

April 2025

From the Desks of Your D.C. Bar Practice Management Advisors



## How Lawyers Can Stay Focused, With or Without an ADHD Diagnosis

By Kaitlin E. McGee

If you're a lawyer who struggles to start tasks, stay focused, or manage an overwhelming to-do list, you're not alone. These challenges are common and not just for those with ADHD.

In a recent [Lunch and Learn program](#) with the D.C. Bar's [Lawyer Assistance Program](#), we talked about how the ADHD brain works, and, more importantly, what helps it work better. The insights and strategies shared aren't limited to those with a formal diagnosis. They're useful for anyone trying to get things done in a high-pressure, distraction-filled world.

### Understand How Your Brain Works

ADHD isn't about a lack of attention. It's a challenge with regulating attention. The ADHD brain doesn't prioritize based on importance—it responds to what's interesting, urgent, or emotionally engaging. That's why it can be easy to hyper-focus on one thing and struggle to start another.

Even if you don't have ADHD, understanding your own patterns (when you work best, what derails you, what drains your energy, etc.) can help you build better systems.

### **Use Structure to Support Focus**

Some tasks, like billing, writing, and organizing, are just harder to start. Here are a few strategies that can help:

- **Body Doubling:** Work quietly alongside someone, virtually or in person, to increase focus and accountability.
- **Time Boxing / Pomodoro Technique:** Set a timer for 25 minutes to do one task, then take a short break. Repeat as needed.
- **Task Adjacency:** Start with an easier or related task to get yourself going.
- **Leave Breadcrumbs:** When stopping mid-task, leave a quick note or cue so you can easily pick it back up later.

### **Simplify Your Systems**

Many lawyers benefit from visual cues and clear labeling, but the key is keeping systems simple. Complexity can lead to avoidance or burnout.

Try rewriting your to-do list each morning, limiting your daily goals to just one to three tasks, or using external reminders that work for you. Don't chase perfection, just aim for something functional and flexible.

### **Progress, Not Perfection**

Perfectionism often gets in the way of productivity. One of the most important shifts we discussed in the program was learning to let go of systems that no longer work. You're not failing, you're adapting.

The goal is to stay organized longer and bounce back faster when things fall apart.

### **Don't Skip the Basics**

Good sleep, regular meals, and movement are foundational to cognitive function. You can't focus well if your nervous system is in survival mode. Taking care of your physical needs is part of getting things done.

### **Need Support?**

The [Lawyer Assistance Program](#) offers free, confidential services to D.C. Bar members, including a monthly ADHD support group and one-on-one consultations.

Contact the D.C. Bar's [Lawyer Assistance Program](#) by emailing [lap@dcbar.org](mailto:lap@dcbar.org).

For more resources, visit our [website](#).

### AI for Law Firms

Have you used AI for marketing your law firm? If so, please email me at [kmcgee@dcbar.org](mailto:kmcgee@dcbar.org) and share your experience and favorite AI tools.

Here is guidance on [Attorneys' Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Client Matters](#), Legal Ethics Opinion 388.

If you are using AI in your firm, let us know how at [PMAS@dcbar.org](mailto:PMAS@dcbar.org).

A banner for LSP Data Solutions. On the left, a blue-tinted image of three people in business attire looking at a laptop. Overlaid on the left is a green square frame containing the text "Trusted Experts. Tailored Solutions." in white and green. To the right of the image is the "LSP" logo in white, with "DATA SOLUTIONS" in green below it. Further right, on a white background, is the text "Digital Forensics and eDiscovery services that fit your needs." in blue. Below this text is a green button with the white text "LEARN MORE".

Trusted Experts.  
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**LSP**  
DATA SOLUTIONS

Digital Forensics and  
eDiscovery services  
that fit your needs.

LEARN MORE

## Basic Training & Beyond

If you're starting a firm, [Basic Training & Beyond](#) is a great jumping-off point. Day One will teach you the essentials to get your firm off the ground, and Day Two will help you grow and manage your firm.

