation instead of conflict. In the aftermath of a divorce, parenting can either become a battlefield or a shared mission. In our work supporting co-parents throughout Snohomish County and beyond, we've learned that a powerful shift occurs when families move from reactive to responsive parenting.

Responsive parenting means pausing before replying, focusing on the needs of the child, and seeking common ground with the other parent. It also means embracing tools for clear, consistent communication. This article offers practical strategies and tools that family law professionals can share with clients to help them reduce misunderstandings, improve cooperation, and refocus on what matters most: the well-being of their children.

1. Responsive Parenting after divorce: What It Means

Divorce doesn't end parenting—it transforms it. Responsive parenting after divorce is about creating an emotionally safe environment for children while maintaining a respectful, low-conflict relationship with the co-parent.

Key aspects include:

- Being proactive instead of reactive
- Maintaining consistency in routines and expectations
- Practicing emotional regulation and modeling calm
- Listening to understand, not to argue
- Using "I" statements instead of accusations

For example: "I feel concerned when the pick-up time changes without notice" instead of "You never show up on time!"

These skills not only benefit children but also create a healthier dynamic for both parents, reducing stress and improving cooperation over time.



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Teresa Koza has joined the Law Office of Neil R. Sarles as of May 1, 2025. Koza brings experience and insight to her practice, focusing on estate Planning, Indian wills, guardianships & conservatorships, probate & estate administration, and related litigation.



Ruth Apahidean joined the Law Office of Neil R. Sarles in March 2024. Apahidean's practice focuses on estate planning, probate & estate administration, and related matters. She is a Volunteer Attorney at the Neighborhood Legal Clinics: Elder Law Clinic.

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Attorney Opportunity

Rare business opportunity for an attorney with at least 3 years of experience practicing in Snohomish County to join a medium sized law firm as a full-time percentage partner. Recent retirements leaves our partnership with a significant need for a new partner to help serve our retired partners' existing clients. Overhead requirements for our percentage partners are paid from a percentage of your monthly receipts. The partnership also provides a full range of employment benefits for the partner and the partner's family. We have a substantial overflow of clients seeking representation from our firm, primarily in the areas of estate planning, probate, guardianship and real estate litigation. To get additional information about this opportunity, send a letter of interest with a description of your experience, your current areas of practice, and the annual revenues of your existing practice to:

Managing Partner
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SCBA Board of Trustees Open Seat

Due to a resignation, the Board of Trustees has one open seat.

To submit a nomination, we will need the following information:

Name

Bar Number

Area(s) of Practice

Statement of Interest

Current Resume

The nomination deadline is 5/12/25 at 5:00 pm. Please submit your nomination(s) to Cynthia Dasté at director@snobar.org.

The role will begin in June.

Announcing

New Attorney Swearing-In Ceremony

May 15, 2025 – 4:00 pm

Jury Assembly Room, 2nd Floor

Snohomish County Courthouse

Please RSVP to Cynthia Dasté at director@snobar.org



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Bill is an attorney at Mill Creek Law; has over 40 years of experience as a trial lawyer; is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; has completed 40 hours of intensive training in mediation through the Academy; and has been successfully mediating Family Law, Civil, Commercial and Estate cases for over 25 years.



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2. Communication Techniques That Reduce Conflict

One of the most frequent sources of conflict post-divorce is unclear or emotionally charged communication. It can either inflame tensions or provide clarity and structure. We recommend the BIFF Method for written communication:

- Brief: Keep messages concise to avoid triggering defensiveness.
- Informative: Focus on the facts, not feelings or accusations.
- Friendly: Use a polite tone, even if you're frustrated.
- Firm: End with a clear statement of what you're doing or need.

Example:

Hi, just confirming the soccer game this Saturday is at 3 PM at Monroe Park. I'll take care of snacks this time. Please let me know by Thursday if you'll be picking up after.

This kind of message can reduce the risk of misunderstanding and show a cooperative tone. Co-parents who adopt this practice often report fewer disputes and better outcomes for their kids.

3. Sharing Resources: Focusing on the Children

Children thrive when both parents stay informed and involved in their daily lives. This means sharing information, not withholding it to maintain control or punish the other parent. Tools like Google Calendar, shared homework trackers, and parenting apps like OurFamilyWizard or TalkingParents can facilitate this cooperation.

Encourage co-parents to share:

- School updates and report cards
- Medical appointments
- Extracurricular activity schedules
- Behavioral concerns or changes
- Photos, videos, and milestones

Pro Tip: Frame all communication around the child's experience. Instead of "I'm entitled to know," say, "Our child benefits when we're both in the loop."

