

Track Decision Presentation Transcript:

Slide #1:

Hi everyone,

Thanks very much for your interest in applying to the rehabilitation counseling program at SDSU.

I'm Mark Tucker, Coordinator of SDSU's Rehabilitation Counseling Program.

If you are applying to SDSU's campus-based rehabilitation counseling program, during the application process you will be prompted to indicate whether you are applying to the generalist track or the psychiatric rehabilitation track, which is sometimes referred to as the clinical track. Although both tracks lead to a master of science degree in rehabilitation counseling, the university regards the two tracks as different majors.

Your decision has significant implications, for your application and your program of study, so we're providing information about the two program tracks with the hope that doing so will help you to decide between the two options.

We will also provide additional information and suggestions that might be useful to you.

Slide #2:

It might be best to start with a summary of the most significant similarities and differences between the tracks.

The primary focus of rehabilitation counseling, regardless of program track or specialization, is that rehabilitation counselors work with individuals with disabilities around goals related to employment, education, training, and independent living. Both program tracks will include a major emphasis upon employment of individuals with disabilities, as employment and disability are central to the profession of rehabilitation counseling.

Both program tracks lead to eligibility to take the national certifying exam for rehabilitation counselors, the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, or CRC, exam. In fact, we use the CRC exam as our program's comprehensive exam.

In lieu of completing a master's thesis students can take and pass the CRC exam and become certified as rehabilitation counselors once they graduate.

The main distinctions between the two tracks are the focal populations, and license-eligibility.

The generalist track as you might imagine, incorporates a broad focus upon individuals with a wide variety of disabilities; for example, cognitive disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and sensory disabilities.

The psychiatric rehabilitation track also addresses disabilities generally to an extent, but has a more intensive focus upon psychiatric disabilities.

While both tracks lead to eligibility to take the CRC exam and become nationally certified; the psychiatric rehabilitation track is designed to permit graduates to pursue licensure in California as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, or LPCC. The generalist track is not designed with intensive psychiatric rehabilitation training and LPCC eligibility as goals.

Slide #3:

Here I would like to briefly share some of the history of the LPCC license in California and the interaction between licensure and rehabilitation counseling.

For most of the history of rehabilitation counseling in California, rehabilitation counselors had no license options. California was the last state in the union to offer a path to licensure for rehabilitation counselors. Applications for licensure became available in mid-2011.

The rehabilitation counseling profession existed in the state for many decades prior to licensure, and as a result, to this day, most rehabilitation counseling positions do not require a license, although there are some settings where a license could be advantageous, particularly in psychiatric rehabilitation settings; I'll share more information about that shortly.

Briefly, license requirements are similar to requirements for LCSWs and MFTs. A sixty semester-unit master's or doctoral degree is required that includes content in 13 core areas, along with supervised counseling practicum. After graduating those pursuing the license must complete 3,000 hours of clinical mental health counseling experience under the supervision of an approved supervisor. Those pursuing the license must also pass the California LPCC Law and Ethics Exam and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination to be licensed in the state of California.

Licensing requirements do vary from state to state as do regulations related to recognition of licenses across state lines.

Slide #4:

The two program tracks share fifteen of the twenty courses, so 75% of the coursework in the different tracks is the same. This fact underscores the idea that the two track are more similar than different, and

are united by a focus upon employment and independent living for people with disabilities. Here are the courses that are shared by the two tracks:

ARP 645: Assessment in Rehabilitation

ARP 646: Career Development

ARP 660: Theory and Process of Counseling in Rehabilitation

ARP 684: Rehabilitation Foundations

ARP 685A and ARP 685B: Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disability

ARP 687: Job Development for Individuals with Disabilities

ED 690: Methods of Inquiry

Slide #5:

ARP 615: Seminar in Multicultural Dimensions in Rehabilitation Counseling

ARP 648: Group Dynamics in Rehabilitation

ARP 708: Human Development and Disability

ARP 755: Governance and Policy in Disability Systems

ARP 744: Beginning Practicum

ARP 744: Intermediate Practicum

ARP 745: Internship

Slide #6:

Here is where the coursework differs between the two program tracks.

The General track offers courses in rehabilitation technology, program development, and grant writing, along with two electives that can be applied toward one of two specializations – a specialization in cognitive disabilities or a specialization in rehabilitation technology – or the electives can be used to take other courses agreed upon by the student and their advisor.

The psychiatric rehabilitation track has courses focused upon psychiatric disabilities, including psychiatric rehabilitation and co-occurring disorders, principles of psychiatric rehabilitation, trauma, substance abuse, and psychopharmacology.

