

The Unspoken Rules of Communication for Florida Attorney's

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Abstract

This project investigates the communication related issues faced by Floridian attorneys. The researcher sampled 1,111 disciplinary sanctions of the Florida Bar from February 2016 to October 2021. Of this total, 570 were selected and analyzed for criteria and were then categorized into into 5 categories; miscommunication with parties, financial mismanagement, confidentiality, advertising, and sexual misconduct. Miscommunication with parties and financial mismanagement made up 91.5% of all sanctions ordered, with the most being suspension sanctions. The researcher included recommendations to help attorneys in Florida avoid communication mistakes and limitations of the study with the hopes of lessening the amount of sanctions in the coming years.

Introduction

Being an attorney does not solely constitute having a law degree. It also implies being a skilled communicator, something that seems so simple yet forgotten. In order to practice law, one must attend an American Bar Association accredited law school, partake in rigorous examinations, and obtain a license (Florida Board of Bar Examiners - Admission Requirements). In addition to these initial requirements, once a license is obtained, an attorney should familiarize themselves with a plethora of rules and regulations set forth by the Bar. These rules include, how to communicate with clients and other court officials or judicial officers, when breaking confidentiality is necessary, how to manage financials in one's trust account, and how to advertise one's law office. Failure to follow the rules and regulations outlined by the Bar can result in disciplinary sanctions being ordered, which appear on an attorney's permanent Bar record. In this paper,

the researcher will explore how Florida attorneys negatively implicate themselves due to their communication mishaps.

Literature Review

Requirements to Practice Law in the State of Florida

Admission to practice in the field of law varies by country. In the United States, persons seeking admission must qualify in three factors; educational, technical competence, and proof of character and fitness. The educational component is fulfilled by attending an American Bar Association (A.B.A.) accredited law school that will result in a Jurisprudence Degree (J.D.), have already received a J.D., or have completed an alternative method of education qualification set forth by the A.B.A. (Florida Board of Bar Examiners - Admission Requirements). Depending on where someone attends law school, may or may not help the applicant apply to the State Bar in which they would be practicing, as there is essentially no oversight of legal education or practice of law by the federal government (Acharya, 2021).

Technical competence is proven via what is known as the Bar Examination, which for Florida, consists of three sections taken over the course of two days- the General Florida Bar Exam, Multi-state Bar Exam (MBE), and an additional portion for Multi-State Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) (Florida Board of Bar Examiners - Admission Requirements). The General Florida Bar Exam is made up of two parts. Part A is compiled with a mixture of essay questions and 100 multiple choice questions designed to test applicants knowledge of both Florida and General law (Exam Information, Test Specifications, Study Guide, and Virtual Tour 2021). Part B is the MBE, which consists of 200 questions that are weighted at 50%. Candidates that achieve a score of 136/200 on Part B are considered to have passed the MBE section of the

General Florida Bar (Exam Information, Test Specifications, Study Guide, and Virtual Tour 2021).

Lastly, applicants to the Florida Bar must provide proof of character and fitness in order for admission. Applicants must be over 18, have a clean background check, and have civil rights restored if previously convicted of a felony (Florida Board of Bar Examiners - Admission Requirements). If an applicant is refused admission prior, they must wait two years from the date on the order to reapply for Bar admission. Those who have been disbarred must wait five years and those who resigned pending disciplinary actions otherwise known as disciplinary revocation, must wait 3 years before applying again. According to Rule 2-13.25 Satisfaction of Court Ordered Restitution and Disciplinary Costs,

“A person who was disbarred, resigned with pending disciplinary proceedings, or was suspended in Florida or from a foreign jurisdiction will not be eligible to apply except on proof of satisfaction in full of any restitution and disciplinary costs. Restitution consists of the following: (a) restitution imposed by a court in its order of disbarment, resignation, or suspension; (b) restitution ordered by a court in any underlying criminal case that resulted in the disbarment, resignation, or suspension; and; (c) restitution owed for the payment of any claims by the Client’s Security Fund in Florida or by a similar bar fund in a foreign jurisdiction” (2-13.25 Satisfaction of Court-Ordered Restitution and Disciplinary Costs 2020).

