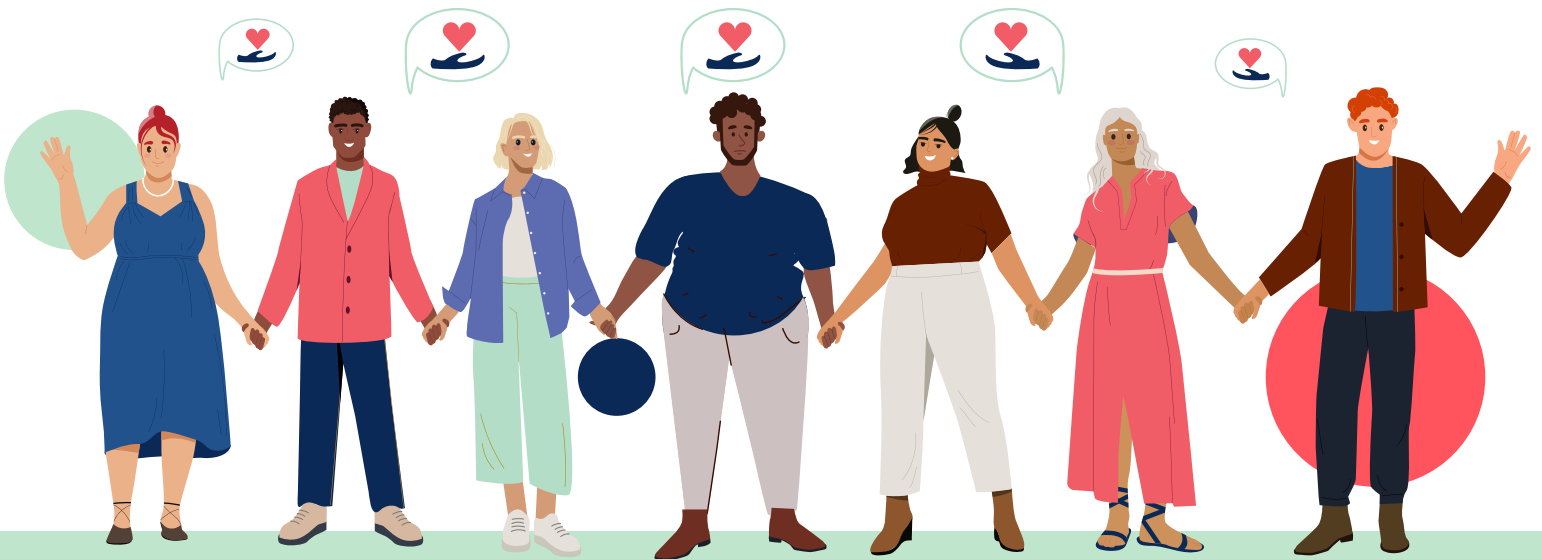




THE
LAY COUNSELOR
ACADEMY

There are millions of people who need mental health care and not enough mental health professionals to meet the need. The workforce does not reflect the community served.

We need **new solutions** to address the scarcity of mental health professionals and to expand access to care.



HOW DOES LAY COUNSELING FIT INTO MY ORGANIZATION?

We can expand the scope of trusted community members—case managers, CHWs, peer specialists, teachers, primary care providers, legal aid workers, first responders, faith leaders, and more—to provide mental health counseling. They *already* hear mental health disclosures and are *already* offering crucial support. The Lay Counseling Academy (LCA) recognizes and builds on what they're already doing well, equipping them with additional skills to strengthen their impact. **This is how we dramatically expand access to mental healthcare—equitably and organically, through the people already connected to those who need it most.**



THE COURSE



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS:

- Person Centered Counseling
- Humanistic Psychology
- Positive Psychology



Course Length

14 weeks



Live Sessions

One 3-hour live session a week



Homework

1.5 hours each week

Participants also engage in counseling as clients for 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. **30% of live sessions spent is practicing.**



