

AUBREY FREITAS

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I'm a Creative at heart passionate about storytelling, research, and mental health advocacy. I have five years of experience in the field of mental health through research, community-facing organizations, and volunteer service. I'm a voracious reader, spirited writer, and dedicated life-long learner.

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

August 2015 - June 2019

B.A. - Psychology

B.A. - English: Creative Writing, Fiction

GPA 3.41

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

West Los Angeles Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

October 2024 - Present

Research Coordinator

Conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Alexander Young for the National VA Virtual Care Consortium of Research. I worked with Veterans with serious mental illness (SMI) and providers exploring how patient-generated health data (PGHI) can be utilized, implemented, and improved to inform health care treatment.

- Collaborated with team members across the nation to design mixed methods data collection tools
- Participated in local Veteran recruitment, data collection, and qualitative interview processes

West Los Angeles Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

October 2024 - Present

Project Manager

Conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Camilla Cummings in MIRECC. I worked with homeless-experienced Veterans using mixed methods to explore their housing and health needs upon transitioning into permanent supportive housing (PSH) at the GLA VA, as well as on a study analyzing PTSD and SUD comorbidities among female Veterans.

- Spearheaded recruitment efforts for individual interviews and focus groups
- Coded and analyzed mixed methods data to explore experiences of female Veterans with overlapping PTSD and SUD within VA housing programs
- Created semi-structured interview guides

West Los Angeles Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

January 2024 - Present

Research Coordinator, Project Manager

Conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Alexander Young in the Mental Illness Research and Clinical Center (MIRECC). I worked with individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) utilizing mobile sensing health data collection to explore its potential benefits on treatment outcomes.

- Led qualitative research and conducted semi-structured interviews about veteran experiences with wearable mobile sensing devices
- Analyzed mixed methods data, created a codebook within Atlas.ti, coded interview transcripts to evaluate findings, and crafted a research publication
- Recruited 34 participants with SMI, conducted baseline assessments utilizing the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS), and facilitated weekly data collection
- Assisted with writing, and submitting two grant proposals, and managed IRB adherence

West Los Angeles Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) **January 2024 - Present**

Research Coordinator, Project Manager

Conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Brandon Yarns in the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC). I worked with older adult veterans experiencing chronic pain to examine the effects of virtual, group-based mindfulness, CBT, and emotional awareness and expression therapy (EAET) on pain symptom reduction.

- Designed data collection instruments through building survey assessments in RedCap
- Utilized R and Excel programming tools to perform data validation
- Coached older adult veterans on using telehealth software
- Recruited over half the study participants, and audited hours of therapy sessions

UCLA Depression Grand Challenge **January 2016 - June 2019**

Research Assistant

Under the guidance of Dr. Elizabeth Gong-Guy and Dr. Allison Pimentel, I facilitated weekly support groups for UCLA students with mild to moderate depression and anxiety by utilizing an internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy (iCBT) program to explore its impacts on symptom reduction.

- Recruited student participants and fellow researchers
 - Collected qualitative data by conducting weekly semi-structured interviews surrounding student experiences with iCBT and facilitated quantitative data collection by administering check-in surveys
 - Trained new research assistants on cornerstones of CBT and support group facilitation
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Clare I Matrix Recovery Center **October 2023 - Present**

Registered Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Counselor

Counseled individuals ages eighteen and over during the first one to three months of sobriety in the inpatient Women's Treatment Program (WTP) as a registered SUD counselor with the California Association of DUI Treatment Programs (CADTP).

- Led weekly individual and group counseling sessions on a variety of topics including agency, identifying past traumas and triggers, and exploring creative outlets
- Facilitated medication distribution for medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- Crafted individualized and trauma-informed recovery treatment plans and assisted with housing navigation and linkage to community resources

988 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline - Didi Hirsch **March 2023 - Present**

Crisis Counselor

Logged hundreds of hours on the phone lines supporting individuals experiencing suicidal ideation, nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI), and those in extreme psychological or emotional pain.

- Assessed for immediate safety and suicidal risk using various screening tools
- Practiced validation, reflective statements, and open-ended questions throughout calls
- Utilized high levels of empathy, emotional regulation, and presence

The People Concern **July 2023 - January 2024**

Case Manager

Provided case management and housing navigation services in the Intensive Case Management (ICMS) program in Permanent Supportive Housing working with homeless-experienced individuals.

- Supported various populations of homeless-experienced individuals, including those with mental illnesses, SUDs, and veterans
- Advocated for clients' housing rights, attainment, and maintainence
- Navigated crisis intervention and utilized trauma-informed care approaches

**Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA)
Jump Start Fellow**

April 2023 - July 2023

This fellowship combines classroom education and practicum allowing fellows to learn and work within the field of case management. I interned with a Full Service Partnership (FSP), Transition Age Youth (TAY) program designed for individuals hospitalized due to SMI.

- Conducted individual and group counseling sessions, coordinated community integration activities, and assessed barriers to quality of life
- Utilized non-violent communication, harm-reduction practices, and strengths-based approaches

**Center For Autism and Related Disorders / Central Valley Autism Project
Registered Behavioral Therapist**

February 2020 - March 2021

Facilitated therapy sessions using Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) to help improve the cognitive, social, and motor functions of children on the Autism spectrum under the guidance of a board-certified behavioral analyst.

- Ensured accuracy of naturalistic data collection to track behavior changes and collaborated with treatment teams to create new therapeutic programs
- Built rapport with families and trained guardians on how to facilitate therapy programming

UCLA's Healthy Campus Initiative (HCI) - MindWell Pod

May 2016 - June 2019

MindWell Blogger

Wrote articles surrounding mental health, collaborated with professors, and acted as a wellness think tank to address student concerns surrounding wellbeing.

- Collected qualitative and quantitative data on student reactions to mental health pop-up events, presented findings to leadership, and secured funding for future events for students

AWARDS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND INVOLVEMENT

UCLA's HCI MindWell Pod Assistant	2022 - Present
Eudaimonia Award Committee Member - UCLA	2022 - Present
WriteGirl Mentor	2022 - Present
Registered SUD counselor and member with the California Association of DUI Treatment Programs (CADTP)	2023 - Present
American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Certification	2023 - Present
Volunteer Crisis Counselor - 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline, Didi Hirsch	2023 - Present
Disaster Crisis Counseling Certification	2024
Psychological First Aid Certification	2024
Tarzana Treatment Centers and Colleges Full Academic Scholarship Recipient	2023
Tarzana Treatment Centers and Colleges SUD Counseling Program Graduate	2023 - 2024
Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA) Jumpstart Fellowship Graduate	2023
Mental Health Recovery Specialist Certification	2023
Mental Health First Aid - Youth and Adult Certification	2023
California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Full Academic Scholarship Recipient	2023

California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Peer Support Specialist Program Graduate	2023
40 Hour Domestic Violence Counselor Training - The People Concern	2023
Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention Certification	2023
Be Well Bruin Consultant and Contributor - UCLA	2022
Bruin Mental Health Advisory Committee (BMHAC) - UCLA	2017 - 2019
Dean's List Honors Scholar - UCLA	2019
David Sedaris Humor Writing Award - UCLA Center for the Art of Performance	2019
Westwind Journal of the Arts Fiction Publication	2019
Most Likely To Brighten Your Day Award - UCLA HCI	2019