

C&R NEWS

Counseling & Rehabilitation Program Newsletter

(Red brick pathways leading to a metal and brick gate. Behind the gate lie trees and a red brick building)

CCA Expands Community Outreach Across Orangeburg

The Clinic for Counseling and Assessment (CCA) is strengthening its presence throughout the Orangeburg community by connecting with residents where they live, learn, and gather. Through participation in local events and strategic partnerships, the CCA is increasing awareness of the services available to individuals and families.



Two women seated at a table

Over the past several months, the CCA has participated in a variety of community outreach initiatives, including Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College student orientations, DiaBingo hosted by the Clemson Rural Health Clinic, and Mental Health Awareness Day hosted by the Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center. The clinic also participated in the recent James E. Clyburn and Ollie Johnson Memorial I-95 Health Fair. These events provide valuable opportunities to engage with community members, answer questions, and share information about the clinic's mission and the services offered.



Group of seated participants

By meeting people in community settings, the CCA continues to expand access to behavioral health resources while fostering meaningful relationships with local organizations. These outreach efforts reflect the clinic's ongoing commitment to promoting mental wellness, strengthening community partnerships, and increasing access to high-quality counseling and assessment services for individuals and families throughout rural South Carolina.

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(Students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Save the Date

August 12th, 2026:

Fall 2026 Semester Fee
Payment Deadline at 5:00
PM

August 14th, 2026:

New and Returning Student
Orientation Event

August 18th, 2026:

First Day of Fall '26 Classes

September 7th, 2026:

Fall 2026 Health Insurance
Waiver Deadline

September 25th, 2026:

Graduation Application
Deadline

October 9th, 2026:

Counseling and Rehab
Professional Speaker Series
with Cathy Wiseman

October 9th, 2026:

Counseling and Rehab
Comprehensive Exam Date
for December Graduates

October 10th, 2026:

Learning Community
Saturday

CHECK OUT OUR
SOCIALS!



National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month: Advancing Equity Through Awareness, Advocacy, and Action

Each July, we recognize **National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month**, a time dedicated to raising awareness of the unique mental health challenges experienced by racial and ethnic minority communities. Established in honor of author and advocate **Bebe Moore Campbell**, this observance highlights the importance of equitable access to culturally responsive mental health care while encouraging meaningful conversations about mental wellness.

At the University of South Carolina's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program, we are committed to preparing counselors and rehabilitation professionals who recognize the importance of cultural humility, social justice, and advocacy in their work. Our students are trained to understand the complex social, cultural, and systemic factors that influence mental health while promoting inclusive, person-centered services for individuals from all backgrounds.

As we observe this important month, we encourage our students, alumni, faculty, and community partners to reflect on how they can contribute to greater mental health equity. Whether through continued education, advocacy, community engagement, or simply checking in with those around us, every effort helps build stronger, healthier communities.



An infographic with three faces representing minority mental health month.

Together, we can help ensure that quality mental health care is accessible, culturally responsive, and inclusive for everyone.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Celebrating Disability Pride Month

Each July, we recognize Disability Pride Month, a time dedicated to honoring the experiences, identities, and contributions of people with disabilities while promoting awareness, inclusion, and accessibility. Disability Pride Month also serves as an important reminder that disability is a natural part of human diversity and that meaningful inclusion requires removing barriers and valuing the voices of disabled individuals.



A rainbow disability pride month logo.

At the University of South Carolina's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program, we are committed to preparing counselors and rehabilitation professionals who understand the importance of accessibility, advocacy, and person-centered care. Our students are trained to recognize how environmental, social, and systemic barriers can affect well-being while supporting inclusive practices that affirm the dignity, autonomy, and strengths of individuals with disabilities.

As we observe this important month, we encourage our students, alumni, faculty, and community partners to reflect on how they can help create more accessible and affirming communities. Whether through advocacy, education, inclusive language, or everyday acts of respect and support, each effort contributes to a more welcoming world. Together, we can help ensure that people with disabilities are seen, valued, and supported in every space they enter.

Student Spotlight: Shelbra Dozier-Woodberry Featured in Diversity Works Magazine

The University of South Carolina's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program is proud to celebrate class of 2027 student, **Shelbra Dozier-Woodberry**, for her recent feature in Diversity Works magazine. Her article, "**Understanding Dual Diagnosis**," showcases her passion for mental health advocacy and highlights an important issue facing individuals, families, and communities across the country.

In her article, Shelbra explores dual diagnosis, also known as co-occurring disorders, which occurs when an individual experiences both a mental health condition and a substance use disorder at the same time. She explains the importance of recognizing that these conditions are interconnected and often require an integrated approach to treatment rather than being addressed separately.