Ethics

The MPRE covers a wide variety of Model Rules of Professional Conduct and Model Code of Judicial Conduct articulated in the A.B.A. (Preparing for the MPRE). Material on the

MPRE is based on the law governing attorneys and judges discipline and conduct (Preparing for the MPRE). In Florida, a minimum passing score of 80 is required on an individual's MPRE for admission into the Florida Bar (Jurisdiction Information 2021).

Professional Misconduct and Discipline

The A.B.A. defines professional misconduct as, violating the Rules of Professional Conduct, committing criminal acts that reflect poorly on the lawyer's honest, trustworthiness, or fitness in other respects, engaging in deceitful, dishonest, or fraudulent acts, and engaging in conduct that the lawyer should know or does know to be harassment or discrimination in conduct related to the law (Rule 8.4: Misconduct - Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession).

Once the Bar receives notice or has suspicions an attorney is engaging in misconduct, it is up to the Bar's judgement to proceed. The Bar acts as judge, jury, and prosecution (Rachels, 2021). The Bar treats disciplinary trials as "quasi-judicial administrative proceedings" essentially meaning, many of the allowances civilians are granted in regard to trial by jury, rules of evidence, and confronting one's accuser do not apply (Burgoon, 2021). Evidence normally thrown out in a traditional courtroom setting such as hearsay, is admissible when investigating an attorney for misconduct (Burgoon, 2021). The purpose of these proceedings is to protect the public from potential harm due to an attorney's misconduct, safeguarding the legal system's integrity, achieving justice, and educating others (Burgoon, 2021). While also attempting to diminish the amount of attorney misconduct all together by setting examples of those not abiding by the Bar's rules and regulations (Scott, 2008). Discipline in regard to attorney misconduct strictly means a sanction has been issued, and that sanction is now apart of the permanent public Bar disciplinary record of the attorney in question (Burgoon, 2021).

Miscommunication with Parties

The Florida Bar has distinct guidelines attorneys must adhere to regarding communication practices with judges, other attorneys, clients, persons represented by counsel, and those not represented by counsel. A man in Palm Beach, FL was permanently disbarred after making multiple unfounded, unethical, and disparaging attacks towards numerous different judges (September 15, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). Making those remarks about judicial officials is a violation of Rule 8.2 (a), which states,

“(a) A lawyer shall not make a statement that the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge, adjudicatory officer or public legal officer, or of a candidate for election or appointment to judicial or legal office.” (Rule 8.2: Judicial & Legal Officials - Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession).

There is no distinct rule about communications with another attorney, however Rule 8.2 (a) mentions “public legal officer” (Rule 8.2: Judicial & Legal Officials - Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession), which can be applied based on context. One of the most important communications an attorney should understand is communication with one’s client. A Miami attorney was suspended for six months after receiving payments from multiple clients and failing to provide legal services and failing to maintain communication with clients (May 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). The Model Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.4 - Communications Client-Lawyer Relationship states,

“(a) A lawyer shall: (1) promptly inform the client of any decision or circumstance with respect to which the clients informed consent, as defined in Rule 1.0(e), is required by

these Rules; (2) reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished; (3) keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter; (4) promptly comply with reasonable requests for information; and (5) consult with the client about any relevant limitation on the lawyer's conduct when the lawyer knows that the client expects assistance not permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law. (b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonable necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation."

(Rule 1.4: Communications - Client-Lawyer Relationship).

When it comes to communicating with someone who is not your client, specifically persons represented by counsel, the A.B.A strictly prohibits communication within the scope of subject for representation, unless the consent of the other lawyer has been given, or if communication is mandated by a court order or law (Rule 4.2: Communication with Person Represented by Counsel). If contact is allowed by the other attorney, a copy must be provided including the subject matter and pertinent information discussed (Radson, 2011). This is also known as a "no contact rule", to prevent an attorney from swaying a represented person to act in a way that differs from their interests (Radson, 2011). Once the attorney-client relationship is established, this rule applies as established in Florida Ethics Opinion 09-1 (Radson, 2011). It is not always clear cut whether a person is already represented, Rule 4-4.2 defines "knows" as actual knowledge of the fact in question (Radson, 2011). If an attorney is unsure whether the other person has representation, they should inquire whether the person is represented regarding the subject, and may be required to identify themselves as a lawyer representing a client (Radson, 2011). They may not

give legal advice and make all reasonable attempts to ensure the unrepresented person understands the attorney's role in the matter (Rule 4.3: Dealing with Unrepresented Person).

