The year 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of The Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at the University of South Florida. In celebration of this landmark, the Department will be hosting a Gala for all alumni and current students on June 1, 2012. In addition to planning this event, the department also conducted a survey of its 1,101 alumni to evaluate the impact of the program and to follow up on our graduate's careers. The results of the survey highlighted the diversity and versatility of our graduates and the impact that our graduates have had in the Tampa Bay community and surrounding areas.

Of survey respondents, 74% reported that they were employed in a rehabilitation setting when they graduated and 39% of respondents indicated that they received a promotion upon graduation. Regarding credentials, 45% of respondents obtained a license in mental health counseling, 7% obtained a license in marriage and family therapy, 33% are certified rehabilitation counselors and 11% are certified addictions professionals.

In Florida and in other states, our graduates reported working in private practice, foster care programs, schools, colleges, universities, police departments, homeless prevention programs, inpatient and outpatient mental health and addictions treatment centers, hospitals, government agencies, child care centers, hospices and nursing homes. In and around the Tampa Bay Area, graduates are employed at USF, Psychological Management Group, Mental Health Care, Hillsborough Community College, Hyde Park Counseling Center, the Pasco County School Board, Bay Pines VAHCS, Vocational Rehabilitation, Tampa General Hospital, England and Associates, the Salvation Army and Youth and Family Alternatives, among other organizations.

The most common populations our graduates work with are addiction disorders, adolescents and adults who have mental health disorders, adults with physical disabilities, couples, families, and veterans. Forty percent of our surveyed graduates earn between $40,000 and $59,999 annually and 37% earn over $60,000 a year. Of survey respondents currently working in the field, 90% reported that they were satisfied with their current career position.

It is clear, our surveyed graduates indicated, that our degree is valuable for them and for the communities in which they work. Professionally, graduates feel prepared to provide necessary help to a public that needs it. And the results of providing that sort of service, our graduates reported, are very rewarding.
Greetings Students, Alums, Colleagues and Friends,

Can you believe it?! It’s been 40 years since the Board of Trustees approved the Master of Arts Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of South Florida. Dr. Calvin Pinkard Jr. was the founding Chair and 10 students enrolled in the first class. On June 1, 2012, we will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Department with a Gala at the USF Alumni Center in Legends Hall at 5:30 p.m. The theme of the celebration is “Celebrating 40 Years of Transforming Lives and Communities through Academic Excellence”. We are very excited about this event and look forward to visiting with many of our former and current faculty, staff, students and friends. You will receive a “Save the Date” and formal invitation very soon and we hope you will join us in celebrating this important milestone. Additional information is available in this issue and on the Department website at http://rmhc.cbc.usf.edu.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Julianne Serovich, a widely respected couples and family therapist from The Ohio State University is the new Dean of the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences at USF. We look forward to working with her in her new capacity.

In 2011, the Department was awarded a permanent Instructor position to teach in the Marriage and Family Therapy Certificate Program. After an extensive search, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Ryan Henry, LMFT, was unanimously recommended by the faculty and approved by the Dean and Provost. He accepted the position and joined the faculty on January 1, 2012 in a permanent capacity. He will continue to serve as Director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Certificate, which was recognized as having the second highest growth in the University in 2011. The growth was due largely to Dr. Henry’s dedication and outreach. Please join us in extending congratulations and a warm welcome to Dr. Henry!

Ms. Aleatha Neal joined us on a part-time basis last semester as our Enrollment Management Specialist. She replaces Denise Montgomery who accepted another position in the College of Education. Aleatha is on loan with us temporarily from the Applied Behavior Analyst Program in the Department of Child and Family Studies. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge about enrollment and graduate education. Please join me in welcoming Aleatha to the Department.

Also, we are pleased to announce that 17 new students were admitted to the Department Spring Semester 2012. The academic credentials and diversity of our new students is very impressive and we look forward to working with each of them. As with Fall 2011 admits, our new students are among the most talented and diverse to join the program. In addition, 25 students graduated at Fall 2011 Commencement Convocation on December 9, 2011. This class was among the largest ever to graduate in one semester and most of the students completed the program in an average of just over two years. Even more impressive is that most of the graduates were employed prior to or immediately following Commencement. Also noteworthy is that several members of the class successfully passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Examination and others were awarded the designation of “Registered Mental Health Counselor” with the State of Florida. We are very proud of each of them and their accomplishments and extend our best wishes for continued success.

Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Joan Reid and the commitment of the faculty and staff, the Department revised the Comprehensive Examination in Fall 2011. The new format is multiple-choice and consists of 225 multiple-choice questions. It is administered in two sections: 120 questions in the first session (Section I); and 105 questions in the second session (Section II). The Examination is comprised of questions across fifteen (15) knowledge domains underlying rehabilitation and mental health counseling. While students were apprehensive about the new format, we are pleased to announce that there was a 100% pass rate on the first administration. Congratulations to our students and faculty for such an outstanding achievement!

As always, I can never thank our faculty and staff enough for their continued dedication and support on behalf of our students and program. They do an incredible job every day! Please take a moment and join me in thanking them for their continued dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

Tennyson J. Wright, Ph.D., CRC
Associate Professor & Chair
Welcome New Dean

An international search for a new dean of the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences (CBCS) at the University of South Florida has culminated in the appointment of Julianne Serovich, a widely respected couples and family therapist from The Ohio State University.

Dr. Serovich’s research focuses on the relationship between HIV disclosure to family, friends, and sex partners and the effects of sharing such information both on reducing HIV transmission and building social support structures for those coping with the illness. She is the principal investigator (PI) of the Kiss & Tell Project for Men and the Kiss & Tell Project for Women as well as other major studies that have resulted in more than 60 book chapters and peer reviewed publications.