Slide #7:

Let's talk about common employment settings for rehabilitation counselors with attention to the distinctions between the program tracks. The settings discussed are those that are common or somewhat common for graduates of our program. There are certainly opportunities for graduates to chart their own paths or pursue opportunities that are unique or less common.

Graduates of both program tracks can use the degree to pursue employment as counselors in state/federal vocational rehabilitation agencies such as the Department of Rehabilitation in California; there are over eighty of these state vocational rehabilitation agencies across the nation. Graduates can also pursue federal positions as rehabilitation counselors with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration. Graduates also work in disability support programs in postsecondary education institutions, in developmental disabilities services agencies such as the Regional Center system in California, in private rehabilitation settings conducting case management or forensic rehabilitation work, and in community-based rehabilitation programs.

The psychiatric rehabilitation track offers exposure at a greater level of depth to psychiatric rehabilitation principles which may be useful in settings such as assertive community treatment programs, crisis houses, and substance use rehabilitation settings. Those with the license may also pursue mental health counselor positions with the Department of Veterans Affairs under the Veterans Health Administration, and may compete for other positions requiring licensure; typically these positions are not rehabilitation counselor positions but may have titles such as licensed mental health counselor.

Occasionally our program has applicants whose interests lie in psychotherapy. They wish to pursue a career focused upon therapeutic mental health counseling where they engage in talk therapy to help individuals to address a broad range of emotional difficulties or symptoms of mental illness. If you have a primary interest in being a psychotherapist and are considering applying to the rehabilitation counseling program, I would suggest that our program is not the right program for you. Psychotherapy is not a focus of our program. The full-time faculty do not have backgrounds as psychotherapists and our clinical experiences are not designed to help individuals become psychotherapists. SDSU does have other degree programs that emphasize therapeutic counseling and I would encourage you to consider applying to those programs if you have an interest in psychotherapy. Rehabilitation counselors are trained in brief counseling interventions focused upon practical problem-solving related to employment, education or training, and independent living and our coursework and clinical experiences are grounded in that type of practice.

To further underscore this point, the rehabilitation counseling program is currently accredited by CACREP – the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. The general track is accredited under the Rehabilitation Counseling specialty area and the psychiatric rehabilitation track is accredited dually under the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health

Counseling specialty areas. During the next accreditation cycle the rehabilitation counseling program does not intend to maintain the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialty area. We intend to apply under the Rehabilitation Counseling specialty area for the generalist track and the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling specialty area for the psychiatric rehabilitation track.

Slide #8:

Here I will share some additional details about the program tracks.

First, we do have a distance program in rehabilitation counseling that is only open to individuals living outside San Diego County. The distance program does not offer the psychiatric rehabilitation track or any of the certificate options mentioned in this presentation or on the program's web site; the generalist track option is the only track available in the distance program.

With respect to admissions, we admit roughly equal numbers of students to each track of the campus-based program. The psychiatric rehabilitation track has, during the past few years, received more applications, so admission to the psychiatric rehabilitation track is typically more competitive.

The rehabilitation counseling program does have stipend funding that we offer to students. The amount of funding and the number of students we can support varies over time. Presently I would estimate that we have funding to provide stipend support to approximately 40% of the students enrolled in the program. Currently we have stipend funding to offer to students in both tracks, but have more stipend spots in the generalist track. However, as I mentioned previously, funding amounts and the number of available spots are subject to change over time.

Slide #9:

In closing I'd like to make some suggestions with respect to deciding upon a program track:

First, I'd encourage you to carefully consider your choice of program track and any specializations that you might choose to pursue. I'd recommend trying to align your choices with your long-range career plans. Which employment settings appeal most to you? The types of work you wish to be doing and the populations that you wish to serve could inform your decision about program tracks and specializations.

I would also encourage you to review rehabilitation counselor position announcements – current announcements as well as those that have been issued in the past. Doing so should give you a sense of the requirements and desired qualifications associated with the opportunities to practice that appeal most to you. The rehabilitation counseling program faculty may be able to share examples of position announcements with you upon request. You might also consider meeting with or interviewing rehabilitation counselors practicing in settings that are of interest to you as they may be able to offer suggestions related to program track and specializations.

I would also suggest that you review the 2021 salary report for certified rehabilitation counselors authored by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, which can be found at the URL on the presentation slide.

Finally, I would suggest that you consult with a variety of sources related to rehabilitation counseling and licensure; there are a wide range of opinions related to rehabilitation counseling and licensure, which underscores the importance of gathering information from several sources of information that you consider trustworthy. The rehabilitation counseling faculty can offer suggestions and information that may help to inform your decision and may also be able to connect you with professionals in the field who can share their perspectives.

Slide #10:

Thank you very much for viewing this presentation. I hope the information is helpful to you as you consider applying to the rehabilitation counseling program.