Advertisement

Advertising is a form of communication and attorneys must be mindful that their advertisements are not deceptive or misleading. Rule 4-7.13 Deceptive and Inherently Misleading Advertisements, states,

“A lawyer may not engage in deceptive or inherently misleading advertising. (a) Deceptive and Inherently Misleading Advertisements. An advertisement is deceptive or inherently misleading if it: (1) contains a material statement that is factually or legally inaccurate; (2) omits information that is necessary to prevent the information supplied from being misleading; or (3) implies the existence of a material nonexistent fact.” (West's F.S.A. Bar Rule 4-7.13).

After previously not complying with the Bar's advisement to remove an advertisement in April 2021, a Jacksonville, FL attorney was publicly reprimanded following a late July 2021 order regarding an advertising campaign that labeled him a “Pitbull Lawyer” in multiple aspects (September 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). The negative connotation associated with the “pitbull” canine breed seems to be deceptive to potential clients without further explanation. Since the attorney has since removed this campaign following the court order, a public reprimand was the Bar's decision in regard to this inquiry. Another attorney in Coral Gables, FL was suspended for 15 days in March 2021, after failing to supervise an assistant in the writing and sending of a letter that broke several advertising rules, to a person represented by counsel, without opposing counsel's permission (May 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

Financial Mismanagement

The Florida Bar has safeguards in place to protect clients from clearly excessive fees by their chosen attorney. Rule 4-1.5 (a) states

“(1)...a lawyer of ordinary prudence would be left with a definite and firm conviction that the fee or the cost exceeds a reasonable fee or cost for services provided to such a degree as to constitute clear overreaching or and unconscionable demand by the attorney; or (2) the fee or cost is sought or secured by the attorney by means or intentional misrepresentation or fraud upon the client, a non client party, or any court, as to either entitlement to, or amount of, the fee.” (West's F.S.A. Bar Rule 4-1.5).

An attorney must also maintain a trust account for funds and property of clients or third parties in the possession of the attorney, separate from their own property, in a federally insured bank, credit union, or savings and loan association within the state the attorney’s office is located or elsewhere if the client or third party has given consent (West's F.S.A. Bar Rule 5-1.1(a)(1)). In August 2021, a Merritt Island, FL attorney was disbarred after engaging in fraudulent activities causing an overdraft in his law office trust account containing client funds, and abandoning clients without taking any safeguards to protect them after closing his law practice abruptly (August 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). When an overdraft or shortage occurs in a trust account, Rule 5-1.1.1 (B) requires

“... The lawyer must notify the bar's lawyer regulation department immediately of the shortage in the lawyer's trust account, the cause of the shortage, and the amount of the replenishment of the trust account by the lawyer.” (West's F.S.A. Bar Rule 5-1.1).

Another attorney from Miami, FL was emergency suspended in June 2021 for misappropriating funds from his trust account and lied in sworn testimony and written responses to the Florida Bar regarding the funds (August 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). While a lawyer in Trinity, FL was suspended for one year after mishandling client's money and failing to replenish those funds in a timely manner (August 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions). When the Florida Bar inquired about the shortage, the lawyer did not respond in adequate time (August 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

The Florida Bar v. Bratton, 413 So. 2d 754 (1982) set the precedent for ensuring a client's money would be protected from an attorney paying themselves to settle the account of a clients for services rendered (The Florida Bar v. Bratton, 1982). An attorney practicing in Florida and Tennessee was disbarred for intentionally withholding settlement funds to settle clients accounts and no sending sounds until the client filed a disciplinary complaint against the attorney (August 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

Confidentiality

The attorney-client relationship is the most sacred relationship within the field of law. The Florida Bar Preamble begins,

“In all professional functions a lawyer should be competent, prompt, and diligent. A lawyer should maintain communication with a client concerning the representation. A lawyer should keep in confidence information relating to representation of a client except so far as disclosure is required or permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or by law.” (Fla. Bar Code Prof. Resp. Preamble).

