

LEAP

with Dr. Gita Pensa



The LEAP Program (Litigation Education and Preparation) is an 8-Module (6 hours total) video course developed by litigation stress expert Dr. Gita Pensa. It is designed to teach physician defendants how to navigate medical malpractice litigation with skill and resilience.

Medical malpractice litigation is an unparalleled stressor for physicians.

Much of this stress arises from anxiety of the unknown — most of us were never taught much about litigation during medical training. Some distress may be linked to the medical events themselves, shame over the public accusation of negligence, or fear over the outcome of the litigation. You may even judge your own distress, if anyone ever gave you the advice to ‘think of it as just business’ — and it somehow doesn’t work for you.

Unaddressed litigation stress is known to contribute to depression, burnout, and lawsuit.

In this program, we will address the two main — and **separate** — goals of the effective physician defendant:

- 1) To become a capable member of your defense team, gain a better understanding of the legal system and your role in it, and learn how to execute that role with skill and strategy.
- 2) To understand, accept, and to begin to move through the emotional and psychological impact of litigation and adverse medical events.

ABOUT DR. PENSA



Gita Pensa, M.D., FAAEM, is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at Brown University and is widely recognized as one of the nation's leading experts on malpractice litigation stress and physician litigation support. After enduring litigation herself as a defendant in a twelve-year-long malpractice case, including two high-stakes jury trials, Dr. Pensa's career took a transformative turn. Her open access podcast curriculum, [*Doctors and Litigation: The L Word*](#) is an introduction to the practical and psychological training necessary for malpractice litigation defendants. It is now used as a teaching tool in medicine, law, and the malpractice insurance industry. Dr. Pensa works as a consultant to medical malpractice insurance companies and defense attorneys, and also is a well-being and performance coach for defendants in litigation.

Dr. Pensa was the editor of the Academic Emergency Medicine journal's monthly research podcast through 2024 and remains a managing editor at Emergency Medicine Reviews and Perspectives (EM:RAP). She was named the EMRA (Emergency Medicine Residents' Association) National Faculty Mentor of the Year in 2018, and in 2019 she was awarded a Special Service Recognition Award from Rhode Island ACEP for "courageous public advocacy of Rhode Island Emergency Medicine Colleagues." In addition to traditional speaking engagements, Dr. Pensa has been featured discussing malpractice litigation on stage at the SXSW Festival, in the documentary film [*A World of Hurt*](#), and on podcasts such as *Knock Knock, Hi* with the Glaucomfleckens and The Nocturnists' *Shame in Medicine* series. She has been a guest on Doctor Radio, and published in [*Time Magazine*](#). You can find more about her at <https://doctorsandlitigation.com>

COURSE OUTLINE

Module 1: Introduction and Foundation

- 1) Introduction and Course Overview
- 2) The Dr. Pensa Story
- 3) The Origins of Litigation Stress
- 4) You've Been Served: The First Do's and Don'ts
- 5) Litigation Roadmap: Getting Oriented
- 6) Your Two Big Goals



Module 2: Getting Your Bearings

- 1) Basic “Legalese”
- 2) Players and Their Roles
- 3) Playing the Long Game
- 4) Introduction to the Coaching Model

Module 3: Diving Deeper

- 1) The Aftermath of an Adverse Event
 - ‘Deservingness’
 - The Myth of Error-less Medicine
 - Trauma Responses and Mitigation Strategies
- 2) Physician Stories and the Power of Narrative
- 3) Application of The Coaching Model

Module 4: Self-Coaching Strategies for Performance

- 1) Self-Coaching Strategies for Performance
 - Thoughts, Beliefs, Habits and The Auto-Pilot Mind
 - Common Thought Traps in Litigation
- 2) Approaching D-Day (Deposition)
- 3) The Expert Edge: When it Cuts Like a Knife

Module 5: Deposition Dynamics

- 1) Deposition Dynamics: What are we Doing Here, Anyway?
 - Spoken and Unspoken Goals
 - Pre-deposition Preparation
 - In-the-Moment Performance Techniques
- 2) Applying Self-Coaching Skills in Deposition Preparation
 - Managing Fear and Reactivity
 - Recognizing and Responding to Manipulation



Module 6: Leveling Up (Litigation and Your Life)

- 1) Next Level Legalese
- 2) Litigation as Transition and Catalyst
 - Radical Self Care
 - Relationship Maintenance and Repair
 - Course Correction Tools

Module 7: Things to Know About Trial and Settlement

- 1) Trial vs. Settlement
 - Practical considerations
 - Emotional impact
- 2) Overview of a Trial
- 3) Jury Considerations
- 4) Introduction to Effective Trial Testimony

Module 8: Bringing it Home

- 1) Making Sense (When it's Not Easy to Find)
- 2) Love it or Leave It: Your Medical Career
- 3) Remembering Your Tools: Integration and Practice

Participants are invited to jumpstart their training by listening to the first season of the [Doctor and Litigation podcast](#), particularly the episode on deposition preparation in Season One.

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