



THE
LAY COUNSELOR
ACADEMY

THE LAY COUNSELOR ACADEMY

There are millions of people who need mental health care and not enough mental health professionals to meet the need. The brunt of this shortage is borne by people of color, who have the least access to high quality mental health care.

The time is now, to embrace and invest in a Lay Counseling workforce.



HOW DOES LAY COUNSELING FIT INTO MY ORGANIZATION?

Many health and social care organizations add Lay Counseling to an employees' current scope of work.

This means a health coach, case manager, community health worker, care coordinator, addiction counselor, victim advocate or other similar positions, are able then to also provide mental health counseling, adding incredible value to the time they spend with patients or clients. Some organizations have employees engage in full time Lay Counseling, for their entire job. This will have the biggest impact on how many patients or clients can be served, lowering wait lists for BH services, and cutting down wait times for first BH appointments.



THE COURSE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS:

- Person Centered Counseling
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Motivational Interviewing
- Humanistic Psychology
- Positive Psychology

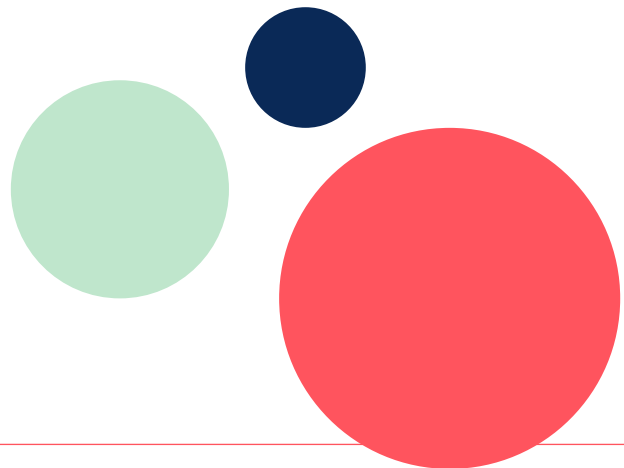


COURSE DESIGN:

Course Length	Live Sessions	Homework
7 Week Course	Two, 3-hour live sessions a week	3 hours each week
14 Week Course	One 3-hour live session a week	1.5 hours each week

Participants also engage in counseling as clients for up to 5 sessions

The course is designed to mirror the counseling relationship, for optimal social learning. To this end, the course is strength-based, relational and empathic. The course is also experiential, with at least 30% of live sessions and 50% of homework spent practicing. We know participants have busy work and home lives, and our goal is for each session to be a rich learning experience and for participants to leave with more energy than they came in with!



LAY COUNSELOR ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS SAY



I want you to know that this has been the greatest gift I have ever been given professionally or with any class I have ever taken. It is changing everything for me....I have a rejuvenation in everything I am doing and a much greater purpose in all aspects of my life.

I have incorporated counseling strategies into not only my professional life but personal. This has enhanced my communication with family members, friends, and coworkers for the better. I feel more rounded as a person.

My communication skills have improved immensely, in reaching the clients!

I feel more confident in allowing people to feel what they feel and not try to change it. Like yes, I do want them to be happier, but sometimes people aren't and it's okay that they aren't, it's not really my job to change that. I feel more confident in using counseling with someone to help them find their own solutions, instead of me telling them what to do or give unsolicited suggestions or advice.

I feel that I am more present for my clients, able to focus more on them as opposed to solutions. I'm also more intentional in my listening AND in my suspension of judgements--even to my wife.
Big help!!!!!!!!!!!!

When I started the course, I was an intern. I was new and I have had no experience in being a BHCC. Now that I've been here for over 3 months, and I was promoted to become a BHCC instead of intern, I've had to deal with hard situations and this course has helped me remember what to do in situations that I am unsure about. I am still learning! I am so appreciative of this course.

This course has made me look at my own self and how I handle situations. It has helped identify my own biases and how to go about seeing them in a different light. It has helped me grow and learn new ways of helping others that I did not know how to or previously got "stuck".

I've become more comfortable with being in uncomfortable situations and dealing with my own feelings of discomfort. I've also learned that listening is the most important part of helping somebody who is in a tough situation. This has helped me move away from my natural urge to give advice and attempt to solve other people's problems for them.