Breaking confidentiality is grounds for disbarment unless under extreme circumstances, which include a client planning to commit, actively committing, or aiding someone who is plan-

ning committing a crime or fraud, a communication relevant to an issue between parties who claim through the same deceased client, a communication is relevant to an issue of breach of duty by the attorney to the client or by the client to the attorney, stemming from the attorney-client relationship, if the client told their attorney that they were planning on giving false testimony or evidence, a communication relevant to an issue concerning competence of a client regarding documents that the attorney is attesting witness too, a communication relevant to a matter of common interest between two or more clients or their successors if the attorney was retained or consulted in common when offered in a civil action to previously mentioned parties, and finally, communications on behalf of the Department of Revenue in regard to child support enforcement (Fla. Stat. Ann. § 90.502 (West)). In Kneale v. Williams, 30 So. 2d 284 (Fla. 1947), the court held that another extreme circumstances where privilege would not apply would include transactions constituting the making of a false claim or the perpetration of a fraud as it is outside the scope of professional duty (Kneale v. Williams, 1947). Once the attorney-client relationship begins, anything communicated between the parties shall be considered privileged, or confidential information.

While the world constantly evolves, the laws governing society must also change alongside it. In 2012, the ABA made modest changes to some of the Rules of Professional Conduct to include technological advances in regard to confidentiality and technology (Cooper, 2012). A Deland, FL attorney was publicly reprimanded in September 2021 for disparaging opposing counsel and firm, and also accidentally sending an email containing attorney client privileged communication (September 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

Sexual Misconduct

The most important relationship an attorney will have is with their client. The Florida Bar prohibits an attorney from engaging in sexual conduct with a client in all accounts.

“An attorney shall not, (i) engage in sexual conduct with a client or a representative of a client that exploits or adversely affects the interests of the client or the attorney-client relationship” (Fla. Bar Code Prof. Resp. 4-8.4(i)).

In 2017, the Florida Bar filed a complaint against Anthony Blackburn, which was referred to a referee (The Florida Bar v. Blackburn, 2018). The referee recommended Blackburn be found guilty of violating Bar Rules 3-4.4 (Misconduct), 4-8.4(a)(a lawyer shall not violate or attempt to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct), (b)(a lawyer shall not commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects) and (i). The Florida Supreme Court then held that disbarment was warranted for Blackburn’s sexual misconduct while visiting two female clients in prison and engaging in sexual activities with them that Blackburn initiated (The Florida Bar v. Blackburn, 2018). Similarly, in March 2021, a New York attorney was disbarred in FL for soliciting prostitution and recording encounters to make an adult entertainment film for his own entertainment and/or financial interest (March 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

The Florida Bar also advises against sexual conduct after the attorney-client relationship ends. It is presumed to exploit the interests of both attorney and client unless a preponderance of evidence is proven stating the sexual relationship did not do such (Fla. Bar Code Prof. Resp. 4-8.4(a)). In Deland, a Florida attorney was suspended for one year starting in late September 2021, for engaging in a consensual relationship and bearing a child with a former client, and

proceeding to use information obtained during representation against the former client during paternity action (September 1, 2021 Disciplinary Actions).

Methodology

The researcher analyzed the Florida Bar Disciplinary Actions newsletters released at the end of each month. This study included disciplinary sanctions ordered in other states to applicable Florida Bar members. Total and complete sample size included 1,111 disciplinary sanctions from February 2016 to October 2021. This time period was chosen because it contained the only recent records available to the researcher. Of these 1,111 a section of 570 met criteria selected by the researcher as they included some aspect of communication due to being a verbal/nonverbal interaction between the attorney and another party or having to deal with actions pertaining to the actual or potential attorney client relationship. Sanctions recognized within the sample size are: disbarment, suspension, public reprimand, and disciplinary revocation. Categories in which a sanction can be classified are miscommunication with parties, advertising, financial mismanagement, sexual misconduct, and confidentiality.

