

Frequently Asked Questions



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What is it?

The Lay Counselor Academy is a course designed to teach lay people how to do **mental health counseling**.

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Why?

We are in a public health crisis in our country; there are so many people who need mental healthcare, and not enough licensed clinicians to meet the need. Further, the licensed clinician workforce rarely reflects the community they are serving, in terms of age, culture, ethnicity, race and language. We need a non-academic pathway to train mental health counselors.

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How many hours is the Lay Counselor Academy: Self-Paced?

- The core course is **70** hours
- The hybrid (course plus group and individual practice) is **82** hours

There are many links and further reading included. Learners who want to dive deeper will find hundreds of hours of learning material.

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Is this long enough to learn to be a skillful mental health counselor?

No. Mental health counseling is an incredibly complex undertaking, demanding enormous skill and lifelong practice. We expect that learners who take the LCA live or online (self-paced) already have natural skill, will continue to pursue lifelong learning, and will obtain clinical support if they provide counseling.

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I'm not really in a counseling position at my job. What will the LCA Self-Paced do for me?

Most people who take the LCA course are not in counseling positions; those who take the course do all sorts of work: fire department employees, paramedics, teachers, teacher's aides, HR professionals, non-profit leaders, outreach workers, community health workers, legal aides and more take the course. Mental health counseling is **treatment through talking**. This means if your job involves talking with the people, you can incorporate mental health counseling skills within those conversations, to assist with **hope, healing and change**.

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What if I don't like it?

We will give you your money back, of course! We will also ask if you can share feedback with us, about what didn't work for you, so we can keep improving.

7

Will I get a certificate when I complete?

If you do the **Self-Paced Course** alone, your certificate will say you completed The Lay Counselor Academy 70 hour course.

If you take part in th **Hybrid Course**, your certificate will say you **completed the course AND the practice hours**.



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What can I do with the certificate?

Lay counseling is not recognized as a distinct profession. We don't want to mislead anyone about the job possibilities, based on this course. Having said that, mental health counseling by people without degrees is increasingly understood as an important way to respond to the need in our communities. Further, many organizations in California and across the US have sent employees to the LCA, and may look favorably on those who have gone through the course. We hope in the future mental health counseling by lay people is recognized and elevated.

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I already have a BA or a masters degree in counseling. Will I learn anything new in this course?

Feedback from over a 1200 past participants says yes! We've had LCSWs, LMFTs, licensed psychologists and psychiatrists take the course and tell us things like "I wish I'd learned this in graduate school" or "I learned more in this course than I did in my practicum". While everything we teach in the LCA is evidenced-based, it is very different than traditional academic training.

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Do you provide CEUs?

Yes, for some California professions! If you are a substance use disorder counselor, the LCA provides 65 hours of continuing education, for all of the SUD certification agencies in California. We are also a continuing education provider for Peer Specialists in California.

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I really don't like school-like things.

We understand! **The course is a mix of learning methods, including reading, audio recordings, videos, self-reflective writing, quizzes and more.** Everything that is written is audio recorded for folks who might not like reading.

Have more questions? Email us! Angelica@emorrisonconsulting.com