TOPICS COVERED IN THE COURSE:

- Building and maintaining authentic Therapeutic Alliance
- Motivational Interviewing
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapies
- Strength-based approaches
- Preparing for sessions, emotionally and practically
- Collaborative agenda setting and treatment planning
- Termination: considerations and core strategies
- Anti-racist counseling practices
- Implicit bias awareness and mitigation techniques
- Counseling ethics, including boundaries and self disclosures
- Self-reflection of our own judgments and conditioning
- Optimizing clinical supervision
- Suicide risk factors; assessment strategies, response and protocols
- Mandated reporting
- First line depression treatment strategies
- First line anxiety treatment strategies
- Substance use disorder treatment approaches
- Vicarious/secondary trauma and self care
- Helping with toxic stress and trauma

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Our online learning platform gives participants access to all written materials, videos and reflective practice exercises. Lifelong access to the learning platform is included in the cost of the course.

EM CONSULTING WILL:

- Work with you to identify 'right-fit' employees for Lay Counseling
- Manage invites, scheduling, attendance, etc.
- Provide you with a course-end report on each counselors strengths, areas for continued learning and recommendations for best-fit work
- Work with your Director of Behavioral Health on integrating your new Lay Counselors into the department



CORE FACULTY



Alli Moreno
BA

Specialties: Building our muscles around lifelong learning and continual growth; intellectual humility; client engagement (digital, phone and video); vicarious trauma prevention and mitigation; ethical code of practice; strength-based approaches.



Holly Hughes:
LCSW

Specialties: Person-centered therapy; Cognitive Behavioral and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies; maximizing use of clinical supervision; differential decisions around self-disclosures; addressing implicit and explicit bias in counseling for the LGBTQ + community; evidenced-based counseling support for past trauma.



Elizabeth Morrison
PhD, LCSW

Specialties: Motivational Interviewing; establishing and growing the therapeutic alliance; empathic communication practices; treating substance use disorders; managing distress empathy; awareness and mitigation of implicit bias, judgment and stigma; evidenced-based counseling treatments for depression and anxiety.



Cecilia Ruezga
LCSW

Specialties: Optimizing use of group and individual clinical consultation; anti-racist counseling practices; positive parenting strategies; cultural humility practices; ethical code of practice; addressing intimate partner violence, past and current.



Donielle Prince
PhD

Specialties: De-colonizing therapy; anti-racist counseling practices; community-focused supportive counseling approaches; social justice activism in counseling; healing in the context of community: strength-based approaches.



Lizzie Horevitz:
PhD, LCSW

Specialties: Cultural humility practices; addressing health disparities; Problem-Solving Therapy; Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; strengths-focused approaches; short-term counseling strategies.





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UNIQUE LEARNING PRACTICES OF THE ACADEMY

1. **Empathy is the Center of the Curriculum:** both in methods used, and content taught. This is reflective of the evidence-base demonstrating that empathy is fundamental for learning and underpins all effective counseling strategies.

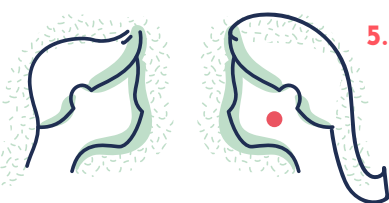


2. **Anti-racism and other Equity Practices are Centralized:** Increasing awareness of counselor biases, learning countering strategies and addressing racism and other forms of discrimination in the counseling relationship are core components of the curriculum.



3. **Personal Growth is Expected:** This is integrated into the curriculum in multiple ways, including engaging in counseling as clients during the Academy, practicing counseling using 'real selves', and focusing on self-reflection in homework and discussions.

4. **Strengthening of a Growth Mindset:** through an intense focus on continual practice and improvement. Participants are observed counseling actor-clients and given feedback multiple times through the curriculum; participants also start seeing clients at their organization, during the Academy.