The researcher coded the sanction into these five categories; miscommunication with parties, financial mismanagement, sexual misconduct, confidentiality, and advertising. Miscommunication with parties was coded by sanctions that included an array of communication mishaps. For example abandonment of practice, making disparaging comments about another judicial official or court officer, and failing to communicate with the client. Factors that did not apply were sanctions due to an attorney not notifying clients, opposing counsel, or other pertinent parties about a suspension or other order and an attorney failing or refusing to cooperate or respond in a timely manner to inquires.

Financial mismanagement was coded by sanctions that included an array of actions pertaining to low financial literacy including, misappropriation and commingling of funds, making payments to oneself without the clients consent, and misusing client funds held in trust. Factors that did not apply were sanctions regarding inadequate trust fund records and sanctions that were due to an employee's mismanagement of funds that the attorney had no knowledge of or benefit from.

Sexual misconduct was included in the results due to being an ethical violation of the attorney client relationship as stated in 4-8.4. It was coded by sanctions that included sexual and romantic relationships with a former or current client that violated Rule 4-8.4. Sanctions not included in the coding were cases of possession of child porn, sexual abuse of a minor, or any sexual conduct that was not with a former or current client.

Confidentiality was coded by sanctions that explicitly stated a breach of confidentiality was found. Advertisement was coded by sanctions with the term advertisement in the order.

Results

Sanctions from February 2016 to October 2021 that fit criteria totaled 51% of the complete sample size. 2019 accounted for 20.8% of the total sanctions, with 64.7% being categorized as miscommunication with parties for that year. 2018 was the smallest percentage of sanctions from a full year, making up 14.9% of the total sanctions. Miscommunication with parties accounted for 59% of all sanctions. Financial mismanagement accounted for 32% of sanctions. Confidentiality was the smallest category of sanctions totaling >1%. Sanctions that could fit into multiple classes (multi class) made up 5% of all sanctions. The average sanctions ordered per year was 95 sanctions.

Table 1: Total Sanctions

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Miscommunication with Parties	56	41	49	77	66	48	337
Financial Mismanagement	33	42	26	38	34	12	185
Advertising	0	0	1	0	0	4	5
Confidentiality	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Sexual Misconduct	2	2	2	0	1	3	10
Multi-class	3	5	6	3	8	5	30
Total	94	90	85	119	110	72	570

Disbarments from February 2016 to October 2021 totaled 123, 21.5% of all sanctions.

Miscommunication with parties accounted for 60% of all disbarments, with a high of 18.6% being in 2019. Financial mismanagement accounted for 27.6% of all disbarments, with a high of 8% being in 2016. There were 0 disbarment sanctions given due to confidentiality. Multi-class accounted for 8% of the total disbarments. Disbarments averaged 21 per year.

Table 2: Total Disbarments

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Miscommunication with Parties	10	10	12	23	11	8	74
Financial Mismanagement	11	7	4	4	5	3	34
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Confidentiality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual Misconduct	1	0	2	0	0	1	4
Multi-class	2	2	2	1	1	2	10
Total	24	19	20	28	17	15	123

Suspensions from February 2016 to October 2021 totaled 238. Miscommunication with parties accounted for 61.7% of all suspensions, with a high in 2020 accounting for 15.5% overall. 2020 also accounted for 22.6% of all suspensions throughout all categories. Advertising was the smallest category making up >1% of suspensions for the year. Financial mismanagement made up 30.6% of all suspensions, with a high in 2017 making up 6% of total suspensions. Suspensions average 40 per year.

