

Volume 3 | Issue 6 | April 23, 2026

Alcohol Awareness

In this Issue

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. This month encourages conversations around alcohol use and abuse, particularly when children are involved. According to the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#), 27.1 million (roughly 1 in 10) people aged 18 or older struggle with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). Further, there are an estimated 19 million children who live with at least one parent who struggles with AUD. When one or more parents struggle with AUD, the impacts on a family can include marital conflict (something we have already explored extensively in relation to its effects on children), inconsistent boundaries, instability, increased alcohol use in spouses and children, anxiety, depression, and in some cases, physical and/or emotional abuse. However, the conversation does not end there.

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**ALCOHOL
AWARENESS
MONTH**



Recovery is hard but it is not impossible, and it is certainly worth it. The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) operates the [Family Recovery Project](#), a resource that provides research and support for families in recovery. A hard truth they outline is that early recovery – that is, the stage where abstinence begins to stabilize and can last as long as three to five years until ongoing recovery begins – is still incredibly tumultuous for children as their parent(s) must put a lot of focus on their own recovery.



“Early recovery was a self-obsessed time for us. Our children had a ‘recovering Dad’ and a ‘recovering Mom’, but who was taking care of them? No one. I will be forever grateful for sobriety, but I have a profound regret that we abandoned our children in the service of our own recoveries.”

– A father in the Family Recovery Project

Recovery is an ongoing process that requires a community of support that cares not only for those in active recovery but also their families. A study conducted by [Dr. Rudolf H. Moos](#) and [Dr. Andrew G. Billings](#) at Stanford University’s Social Ecology Laboratory found that “children of relapsed alcoholics evidenced more symptoms of emotional disturbance than did the control children. In contrast, the children of recovered alcoholics were functioning as well as the control children.” When support is provided, there is great hope for the functioning and well-being of children and family systems.



Understanding AUD and speaking respectfully about it is a major first step to help families and children manage what is happening around them and minimize the shame they may feel. NACoA provides [a helpful resource](#) for equipping parents (whether they are the parent struggling with AUD or not) to support their children and family system. Creating a space for children to talk about their parent(s)’s alcohol use is an important step for families to take because it can increase the feelings of trust and safety that all children need. [The American Association for Marriage and](#)

[Family Therapy \(AAMFT\)](#) states, “One of the most important messages children can hear is that the alcoholism is not their fault.” This message is necessary to create a safe space for children. The month of April is an important reminder to have these difficult conversations and take important steps towards sobriety for the sake of our children and family systems.

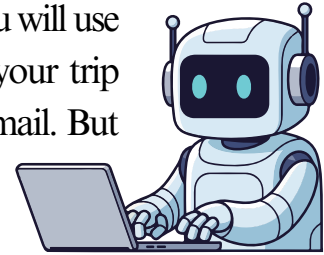
Soberlink Virtual Lunch and Learn

To conclude Alcohol Awareness Month, we are facilitating another FREE virtual Lunch and Learn, this time with a presentation from Soberlink, a valuable resource for families where one or both parents struggle with AUD. See the flyer at the end of the newsletter for more info.

The Use of AI in Family Law Cases

Best Practices Spotlight

In today's technological landscape, there is no longer a question of *if* you will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) but *when*. Perhaps ChatGPT has become your trip planner or nutritionist. Maybe it helped you draft that hard-to-send email. But can it be used in the practice of law? What about Family law? If so, to what extent?

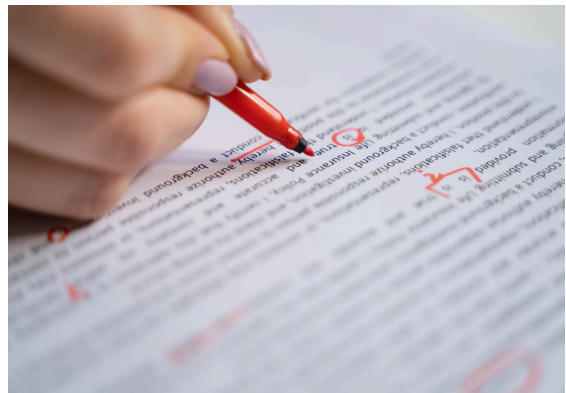


There are many resources that discuss the ethical and practical implications of the use of AI in the practice of family law. We want to highlight benefits of the technology along with some ethical considerations.

**AFFORDABLE
REP!**

In an [article published by the American Bar Association \(ABA\)](#), author Hans Guntren presents that family law attorneys could especially benefit from using AI. Because family law, specifically divorce cases, involves a breadth of ever-changing information (e.g., pay stubs, ongoing communications, property and business valuations), AI can be used to simplify administrative work. Automated calendaring, document collection, timely responses to common questions, and categorizing urgent issues from routine ones are all examples Guntren provides for the use of AI in family law cases. His emphasis is on providing more affordable representation to clients while implementing processes that protect attorneys from burnout.

Further, AI can analyze complex property divisions, assist in calculating child or spousal support, track cases, and automate billing, all suggestions provided by [Jillian Duggan-Herd for the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers \(AAML\)](#). However, Duggan-Herd cautions of the ethical and professional obligation of attorneys who use AI to assist with legal work. Major concerns include applying critical judgement to all AI produced documents (review of such products is non-negotiable), confidentiality when inputting client information into a generative AI system such as ChatGPT, and review of all citations and legal arguments.