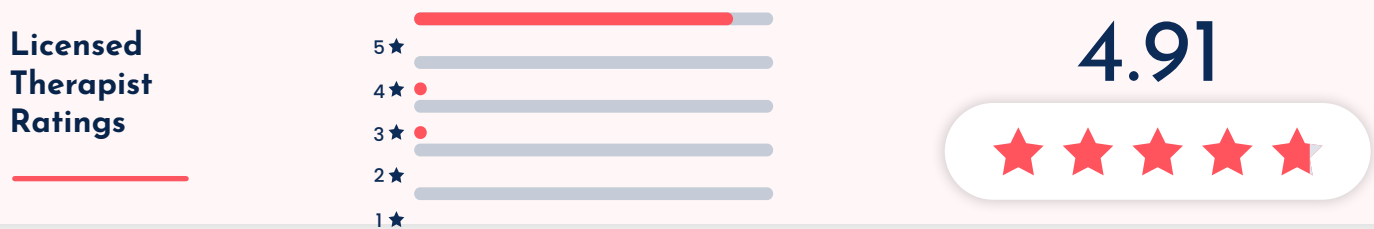
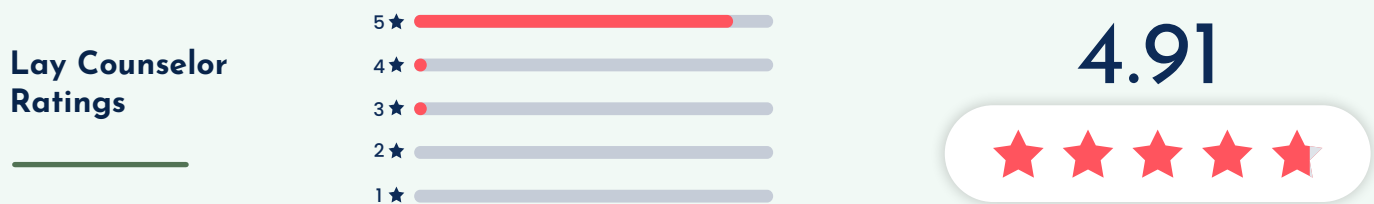
5. **Attention to the Parallel Process:** The Lay Counselor Academy is intentionally designed for participants learning experience to mirror the counseling relationship, including establishing an empathic relationship, addressing racism and other forms of discrimination and creating the conditions for personal growth to occur.



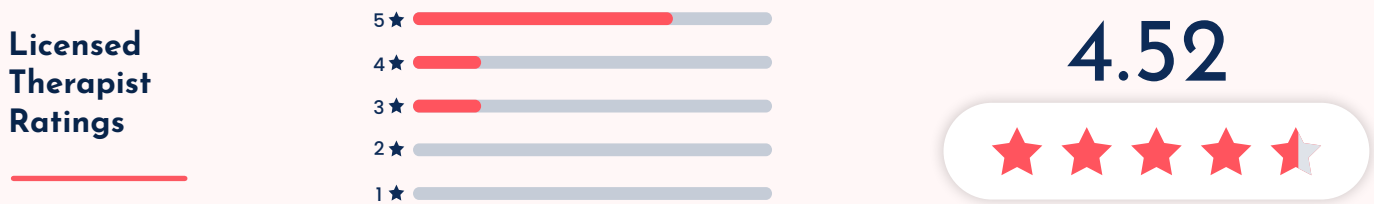
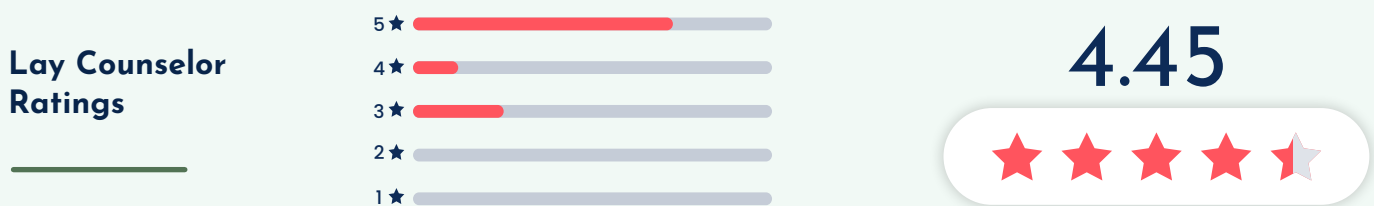
HOW DO LAY COUNSELORS COMPARE TO LICENSED THERAPISTS?