Table 3: Total Suspensions

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Miscommunication with Parties	19	14	22	28	37	27	147
Financial Mismanagement	13	15	13	13	12	7	73
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Confidentiality	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Sexual Misconduct	1	1	0	0	1	2	5
Multi-class	0	2	2	1	3	0	8
Total	33	32	38	43	54	38	238

Public reprimands made up 18.5% of all sanctions from February 2016 to October 2021. Miscommunication with parties accounted for 80% of all public reprimands, with a high being in 2016 accounting for 20.7%. There were 0 sanctions ordered due to a breach in confidentiality. Financial mismanagement made up 14% of sanctions ordered. Public reprimand sanctions averaged 18 per year.

Table 4: Total Public Reprimands

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Miscommunication with Parties	22	15	13	13	12	10	85
Financial Mismanagement	3	5	1	3	2	1	15
Advertising	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Confidentiality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual Misconduct	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Multi-class	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Total	25	21	15	16	16	13	106

Disciplinary revocations accounted for 18% of the total sanctions ordered from February 2016 to October 2021. Financial mismanagement made up 61% of all disciplinary revocations, with the bulk being in 2019 making up 17% of all disciplinary revocations. Miscommunication with parties made up 30% of sanctions ordered. Multi-class made up the remaining 8.7%. Sanctions for advertising, confidentiality, and sexual misconduct were 0 in regard to disciplinary revocations. The average amount of disciplinary revocations ordered per year was 17.

Table 5: Total Disciplinary Revocations

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Miscommunication with Parties	5	2	2	13	6	3	31
Financial Mismanagement	6	15	8	18	15	1	63
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Confidentiality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multi-class	1	1	2	1	2	2	9
Total	12	18	12	32	23	8	103

Discussion

The researcher coded each disciplinary sanction into its own table and into an absolute total table. Within these results, it was found that miscommunication with parties accounted for the majority of all sanctions ordered, with financial mismanagement coming in at a close second. While sanctions pertaining to advertising, confidentiality, and sexual misconduct were minimal, they were not obsolete. There is still much that can be done to improve these numbers with the hope that sanctions lessen in years to come.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends more training within communication of all parties an attorney might interact with. Due to miscommunication with parties making up more than 64% of all sanctions (see Table 1), attorneys could benefit from continuing legal education courses designed to refresh themselves with the rules and regulations of the A.B.A. and Florida Bar set forth for communication, proper training for Zoom and other online platform usage and the associated etiquette for such, an annual review of relevant Florida rules of professional conduct to ensure compliance. Larger corporations could hire a communication consultant to review documents prior to being sent to clients or other parties. Financial mismanagement was another category that could benefit from refresher courses of practicing attorneys. While 32% (see Table 1) was due to financial mismanagement, hiring an outside financial accounting firm to conduct reviews and an annual review of the relevant Florida rules related to financial recording and trust accounts could possibly lessen the amount of disciplinary revocations (see Table 5) and suspensions (see Table 3). Between the two, disciplinary revocation and suspensions make up 73.5% of

the total financial mismanagement sanctions ordered from February 2016 to October 2021. With these two recommendations, the amount of sanctions ordered per year could decrease if implemented within the Florida Bar Association.

Limitations

With every research project there are limitations. A limitation for this project related to the year 2021, being that the year had not completed by the time this study was conducted in October. Additionally, the years analyzed also were during the global pandemic which saw a cultural shift of workers to online or remote work. This may have impacted the number of sanctions.

Conclusion

The ABA and Florida Bar implement rules and regulations for attorneys to follow in order to protect the integrity of the profession. The purpose of this study was to determine the negative implications that Florida attorneys deal with due to mistakes in their communication practices, including financial mismanagement, advertising, confidentiality, and sexual misconduct. The researcher found that 91.5% of all disciplinary sanctions ordered were due to miscommunication with parties and financial mismanagement. With the recommendations given, the researcher hopes that the sanctions ordered will lessen within the Florida Bar Association in the coming years.

To conclude, from February 2016 to October 2021 there was 1,111 disciplinary sanctions ordered with 570 being due to improper communication practices. There is a clear problem with attorneys in Florida needing more education and training to maintain the laws integrity of the legal profession. However, there are many practices that attorneys can implement that will help

improve communication within the discipline. Without integrity of attorneys, the legal standards set forth would not be upheld and the legal system would lose credibility with society.

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