“This is where the true challenge lies: maintaining our role as the directors of technology rather than allowing ourselves to become passive recipients of its output.” — Jillican Duggan-Herd

From streamlining meticulous processes to increasing organization, AI can be a great asset to family law practitioners. However, it is also necessary to remain cautious and diligent when reviewing AI output.

Administrative Professional’s Day

Thank you, Ronnell!

Wednesday, April 22nd was Administrative Professional’s Day which was just an excuse for the Fourth Circuit to celebrate and thank Ms. Ronnell Griffin for all of the work she does for our office and the families of Davidson County. She is organized, consistent, and handles her duties (and then some) with care and expertise. Thank you, Ronnell!



Reminder to Vote!

May 5th, 2026, is Election Day!



As many of you are already aware, state and county primary elections are coming up! May 5th is the official election day, however, early voting for Davidson County primaries began on April 15th and will run through the 30th. To view the early voting schedule and locations, click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code below:



This voting cycle places several judiciary and clerk positions on the ballot, so it is especially important for the Nashville Bar to vote. To view the ballot, click on this link: [BALLOT](#) or scan the QR code:



Something Exciting is Coming...



We have something very exciting in the works that you won't want to miss it.

Stay tuned for more information on this special project. Here's a hint: it is a continuation of our collaboration with mental health professionals and Trevecca's Master of Marriage and Family Therapy Program.

Save the Date:

New Attorney Orientation

On Thursday, June 25, we will host a New Attorney Orientation for recent bar exam takers, law school graduates, and rising final-year law students. This event will provide an opportunity to become familiar with the Fourth Circuit Court and the Courthouse, as well as to connect with both new and experienced attorneys. More information coming soon.

Calendar

May

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		5				
				21		
		19	20	21	22	
	25	26				

5/5: Election Day!

5/21: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Judge Williams' Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

5/19–21, 26: ID Divorces by Waiver ONLY

5/22: No Motion Docket, Office Open

5/25: Office Closed for Memorial Day Holiday

June

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		9	10	11		
				18	19	
				25		

6/9 – 6/11: Irreconcilable Differences Divorce Docket via Appearance Waiver ONLY

6/18: Judge Williams' Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in Person or Via Zoom

Judge Williams' Dismissal Docket at 2:30 p.m.

6/19: Office Closed for Juneteenth Holiday

6/25: New Attorney Orientation

For a complete view of our regularly scheduled dockets and available Court dates, please see the calendar page on our website by clicking here: [Website Calendar](#) or by scanning the QR code:



Share!



[@JudgeStephanieJWilliams](#)



[Judge Stephanie J. Williams](#)

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who may be of interest. You may also email RebekahLHaralson@jnsnashville.gov to be added to the mailing list.

Additionally, you may view this and all previous newsletters on our website by clicking this link: [Updates and Announcements](#) or by scanning the QR code:





Virtual Lunch & Learn

April 30, 2026, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Chris Beck, VP Business Development - Family Law



1 Hour CLE Credit: Alcohol Monitoring Overview for Family Law Professionals



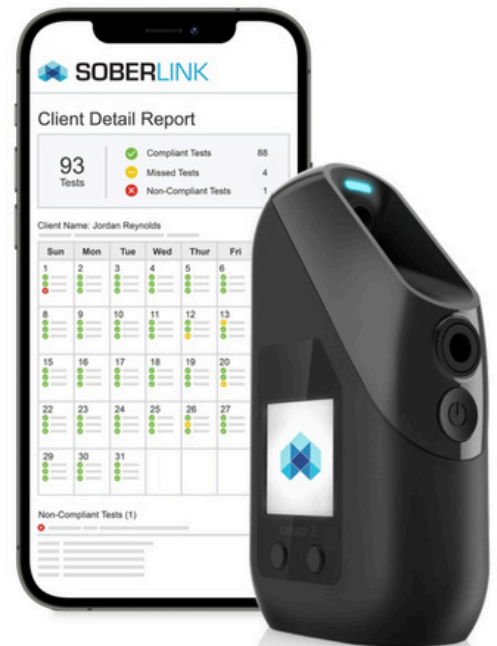
Moderated by Judge Stephanie J. Williams

This CLE **provides** Family Law Professionals with **practical knowledge** to **manage cases** involving one or both **parents accused of misusing alcohol while parenting**. The session explores Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), how it affects parenting plans, and its role in custody decisions and child safety.

Attendees will gain insight into **best practices for alcohol monitoring** and learn **how to implement Soberlink** technology in ways that **support both parenting goals and child safety**, while reducing the risk of misuse. We'll explore how Soberlink supports courts, attorneys, and families by going "Beyond the BAC" to provide much more than just breathalyzer results.

Key Topics Covered

- Best practices and protocols for alcohol monitoring
- Overview of the Soberlink device and technology
- Review of Soberlink's court-admissible reporting
- Understanding parenting plan levels (Level 1 and Level 2)
- Best practices for testing schedules
- Importance of tamper detection in alcohol monitoring
- Family Assistance Program to help clients facing financial hardship
- Professional resources to help you save time



REGISTER FOR THE CLE