4. Encouraging Multimedia Communication When Helpful

For parents who struggle with writing, or who interpret written tone negatively, audio and video messages can offer more clarity and humanity. A warm tone of voice or a smile can go a long way toward diffusing tension. We encourage co-parents to use short, recorded messages when:

- Sharing praise or milestones (e.g., "She got a gold star in math today!")
- Providing calm updates after difficult events (e.g., illness, behavioral incident)
- Expressing appreciation ("Thanks for helping with the school project")



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Please scan the QR Code or click the link below to sign up!

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Sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Cynthia at director@snohar.org for more information.





NLD Mentorship Program

SCBA and the New Lawyers Division are excited to announce our new mentorship program. In this program, we will pair experienced attorneys with attorneys newer to the practice of law. We already have several attorneys signed up as mentees and are looking for attorneys to serve as mentors.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please email Gregory at service@snobar.org. If you have additional questions about the program, please reach out to Alison Sheets at alison@sheetlaw.co.



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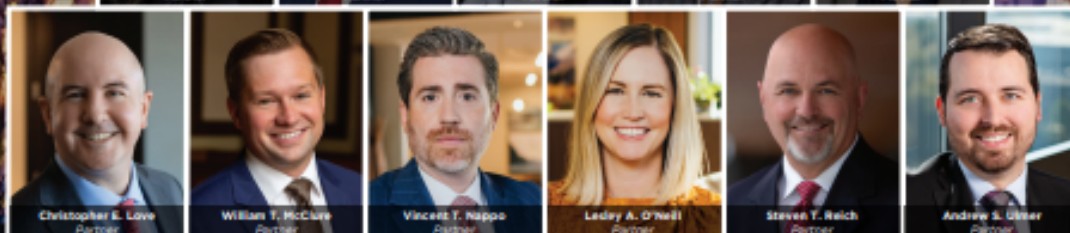
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Washington Lawyers Assisting Lawyers (WALAL) is available for free, confidential lawyer-to-lawyer peer support for lawyers, judges, and law students. www.walal.org; info@walal.org; 1-800-812-3812.

What is WALAL? It is a new, free, and confidential nonprofit assistance program with an all-volunteer/all-lawyer board and a trained state-wide peer counseling Corps with lived experience or interest in the array of substance use and mental and physical health challenges faced by those in the legal profession, from law school, to practice, and in retirement.

That's the good news. The bad news is how prevalent these challenges are in the legal profession. As WALAL Founder and President Leslie Hagin of Seattle explains:

"We are here to directly serve, on a lawyer-to-lawyer, peer support basis, the more than 1/3 of the legal profession struggling with substance use or other mental health challenges. These issues within the legal profession have been documented for decades and are well-known to be acute. Their prevalence far surpasses the general U.S. population as well as any other profession. Unfortunately, the needs for peer support, outreach, and destigmatization of these challenges within our legal community have remained unmet. WALAL promotes wellness in the legal profession by proactively stepping into the breach to fill this void."

Lawyers and judges of a certain age will remember Andy Benjamin as the developer and director of the WSBA Lawyers Assistance Program from its inception in the mid-80's until the 90's. WALAL is delighted that Andy (more formally G. Andrew H. Benjamin, JD, PhD, ABPP UW Clinical Professor of Psychology and Affiliate Professor of Law) will continue to serve the legal profession as WALAL's Director of Peer Counselor Training and Consultation, and also its Peer Intake Coordinator.

Questions? Concerns? Interested? You can contact WALAL at www.walal.org, info@walal.org, and 1-800-812-3812.

These tools should be used sparingly and respectfully, but when used well, they help humanize co-parents and remind both parties that they are part of the same team, even if they're no longer partners.

5. When Communication Breaks Down: Resetting the Conversation

Sometimes, despite best efforts, co-parents fall into old patterns of blame, sarcasm, or avoidance. This is where structured resets can help. We teach a simple technique called the Three R's:

- Recognize when communication is becoming toxic
- Reset by taking a break, breathing, and re-centering on the child's needs
- Rephrase before replying — try again with less emotion, more clarity

Example Reset Message:

Let's try again. I think we both want what's best for Jake, and I'd like to keep our tone respectful so we can work through this.

Helping parents learn how to self-correct builds resilience and models healthy behavior for their children.

Conclusion: A Shared Future, Not a Shared Past

Responsive parenting is not about perfect harmony, it's about purposeful effort. It means recognizing that while a marriage may end, the job of parenting continues, and how parents communicate determines whether children experience peace or turmoil.

By focusing on clarity, compassion, and co-responsibility, parents can model strength and stability. And with the support of legal professionals who guide them to the right tools, more families in Snohomish County can thrive beyond the breakup.

Let's work together to make that the norm.

Contact Tio Jorge and the Successful Co-Parenting Team:

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Thank
you!



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