

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THE CLIENTS YOU SERVE?

If so, then Rehabilitation Counseling may be for you. One of the goals for Rehabilitation Counseling is to assist clients to achieve independence and obtain work. Unlike most other counseling professions which may solely assist clients with psychosocial adjustment, the Rehabilitation Counselor is charged with empowering the client to become productive and reach their best level of independence.

The skilled rehabilitation professional assists clients with physical, mental and/or emotional disabilities in focusing on their strengths and abilities rather than limitations. The Rehabilitation Counselor often works closely with clients, their families, physicians, psychologists and other allied health professionals to maximize client's potential within their limitations.

Rehabilitation Counseling is a diverse profession that serves those who have disabilities as a result of birth defects, illness or disease, motor vehicle accidents, work related injuries, substance abuse, occupational stresses, psychiatric disturbances, illegal behaviors, and any other disorder limitation which adversely affects the ability to function. Although traditionally Rehabilitation Counselors provided services to people 16 years and older, many professionals are now assisting

children and their families. Others specialize in geriatric rehabilitation to help clients cope with age-related health issues and a changing lifestyle. Rehabilitation Counseling provides the professional the ability to work with a wide variety of disabilities and issues. The opportunities are limitless and horizons are increasing!

BASIC PHILOSOPHY

Rehabilitation Counseling is an interdisciplinary, empowering process that encourages individuals to exercise control over their lives. These concepts include:

- ◆ An appreciation of the holistic nature of human beings. Rehabilitation Counselors recognize that physical, mental, psychosocial, cultural, and economic aspects of life are all integrated to form the whole person.
- ◆ The maximization of residual function for each client utilizing available technology and financial resources.
- ◆ The promotion of optimum health and wellness for clients and for themselves so that they more effectively serve their clients.
- ◆ The encouragement of self-responsibility in the client to develop and use his or her own personal resources to solve life's problems.

- ◆ The recognition of the importance of each client's unique assets, cultural background, psychosocial environment, and goals in developing counseling strategies and rehabilitation plans to best meet the client's needs.
- ◆ The assumption that all individuals have equal worth regardless of disability status. When the client is unable, the Rehabilitation Counselor advocates for the client and actively develops opportunities with employers and social institutions for the benefit of all persons with disabilities.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Approximately 50,000,000 Americans have one or more physical, mental and/or emotional disabilities and the number is increasing. Thus the demand for Rehabilitation Counselors continues to grow. According to studies reviewed by the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, ..."Rehabilitation Counselor education programs are still not graduating sufficient numbers of qualified students to fill current rehabilitation counseling vacancies or anticipated positions in the profession. Often, many rehabilitation counselor education programs around the country receive announcements for four or five job opportunities for every graduate." Similarly, recent graduates of Georgia State University's master's degree program report excellent job availability which has allowed

them to select the job best suited to their particular interests, talents, and counseling styles. Employment opportunities include:

- State vocational rehabilitation agencies (some scholarships available!)
- Private practice
- Disability management companies
- Workers' compensation or insurance
- Correctional agencies
- Sheltered workshops
- Schools and colleges
- Private industry
- Non-profit agencies
- General and psychiatric hospitals
- Rehabilitation hospitals
- Private outpatient psychiatric settings
- Drug/substance abuse programs
- Rehabilitation technology centers
- Outpatient mental health programs
- Rehabilitation product sales/training
- Research centers
- Employee assistance programs
- Transitional rehabilitation centers
- And the list is growing

Average starting salaries range from about \$28,000 to \$32,000. The higher salaries are usually with private sector rehabilitation services and workers' compensation rehabilitation.

CERTIFICATION

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) is the primary credentialing body for the Rehabilitation Counseling profession. Georgia State University, accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE), offers preparation for the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) examination.

Students may take the examination prior to graduating. Once the Commission has the transcript reflecting graduation (along with the student's passing score), the student will be certified. Other credentials the program may prepare the student for include: License Professional Counselor (in GA), Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS), and Certified Case Manager (CCM).

LICENSURE

Rehabilitation Counselors with a master's or doctoral degree are eligible for licensure in almost all states that regulate counselors. However, counselors must complete the necessary supervised counseling experience and pass an examination before licensure is granted. In Georgia, if one has achieved the CRC, the supervision requirement is reduced by one year (2 years rather than the 3 years required for a master's degree in counseling).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<http://education.gsu.edu/cps/M.S.%20Rehab%20Counseling.htm>

GSU is an equal opportunity institution. People of minority status and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

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Rehabilitation Counseling

**A Profession
That Makes
A Difference**