Shelbra's publication in Diversity Works magazine reflects both her commitment to serving others and the high level of scholarship and professional engagement demonstrated by students in the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program. Her ability to communicate complex clinical concepts in an accessible and meaningful way is a testament to her dedication to the counseling profession and to advocating for those affected by co-occurring disorders.



The Diversity Works magazine cover.

[Read Shelbra's article in the July issue of Diversity Works Magazine here.](#)



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Alumni Spotlight: Spring '26 Graduate Dave Tussey

"The title "alumnus" still feels new, especially with graduation having taken place on May 8 of this year. Even so, it already represents the privilege of joining those who have successfully navigated a challenging course of study and stepped through the gateway into a new career. In the short time since graduation, several lessons have become clear, and those still in the program may find value in carrying similar lessons with them as they continue their own journey. While developing a private counseling practice has brought challenges, it has also proven rewarding. Through that process, four valuable lessons have emerged:



Alumni Amanda Allen, Skylar Linder, and Dave Tussey take a selfie at graduation.

Lesson 1 – Value the relationships built during the program. Early on, it became clear that success in the coursework depended on teamwork, shared responsibility, and the support of classmates working toward the same goal. Strong working relationships with Andrea Brownfield and others helped create confidence and encouragement along the way. During the final year, the opportunity to work with Skylar Linder and Amanda Allen in the Community Care Program became especially meaningful, and those relationships continued through internship and graduation. Skylar and Amanda are now successful counselors, yet the encouragement and support among the three of us continues almost daily as ideas are shared, work is reflected upon, and challenges are navigated together.

Lesson 2 – Pay attention and stay connected to what was learned. During the program, the question occasionally arose, "Will this really be used in counseling practice?" Recently, a review of the final program of study and each completed course made the answer clear. Even after less than three months in the field, lessons from every course have already proven useful, often bringing to mind specific comments, anecdotes, guidance, and insights shared by instructors and faculty leadership.

Lesson 3 – Reality is different, but in a good way. In classroom role-plays, there was usually a general sense of what to expect and how the interaction should unfold. That experience was valuable because it built confidence and allowed newly acquired knowledge to be applied in a structured, almost textbook way. Practicum and internship moved the experience closer to reality while still providing guidance from site supervisors, classmates, and Dr. Richardson-Booth's Monday noon counsel. Today, regular meetings with an LPC supervisor provide insight and feedback while working toward the 1,500-hour requirement mandated by the state. That is why reality is different, but in a good way. There is something positive about developing independence and learning to stand on one's own. Yes, it can be intimidating and even a little scary, but it is also liberating to know that each counselor is accountable for personal actions and for the care provided to others.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Alumni Spotlight: Spring '26 Graduate Dave Tussey

And finally, lesson 4: give back by sharing the skills and knowledge gained through the program. There is always a need for compassionate, well-prepared professionals, and when time allows, volunteer service can be a meaningful way to contribute. This lesson became especially clear after learning about the need for licensed Disaster Mental Health counselor volunteers with the American Red Cross. After researching the role, responsibilities, and training requirements, the opportunity to serve in that capacity became a powerful reminder that counseling skills can extend beyond the office and into moments when communities need support most. At some point in our lives, we have all benefited from someone's willingness to volunteer their time and care.

There will surely be many more lessons to take from the Rehabilitation and Counseling program. One of the most important is the distinction between being trained as a counselor and receiving a counselor education. Training often focuses on performing a specific task or following a routine process. Education, however, develops knowledge, critical thinking, understanding, and sound judgment. If anything has become clear in the brief time since graduation, it is that counseling is never routine or rote. Each person, each story, and each moment calls for thoughtfulness, humility, and care." - **Dave Tussey, recent graduate**

To get in touch with Dave, you may contact him through the website for his newly opened practice, [Mental health counseling in Orangeburg & St Matthews | DRT Clinical Counseling Service online](#) or through his contact information found below.

Phone: (803) 900-8584 (text or call)

Email: drtclinicalcounseling@gmail.com

Office Location: Trinity Presbyterian Church, 975 Willington Drive, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Welcome Our Newest Program Coordinator: LaVonn Scott

The University of South Carolina's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program is pleased to welcome LaVonn Scott as our newest Program Coordinator. In this role, LaVonn will work alongside Patrick Demery to enhance the student experience by providing comprehensive support to current and prospective students throughout their academic journey.

LaVonn joins the program with a strong commitment to student success and a passion for creating meaningful connections. As Program Coordinator, she will assist students with navigating program resources, answering questions, coordinating communications, and helping ensure they have the tools and support needed to thrive both academically and professionally.

"Our students are at the heart of everything we do," said Patrick Demery. "Adding LaVonn to our team strengthens our ability to provide personalized support and exceptional service to every student in our program. We're excited to have her on board and look forward to the positive impact she'll make."



