

Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling

Standards of Practice

The skills of the practitioner determine the quality of the profession. Because clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling is one of the helping professions, there is a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of practice. One of the primary functions of clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors is to work with people who have various disabilities to develop or enhance the:

- *vocational skills they need to secure gainful employment
- * coping skills they need to achieve good mental health and increased independence
- * qualities and skills needed to function effectively within the community

Our mission is based on the fundamental belief in the dignity and worth of all people and the rights of people with disabilities to live self-determined lives in inclusive communities of their choice. The Division seeks to educate clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors who use the counseling relationship and skills to work collaboratively with clients to maximize functional capacity, independent living skills, and quality of life. Fundamental to this is a focus on the whole person –psychological, vocational, spiritual, and physical aspects as well as family, social, work, and community relationships. The Division also strives to train clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors who possess the knowledge, critical thinking abilities, commitment to independent learning and scholarship, vision, and courage required to forge new models of community practice to address the diverse needs of people with disabilities now and in the future.

Content of Curriculum

The content of the curriculum in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program is designed to help students obtain the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively as professional clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors.

Graduates of the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program will:

1. Effectively apply ethical and current best practices in clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling within a community-inclusion model;
2. Accurately assess the clinical rehabilitation and mental health preferences and needs of people with disabilities and work in partnership with clients to provide appropriate clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling, services, and supports;
3. Acquire specific knowledge and skills to address the counseling and case management needs of people with and without disabilities, with particular emphasis on strategies and techniques for serving people with psychiatric and developmental disabilities;

4. Work collaboratively with professionals, family members, community providers, employers, and agency policy and decision makers to achieve optimal rehabilitation and mental health outcomes for people with and without disabilities;
5. Engage in a process of lifelong learning, collaboration, and collegiality as part of ongoing professional development as clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors;
6. Have the necessary leadership, business and management, and public policy skills to assume leadership roles in the practice and the profession of clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling; and
7. Promote and support consumer empowerment and self-advocacy of people with disabilities.

Scope of Practice

The Scope of Practice for Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling represents a broad consensus regarding the range of knowledge and skills as well as the specific techniques and modalities required to provide effective clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling services. This professional scope of clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling practice differs from the individual counselor's scope of practice. Specifically, an individual scope of practice is based on each practitioner's additional training and experience beyond their Master's Degree program. Each clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselor is ethically bound to limit their client practice to that individual scope.

The *Code of Ethics for Professional Rehabilitation Counselors* is a consensus-building statement of ethical standards that articulates the core practice elements for individual practitioners of clinical rehabilitation counseling. Its vigorous enforcement through CRCC's *Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Complaints* is an indication of the importance the profession places on adherence to this mandatory code. These standards of ethical practice are intended to assure the community that the clinical rehabilitation counseling profession accepts its responsibility to provide caring and competent services to persons with disabilities. Students in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program are expected to practice in conjunction with the *Code of Ethics for Professional Rehabilitation Counselors*.

The *American Counseling Association Code of Ethics* is a consensus-building statement of ethical standards that articulates the core practice elements for individual practitioners of mental health counseling. Its vigorous enforcement through ACA's *Policies and Procedures for Processing Complaints of Ethical Violations* is an indication of the importance the profession places on adherence to this mandatory code. These standards of ethical practice are intended to assure the community that the mental health counseling profession accepts its responsibility to provide caring and competent services to persons seeking counseling. Students in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program are expected to practice in conjunction with the *American Counseling Association Code of Ethics*.

I. Assumptions

- The Scope of Practice Statement identifies knowledge and skills required for the provision of effective clinical rehabilitation counseling services to persons with physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities as embodied in the standards of the profession's credentialing organizations.
- The Scope of Practice Statement identifies knowledge and skills required for the provision of effective mental health counseling services to all persons seeking counseling as embodied in the standards of the profession's credentialing organizations.
- Several clinical rehabilitation disciplines and related processes (e.g., vocational evaluation, job development and job placement, work adjustment, case management) are tied to the central field of clinical rehabilitation counseling. The field of clinical rehabilitation counseling is a specialty within the clinical rehabilitation profession with counseling at its core and is differentiated from other related counseling fields.
- Several mental health disciplines and related processes (e.g., evidence based practices, research, various types of therapy, case management) are tied to the central field of mental health counseling. The field of mental health counseling is a specialty within the psychology profession with counseling at its core and is differentiated from other related counseling fields.
- The professional scope of clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling practice is also differentiated from an individual scope of practice, which may overlap, but is more specialized than the professional scope. An individual scope of practice is based on one's own knowledge of the abilities and skills that have been gained through a program of education and professional experience. A person is ethically bound to limit their practice to that individual scope of practice.

II. Underlying Values

- Facilitation of independence, integration, and inclusion of people with disabilities in employment and the community.
- Belief in the dignity and worth of all people.
- Commitment to a sense of equal justice based on a model of accommodation to provide and equalize the opportunities to participate in all rights and privileges available to all people; and a commitment to supporting people with disabilities in advocacy activities to achieve this status and empower themselves.
- Emphasis on the holistic nature of human function which is procedurally facilitated by the utilization of such techniques as:
 1. Interdisciplinary teamwork.
 2. Counseling to assist in maintaining a holistic perspective.
 3. A commitment to considering individuals within the context of their family systems and communities.
- Recognition of the importance of focusing on the assets of the person.
- Commitment to models of service delivery that emphasize integrated, comprehensive services which are mutually planned by the clients and the clinical rehabilitation and mental health counselors.

III. Scope of Practice Statement

Clinical rehabilitation counseling is a systematic process which assists people with physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities to achieve their personal, career, and independent living goals in the most integrated setting possible through the application of the counseling process. Mental health counseling is a systematic process which assists all people seeking counseling to achieve their highest quality of life possible through the application of the counseling process.

The counseling process involves communication, goal setting, and beneficial growth or change through self-advocacy, psychological, vocational, social, and behavioral interventions. The specific techniques and modalities utilized within these clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling processes may include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment and appraisal;
- Diagnosis and treatment planning;
- Career (vocational) counseling;
- Individual and group counseling treatment interventions;
- Case management, referral, and service coordination;
- Program evaluation and research;
- Interventions to remove environmental, employment, and attitudinal barriers;
- Consultation services among multiple parties and regulatory systems;
- Job analysis, job development, and placement services, including assistance with employment and job accommodations; and
- The provision of consultation about and access to rehabilitation technology.

Commitment to Non-Discrimination/Seeking Reasonable Accommodations

The University is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. A student with a disability may participate in the program so long as the student satisfies program requirements, including these Standards of Practice, with or without reasonable accommodation. Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact the University's Office of Accessibility Resources and Service ("ARS") as soon as possible. The Office will determine a student's eligibility and recommend appropriate accommodations and services. ARS may be reached by phone at 919-962-8300 or by email at accessibility@unc.edu.

I have read and understand this overview of the Standards of Practice. I have also read and understand the UNC-CH Honor Code (<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/students>).

Student: _____

Date: _____