

Pro Bono Counsel Co-Authors *Law360* Article Addressing Trauma-Informed Approaches for Attorneys

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Stinson LLP Pro Bono Counsel [Katie Cronin](#) co-authored an article for *Law360* with Blackbird DC President Katharine Manning, "Trauma-Informed Legal Approaches For Pro Bono Attorneys." The article is a result of the partnership between Stinson's pro bono and well-being departments' focus on supporting its attorneys working with trauma survivors. As part of this initiative, Manning presented to the firm during Pro Bono Week about trauma-informed practices and advice for protecting oneself from secondary trauma and guarding against compassion fatigue.

In the article, Cronin and Manning emphasize the importance of trauma-informed interviewing techniques to create a safe and supportive environment for clients.

"The greater the sense of calm and safety you instill in your client, the more effective they'll be at communicating, recalling information and listening to your words. Trauma-informed interviewing can mitigate the effects of trauma and avoid retraumatizing survivors," they said. Key principles of trauma-informed interviewing include building trust; being clear; giving choices; listening and acknowledging; ending the meeting well; and managing your response.

They also address compassion fatigue, offering attorneys and law firms strategies for managing compassion fatigue and maintaining well-being and emphasize the importance of self-care and compassion, especially when working with pro bono clients.

"The legal profession can be stressful. Working with clients who have experienced trauma, and dealing with trauma of our own, can compound that stress," they said. "Understanding trauma's impact on clients allows us to better represent them, minimize adding stress and distress to an already difficult experience, as well

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as protect ourselves from compassion fatigue and burnout so we can continue to engage in meaningful pro bono work over the course of our careers.”

Cronin spearheads Stinson’s pro bono program and works with firm leadership and the firm’s Pro Bono Committee to implement and grow its pro bono initiatives and strategy. The firm’s pro bono program champions a variety of issues, including matters involving immigration and international human rights, representation of nonprofits, and post-conviction and expungement work. As signatory to the Pro Bono Institute’s Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge[®], the firm strives to donate at least 3% of total billable hours to pro bono every year.

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