**Here is how to start, grow and manage a law firm in a large, urban market.**

Our monthly [Basic Training & Beyond](#) is set for **April 1 & 22, 2025**, from **9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** We will meet in person in the Williamson Conference Room on the third floor of Bar Headquarters. The program is presented monthly for members and law firm staff.

*This program has been presented more than three hundred times for more than 4,000 lawyers over the last fifteen years, and many have launched and are now operating small firms. We stay connected with many small firms, and what we learn informs the content for this program.*

## Managing Money

### Managing Money

Our next in-person session of Managing Money is set for **June 16, 2025**, from **9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

We also present Managing Money on request for a law firm or organization.

[Register for an upcoming session or schedule a session for your firm here.](#)



## Lunch and Learn

PMAS will also be collaborating with the [Law Practice Management Community](#) to bring you the following [Lunch and Learn programs](#):

- **May 8, 2025** – AI in Action: ChatGPT & Descript for Law Firm Marketing

*An LPM & PMAS Production*

Register for any or all [here](#).

District of Columbia  
JUDICIAL & BAR CONFERENCE

**The Future of the Profession:**  
Shaping the Next Generation of Legal Practice

April 25, 2025



## Successful Small Firm Course

### **Are you interested in a business incubator approach to growing your law firm?**

Consider working with us on an individual basis. We now offer the [Successful Small Firm Practice Course](#) in a series of one-on-one sessions on Zoom.

The course serves as an incubator for solo attorneys and small firms and helps them work through their business and marketing plans with support, feedback, and guidance. Lawyers focus on the type of firm they want to create and work through the course at their own pace with built-in accountability for achieving their business goals. If you are interested in this approach to creating and growing a law firm, contact [PMAS@dcbar.org](mailto:PMAS@dcbar.org).

### **Resources**

Our [Video Resource Library](#) offers free webinars on a variety of practice management topics. New programs are added regularly. Our full archive of recordings and materials is [here](#). If you have an idea for a program, let us know at: [lunchandlearn@dcbar.org](mailto:lunchandlearn@dcbar.org).

**Missed any of these recent sessions? You can [access the recordings and materials anytime](#).**

Here's a glimpse of some recent sessions:

- **Cyber Liability Exposures for Law Firms**
- **Interested in Adding Law Bono Services to Your Practice?** with DC Refers
- **Recruiting and Hiring 101: How to Get Started When You Need to Hire Help**

If you are interested in a practice management assessment, [click here](#).

– Kaitlin & Dan

**In other news . . .**

For more tips on transitioning out of public service, read our [latest article in Duly Noted](#).

For the recent results of the groundbreaking study on attorney mental health and well-being, [click here](#).

Read the [LAP Winter Newsletter](#).

For more information on PMAS programs, [click here](#).

**CLE, Communities Events & Pro Bono:**

*Continuing Legal Education* programs are [here](#).

*Communities Events* are [here](#).

*Pro Bono Center* training programs are scheduled [here](#).

As we return to D.C. Bar headquarters for meetings and events, everyone entering the building will need to comply with the [COVID Guidelines](#).

**Our Practice Management Advisors are:**

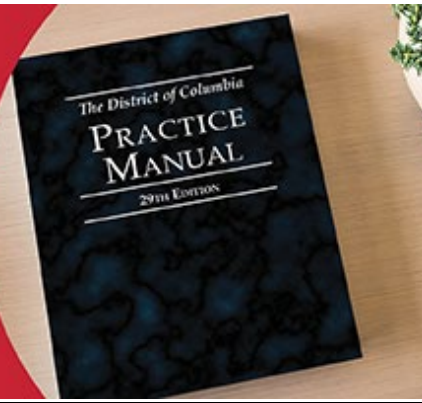
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Practice Management Advisors have a free and confidential relationship with D.C. Bar members pursuant to Rule 1.6(j) of the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct.

## District of Columbia Practice Manual

Every D.C. Lawyer's Must-Have Resource



This two-volume title, typically priced at \$495, is being offered to subscribers of this newsletter at a discounted rate of \$450. To obtain the discount code, please reach out to [communitiesregistration@dcbar.org](mailto:communitiesregistration@dcbar.org).



Serving our members so they can serve the community

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