The first session is in person

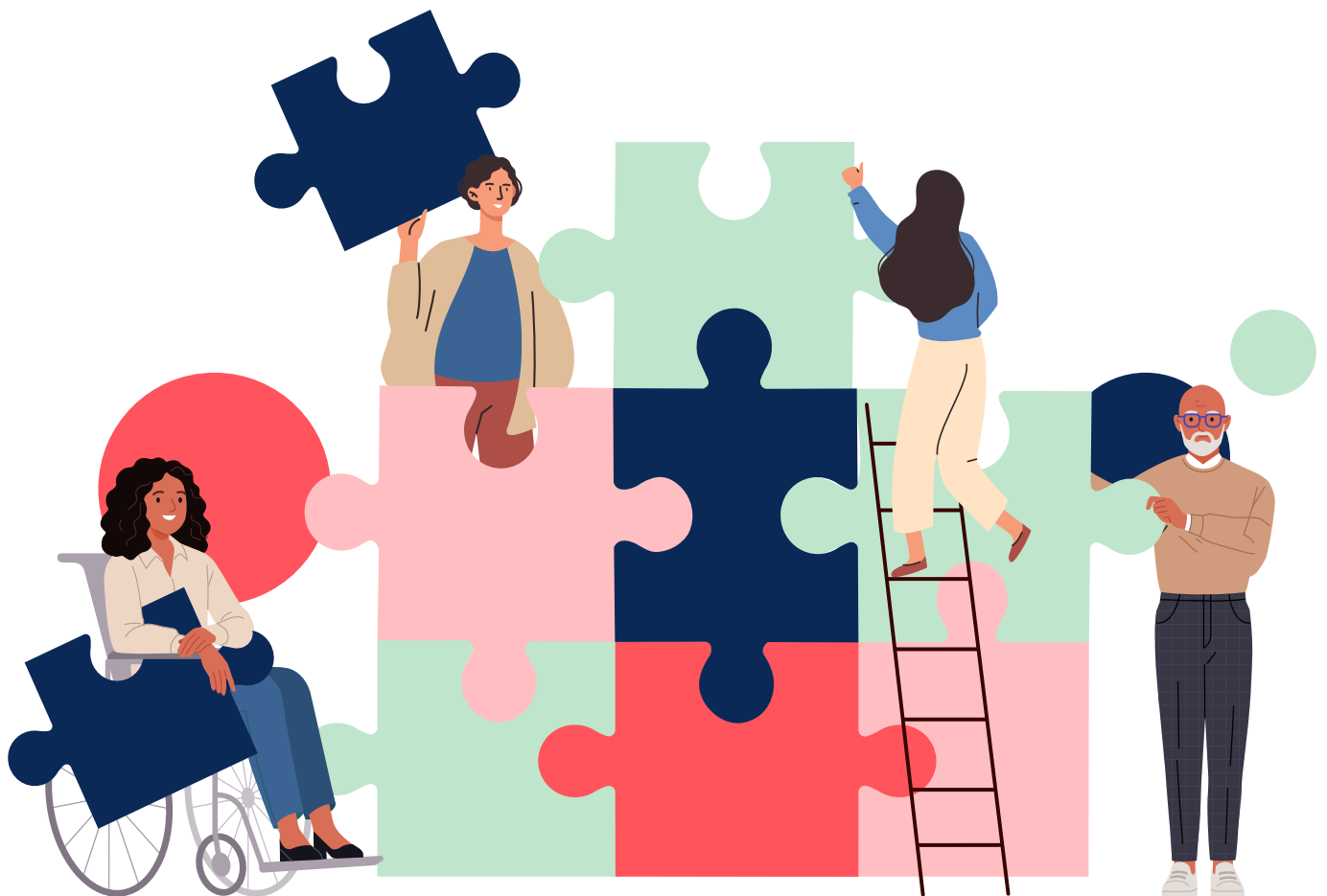


The remaining 13 sessions are virtual



COURSE CURRICULUM:

- ✓ Building and maintaining the Therapeutic Alliance
- ✓ Motivational Interviewing
- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- ✓ Behavioral Activation
- ✓ Strength-based approaches
- ✓ Anti-racist counseling practices
- ✓ Implicit bias awareness and mitigation techniques
- ✓ Responding and helping people with suicidal thoughts
- ✓ Helping people with anxiety and depression
- ✓ Helping people who have substance use disorders
- ✓ Helping people who have adverse childhood experiences
- ✓ Managing boundaries and self disclosures
- ✓ Preventing vicarious trauma



