

Claudia Alcala was born and raised in Oxnard, California, an agricultural and farming community. She is the eldest daughter of two Mexican immigrants. Her father was a farm worker until he got hurt on the job, and her mother was a factory worker for many years and is now a domestic worker. Claudia was the first one in her family to go to a university. Being the first one, meant that she had to learn how to navigate the system and create a space for herself within it. She received a B.A. in Sociology & Chicano Studies with Minors in Education & Applied Psychology from UC Santa Barbara in 2007. Claudia went on to receive a Masters in Social Work from USC in 2009. It was during her graduate program that she realized that she had a mental health disorder growing up. Unfortunately, like many people of color, her family did not have knowledge about mental health disorders and didn't get her treatment. Her experiences growing up is what pushed her to the mental health field. She wants to provide knowledge and support to minority communities so that she can help others. Claudia is a licensed clinical social worker and has worked with children, adolescents, and parents for over 11 years. Her clinical experience has been with mental health assessments, parenting programs, special education in schools, individual, group, and family therapy to name a few. She has worked for the Department of Children and Family Services, a contracted agency through the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and multiple school districts through Los Angeles County, including LAUSD. Through her profession, she feels she has been able to increase knowledge about mental health and decrease the stigma.