

## ***Does Lay Counseling work? 4 Advantages to Consider***

**“Most Christians don’t know how to effectively care for the hurting and most churches don’t know how to effectively train them to care.”**

Four reasons that recent studies demonstrate how lay counseling works:

**1. Lay Counselors can be more available when needed.**

Lay Counselors generally work with 1-2 people at a time and see them on a more frequent basis. Imagine the difference it would make in your medical care, if your doctor spent a full hour with you! Lay Counselors often answer the phone at 9:30 PM for the addict in need or stop by to fold laundry with the overwhelmed young mom. They see those they counsel in church, at community events or they might share a meal together. Most struggling people need motivation to change, not just expertise. Lay Counseling wins on its ability to provide more consistent motivation.

**2. Lay Counselors minister with their life story and passions.**

Lay Counselors can be matched with those of similar life experience. Marital Struggles, severe depression and career guidance are very different struggles. Lay Counselors strive to bless others because someone was a blessing to them at some point. Because they tend to limit themselves to areas of life experience, they can specialize their training to their area of passion.

**3. Lay Counselors can often develop deeper connections because of shared-life experiences.**

A common obstacle to change in counseling is the perception that one’s counselor is “normal” and thus will not understand those going through difficult struggles in life. Studies have also shown that different socio-economic backgrounds and races may become obstacles or they may also increase the connection with one’s counselor as well. Lay Counselors with stories of life threatening illness, grief, addictions, or trauma can make strong connections with those in similar situations.

**4. Lay Counselors are volunteers and increase counseling options to those in need.**

Many people can’t afford to regularly see a quality counselor in our current system.. Many areas of the country have counties with only a handful of licensed counselors and often no faith-based counseling options anywhere. Insurance companies limit networks, frequency and impose restrictions with frustrate and limit the effectiveness of those providing counseling. Lay Counseling takes the pressure off the “quick-fix” and instead proposes a model where people walk through life together, side-by-side. No insurance company ends the relationships and there are no billing codes to fill out.

Are you interested in developing a Lay Counseling team at your church? We would love to help.