We collected data from clients who received services from either a Lay Counselor who completed the Lay Counselor Academy, or a Licensed Therapist.

Q1 How would you rate quality of counseling services you received?



Q2 How much has counseling helped you?



Client Comments about Lay Counselors

(Lay Counselor) has been a legit mirror (even if we just talk on the phone as I prefer it that way). I'm immensely thankful for her help and guidance!!! My life has legitimately changed because I gave her a chance.

(Lay Counselor) is amazing. She's transparent and I always feel great after our sessions.

I have never felt so heard and comfortable!

(Lay Counselor) is amazing. She has such a calm demeanor and her recollection of past conversations makes me feel heard.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Who can Lay Counselors provide services to?

Lay Counselors can provide services to any adult or adolescent seeking BH services. Currently, our Lay Counseling Academy does not include training for providing services to youth, under 12. (it is coming soon though!)

Is it effective? Safe? Legal? Ethical?

Yes, yes, yes and yes!

Effectiveness: Research demonstrates lay counselor effectiveness when compared with licensed clinicians.

EM Consulting has data proving this with our own team!

Safe: organizations already have unlicensed workers providing social, human and sometimes medical services (case managers; health coaches, peers, etc) The safety is in who is selected; the training they receive from us, and the weekly clinical supervision.

Legal: Anyone can provide 'counseling'. Not everyone should, of course, but legally anyone can.

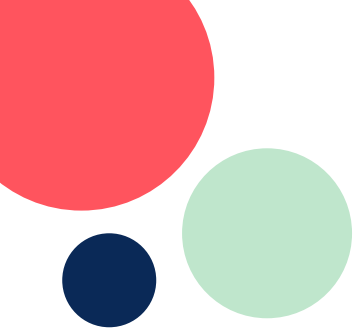
Ethical: We believe it is deeply ethical to deploy highly skilled, trained and supervised mental health counselors when our country is in a mental health crisis.

Who is the best fit for Lay Counseling?

We do not believe that anyone, no matter how much training, can be an effective, safe counselor. Instead, our experience has been that people who are emotionally mature, have a natural aptitude interpersonally, a sense of humility and curiosity, and a commitment to lifelong learning and growth, are the best fit for this work. The following are some additional characteristics and skills of people who are the best fit for Lay Counseling:

- A stance of self-reflection and self-awareness
- A stance of constant striving toward unconditional empathy & equity
- A commitment to do the ongoing work of identifying barriers to the above, in our own conditioning
- A commitment and ongoing practice within a deep, dynamic, safe learning community and a robust network of mentors



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- A commitment to one's own personal growth, one's own 'work'
 - A deep belief that others know what is best for themselves; that helpers are not 'experts' on others' lives
 - A love of connection, communication, and a relational way of being.
 - Highly proficient interpersonal and communication skills
 - A deep and profound capability to hear and hold others' distress, anger, fear and other strong or difficult emotions, without undue distress, reactivity or trying to 'fix' the other person
 - Humility, curiosity, and growth-mindset, coupled with an openness to learning, feedback and support

The EM Consulting team has a selection process to assist you in identifying these employees!

Where do Lay Counselors Fit in my organization?

Organizationally, because Lay Counselors provide mental health and substance use disorder counseling, they fit naturally within the behavioral health departments of organizations. Lay Counselors must have weekly clinical supervision and support, just as other BH clinicians, so if they do not have a licensed behavioral health clinician as their supervisor, they can have a dotted line to a licensed person for weekly support.

EM Consulting will provide consultation to BH leaders or other organizational leaders, to assist with integrating Lay Counselors into the organization's org chart and service structure.

EM Consulting has a service to provide weekly clinical supervision to Lay Counselors if your organization prefers this.



COSTS

Per participant:.....\$5200

5-9 participants:.....\$4800 each participant

Over 9 participants:.....\$4200 each participant

Over 20 participants:.....\$3800 each participant



● Please email us to meet and ask any other questions you might have!

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