CORE FACULTY



Alli Moreno

Lay Counselor and Co-Creator of the LCA

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



Elizabeth Morrison

PhD, LCSW, MAC and Co-Creator of the LCA

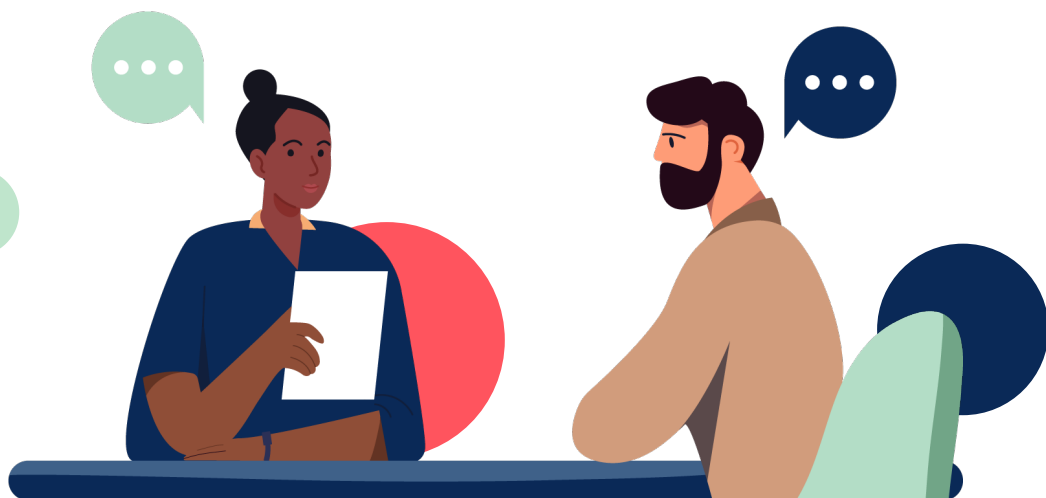
Specialties: Motivational interviewing; establishing and growing the therapeutic alliance; empathic communication practices; treating substance use disorders; managing distress empathy; awareness and mitigation of implicit bias, judgment and stigma; evidenced-based counseling treatments for depression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



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.





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:** Humility as a central stance is emphasized throughout the course, as are continual practice and improvement. Participants are observed counseling actor-clients and given feedback multiple times through the curriculum.



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.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Is it effective? Safe? Legal? Ethical?

Yes, yes, yes and yes!

Effectiveness: Decades of research demonstrates lay counselor effectiveness when compared with licensed clinicians. Our team's data shows the same!

Safe: Organizations already have unlicensed workers providing social, 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 to expand their scope to provide 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 the LCA:

- ✓ A stance of self-reflection and self-awareness
- ✓ Striving toward unconditional empathy & equity
- ✓ Relentless commitment to bias awareness and mitigation
- ✓ A deep belief that others know what is best for themselves; that helpers are not 'experts' on others' lives
- ✓ Highly proficient interpersonal and communication skills

Humility Curiosity Growth-Mindset

Coupled with an openness to learning Feedback and support

We have a selection process to assist you in identifying these employees!



TUITION



1-9 participants:
\$5500 each
participant



Over 10 Participants:
\$4800 for
each participant

Tuition includes **lifetime access** to the online learning platform, and the ability to take the whole course, or any part of the course, **anytime in the future for free.**

The LCA is offered in DHCS's CalAIM Technical Assistance Marketplace!
This means if your organization is eligible the State will pay for your staff to participate. Contact us to learn more!



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

Angelica@emorrisonconsulting.com



WHAT 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.

This is hands-down the most rewarding and useful course I have ever had. Every single skill we learn directly helps people. It de-mystifies counseling, and breaks it down into practical strategies we can use. I use the skills I learned here every.single.day. With every patient.

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.

I never knew what to do when patients would share deep things with me. Now I have tools, I know how to respond in a way that will be helpful.

Hands down the most rewarding, useful and important training I have ever had.

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".

