

Substance Misuse in the Legal Profession 2025

Recorded: Friday, 22 August 2025 | 60 minutes

Program

60 mins **Alcohol, Gambling and Substance Misuse in the Legal Profession**

Substance misuse within the legal profession is a growing concern, both in Australia and internationally, with research indicating that lawyers experience disproportionately high rates of alcohol and drug-related issues compared to the general population. The intense pressures of legal work—long hours, high stakes, and a culture of perfectionism—often begin in law school and continue throughout legal careers, contributing to elevated stress levels and mental health challenges. These factors can lead to the misuse of alcohol, prescription medications, and illicit substances as coping mechanisms. Despite the prevalence of these issues, stigma and fear of reputational damage frequently prevent legal professionals from seeking help, creating barriers to early intervention and support. The lack of targeted Australian research and structured support systems further compounds the problem, underscoring the urgent need for open dialogue, education, and proactive wellbeing initiatives within the legal sector.

Listen to Stephanie Cowie, Education Governance and Regulation Lead discuss issues surrounding alcohol, gambling and substance misuse with Dr Jacob Sorbello to gain further insights into this area.

Presenters:

Dr Jacob Sorbello, Clinical Psychologist, Sorbello Psychology

Stephanie Cowie, Education Governance and Regulation Lead



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Dr Jacob Sorbello

B. Psych Science (Hons), B Criminology, Clin Psych PhD.

Dr Jacob is a Brisbane-based (Australia) clinical psychologist with several years of clinical experience working across the lifespan. Dr Jacob obtained his Clinical Psychology PhD in 2022 from Griffith University and has clinical research experience in nuanced substance use behaviours. Dr Jacob currently works at Hamilton Psychology Clinic in private practice for individual therapy and Belmont Private Hospital offering group therapy.

Stephanie Cowie

GAICD, GDipEd, LLB, BA, M.Ed (Work & Learning), Cert. (Gov. & Risk)

Stephanie has over ten years' experience working as a lawyer in-house and in private practice in Australia and the UK. She has also worked in education for five years following the completion of a Masters of Education (Work and Learning Studies) and a Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teaching. Stephanie is an Accredited Mental Health First Aid Instructor and is passionate about wellbeing, developing lawyers, legal education and promoting positive workplace cultures.
