

LMU MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICUM

Yoga Therapy for Mental Health: Supervised Clinical Practicum at Venice Family Clinic is an advanced professional development course designed primarily for C-IAYTs interested in gaining training and experience working individually with clinic patients who have mental health challenges. This 100-hour course at the Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Extension will meet weekly. Six students will be accepted each year. The students will provide 40–50 hours of individualized, supervised yoga therapy during the twelve-week course. The ratio of six students to so many world-renowned teachers is highly unusual for a university setting. We are looking for highly trained students who wish to refine their scope of practice while serving the community.

I designed the curriculum to help yoga therapists stay tuned into their own breath and wellbeing while building stamina in a busy community clinic setting. Venice Family Clinic has been serving the community since 1970 and currently cares for 24,000 patients a year, 73% of whom live below the poverty line. The yoga therapy services are offered free to patients referred by their social workers for challenges with anxiety, depression, panic, and trauma-stressor disorders.

Besides a rigorous schedule with patients, features of the course include *seva* (selfless service) trainings for clinic staff; a brown-bag lunch speakers' series; a six-hour course on law and ethics (six continuing education units for those with licenses in psychotherapy or social work), and yoga therapy with Spanish-speaking patients. Guest speakers include Shirley Telles, MBBS, MPhil, PhD, on the fundamentals of yoga clinical trials; William Resnick, MD, on psychopharmacology; Gerry Grossman, LMFT, on law and ethics; Mimi Lind, MSW, on domestic violence; and Jewel Simpson, DDS, C-IAYT, on dental phobia.

Many highly skilled certified yoga therapists wonder when the day will come that the mainstream medical community considers yoga therapists as valued members on their teams. Most in the mainstream medical community still don't know that yoga therapy exists or are confused about the differences in training and orientation, which is why our Yoga Therapy for Mental Health course includes soul-searching with the students about their dreams, aspirations, and job goals. We encourage each student to refine their curriculum vitae and we oversee their out-

reach to medical specialists, social service agencies, and dual-diagnosis residential treatment facilities in their neighborhoods. We assist students in drafting letters to educate medical professionals about this specialized yoga therapy training.

Venice Family Clinic is an established teaching facility with a long and respected history of partnerships with local medical schools and universities. Treatment rooms in the Department of Behavioral Health have two-way mirrors and intercoms for the clinical supervisor to observe sessions in vivo while the yoga therapist is alone in the room with the patient. Teamwork, including two yoga therapists with one patient, will also be encouraged for acute cases.

Students will learn how to obtain Informed Consent to Participate in Yoga Therapy, Consent to Be Observed, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act forms from each patient. Students will also have each patient fill out anxiety and depression questionnaires weekly, will review the answers with the patients, and will input the results and the individualized home yoga plan into the clinic's electronic medical records system.

The genesis of the Yoga Therapy for Mental Health clinical practicum dates to 2002 when Christopher Chapple, PhD, first established yoga certificate programs at LMU. Then in 2005, he and Larry Payne, PhD, E-RYT 500, founded the Yoga Therapy Rx program, which currently includes Level I, Yoga Therapy and the Musculoskeletal System; Level II, Yoga Therapy and the Other Systems of the Body; Level III, Clinical Yoga Therapy; and Dr. Lori Rubenstein Fazzio's groundbreaking Level IV, Yoga Therapy for Chronic Pain Clinical Practicum at Venice Family Clinic's Integrative Medicine Clinic run by Myles Spar, MD, MPH.

Because the program aspires to the highest standards of mental health professional training, our certified yoga therapy students must have a minimum of twelve sessions of personal psychotherapy with a licensed psychologist or psychotherapist while in our course. This requisite is designed to help the student process countertransference issues that may not be applicable to clinical supervision. **YTT**



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