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Welcome Our Newest Program Coordinator: LaVonn Scott

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Program remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive, supportive learning environment that prepares students to become compassionate, skilled professionals. LaVonn's addition reflects the program's continued investment in student success and excellence in service.

Meet LaVonn Scott

"I am honored to join the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program and be a part of a team dedicated to preparing future counselors and rehabilitation professionals."

Email: LaVonn.Scott@uscmed.sc.edu

Phone: 803.216.3316



LaVonn Scott, our newest program coordinator.

C&R Students Present at 2026 Life with Brain Injury Conference

On Friday, July 24th, Counseling and Rehabilitation class of 2027 students, Tom Johansen and Olivia Curry were featured as presenters at the 2026 Life with Brain Injury Conference. This inspiring annual event brings together survivors, caregivers, family members, professionals, advocates, and community partners from across South Carolina to share knowledge, discover resources, and explore innovative approaches to Brain Injury (BI) rehabilitation and support.



Tom Johansen, Olivia Curry, and Dr. Dawson pose for a photo.

Tom and Olivia's presentation, **"Not Just A Game: Virtual Reality for TBI Rehabilitation"** examined current research on the effectiveness of VR applications in improving cognitive, social, motor, emotional, behavioral, and functional skills. During the session, they explained how VR-based interventions increase engagement, motivation, and participation in rehabilitation and discussed the role of VR in supporting neuroplasticity through repetitive stimulation and training.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

C&R Students Present at 2026 Life with Brain Injury Conference



Tom Johansen and Olivia Curry pose for a picture behind the podium on the conference stage.



Tom Johansen and Olivia Curry present at the Life with Brain Injury conference.

Virtual reality (VR) has continued to grow as a promising tool in rehabilitation for individuals experiencing a traumatic brain injury and other cognitive disabilities.

Join us in congratulating Tom and Olivia for shining light on this valuable resource and promoting its use and understanding to those in the community impacted by brain injury (BI)!!!





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Blackboard: Did You Know?

Don't forget to check out the new Alumni mentorship feature on blackboard! Students of the C&R Program are now able to access the contact information of select alumni at any time by navigating to the **"Professional Development"** tab in Blackboard, found under the **"Rehabilitation Learning Community"** organization. Students are encouraged to reach out to the listed mentors directly to set up a time for a mentorship session.



Blackboard

Upon opening the list of alumni, you will see each previous students' contact information and typical availability, as well as their current role, credentials, and practice focus. This is a great and efficient way to make real-world connections in the field, learn more about what to expect as a future counselor, and receive guidance from individuals who have gone through the program as well as the practicum and internship process.

Wellness Corner

As the semester begins, it's easy to fall into the trap of constant productivity, but your brain needs regular breaks to function at its best. Intentionally setting aside "no-study" time each day—even just 30 to 60 minutes—gives your mind space to reset and refocus. Use this time for something that genuinely brings you joy and feels restorative: take a walk, read a book for fun, call a friend, draw, or just relax without guilt. This practice not only helps reduce burnout but also boosts creativity and motivation when you return to your academic tasks. Think of it as recharging your internal battery—because rest is productive, too.

Writing Tip: Citing Laws and Legislation

Citing laws and legislation in APA style can seem tricky, but it follows a clear structure. Begin with the name of the law, followed by the title number, source, and section number in parentheses, then the year. For example: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990). In your reference list, you don't need to italicize any parts of the citation. Be sure to include the URL if you accessed the law online, especially from a government website. For more examples, visit Purdue OWL's APA Legal References section.



Mr. Sauce looks at the camera with his pretty blue eyes.

Pet of the Month

Meet our pet of the month, the 12-year-old Siamese Mr. Sauce! "Mr. Sauce was abandoned in his home by his previous owner and was listed on Facebook by a neighbor who found him and two other pets inside. He is super friendly and very chatty. I recently bought a pet stroller, and he loves going in it for walks around the neighborhood or on the beach." - **C&R Student, Dawn Brewer**

Show us your pet by filling out the form below:

Pet of the Month

Save the Date

Fall 2026 Semester Fee Payment Deadline -
Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Mandatory New and Returning Student
Orientation Event – Friday August 14th from 8:30am-
4:30pm

First day of Fall '26 classes – Tuesday, August 18th

Fall 2026 Health Insurance Waiver Deadline -
September 7, 2026

Graduation Application Deadline - September 25,
2026

Counseling and Rehabilitation Professional Speaker
Series featuring Cathy Wiseman – October 9th from
3:00pm-4:30pm

Counseling and Rehabilitation Comprehensive
Assessment Date for December Graduates - Friday,
October 9 from 9:00am-3:00pm

Mandatory Learning Community Saturday Event
– Saturday, October 10th from 8:30am-4:30pm