Her work began more than two decades ago at Texas Tech University, where, after receiving her doctorate from the University of Georgia, she was named an assistant professor of marriage and family therapy in 1991. Also a graduate of Loyola College, Baltimore, she joined the OSU faculty in 1995 and was named the inaugural director of the CFT program. Since 1997, she has received grant funding in excess of $9 million, mostly from the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH).

We would like to welcome Dr. Serovich to College of Behavioral and Community Sciences and look forward to her arrival this summer.

Welcome New Faculty

We would like to welcome Dr. Lisa Ottomanelli as the Department’s first Courtesy Faculty member. Dr. Ottomanelli is a psychologist at the James A Haley VA Center of Excellence Maximizing Rehabilitation Outcomes where she serves as the principal investigator for a large VA funded multi-center study of vocational rehabilitation and Spinal Cord Injury. Her research interest and activities are a great fit with the department and we are excited to have her join us. In her new faculty affiliation, she will be guest lecturing in various courses, collaborating with faculty on research, and mentoring student research within the department.

Dr. Lisa Ottomanelli

Inspirational Students

Jessica Russo, a student of the RMHC graduate program, recently created a non-profit cause project called Eating to Live, Not the Alternative. Eating to Live, Not the Alternative (ETLNTA) was founded based on Jessica’s real-life struggle working through an eating disorder, poor body image and poor self-esteem. Through this project, Jessica has reached 100’s of people with messages of positive self-esteem and positive body image as well as through her personal blog – www.eatingtolivenotthealternative.blogspot.com – which is linked to the project’s Facebook page – www.facebook.com/EatingLiving.
Alumni & Current Student News

Tim Cashman...
was licensed as an LMHC. He is currently doing jail diversion for the Public Defender in Pasco County.

Leah Goodman...
is getting married June 3rd.

Ben Holmes...
passed the LMHC exam.

Marian Lee...
was accepted into the Ph.D. program with the political science department at the University of South Florida. She is one of six new students and her studies are fully funded. She will be working on research assessing the impact of globalization on the sustainability of local communities.

Barbara LoFrisco...
recently accepted a position as a paid blogger for the site Masters In Counseling (mastersincounseling.org). She also recently co-authored an article titled “How Do Career Centers Use Social Networking Sites”, which has been accepted for publication in Career Development Quarterly.

Robert Mayor...
and his wife Kelly Mayor welcomed Faith Elizabeth Mayor (top photo) into the world on January 8, 2012. Faith was 7 lbs 13.3 oz and 20.5 inches long. (top photo)

Mary Elizabeth “Betsy” Mirro-Glass, Ph.D., LMHC, CRC...
left teaching and is counseling in a psychiatric office under an M.D. She earned her Ph.D. in the field of Psychoneurogastroenterology (Ex: IBS) in 2000 and found that the Gut-Brain (Enteric Nervous System) has a major role in the lives of most people (not just those in counseling).

Linda Peterman...
recently completed a course to become a Qualified Supervisor.

Kristina Risola...
was hired for a permanent VR Counselor position in Spring Hill on April 2nd.

Janie Koike...
is in Peru for an international practicum experience. View her blog at: http://www.peru-zo.com/

Jessica Russo...
got engaged! On January 28th, 2012 her biggest fan, Galo Poveda, proposed and she said YES! They will be married in Jessica’s hometown of West Palm Beach after she graduates in Spring of 2013. (middle photo)

Jim Soda...
and his wife Nikki Soda gave birth to their daughter Harper (bottom photo) on September 16, 2011.
Alumni Spotlight - Aaron Shaw, M.A., CRC

Aaron Shaw Ph.D., LMFT received his MA from University of South Florida in Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling. He received his PhD from Brigham Young University in Marriage and Family Therapy. He has worked with teens in many settings including the Department of Children and Families, wilderness therapy, and residential treatment facilities for the past 10 years. He is also happily married and the proud father of 6 children.

Working In Residential Treatment with Teens

As a therapist who specializes in working with teens, one of the first things I noticed was a common pattern in about 99% of my clients. The pattern was that nearly every single teen, with which I have had the privilege of working, has had huge self-esteem issues. This pattern is usually quite easy to see because teens have a way of swinging the pendulum so far to one side or the other, it is hard to ignore. By the time a teen enters treatment, they are usually shouting from the rooftops either how awful or wonderful they are. Both seem to be pretty good indicators of low self-esteem.

When working with clients with self-esteem issues, I try to introduce them to the idea of the rejection cycle. My belief is that 99% of us as humans go through the rejection cycle during our teen years. The rejection cycle basically assumes that a fear of rejection is at the root of most self-esteem issues.

So, here is how the rejection cycle works:

A child is going through life, and all is well. Then someone, who the child thinks should love the child, doesn’t at this point the child is likely to internalize this rejection and think, “Maybe there is something wrong with me, and that is why they rejected me.” And, that is where the rejection cycle begins.

The next part of the rejection cycle occurs when the child begins to look for evidence that there is something wrong with them. A child can be very persistent in this task. After searching diligently, the child will find many evidences that there is something wrong with them, and low self-esteem has been activated. By the time the child becomes a teenager, the low self-esteem has snowballed to become a very large problem. The teen is now behaving in extreme ways in order to either cope with or cover up their extreme fears of rejection.

Thus, much of my work with teens revolves around helping them rebuild self-esteem by recognizing the rejection cycle, and helping them find ways to boost their self-confidence. One of the best ways to boost self-esteem is by overcoming challenges you didn’t think you could overcome. This occurs in humans in a maturing process that usually takes years and years in a natural setting. However, the process can be artificially expedited through residential treatment. It is my belief that this is why residential treatment can be so effective. In essence, residential treatment is all about speeding up the maturation process as we ask teens to overcome the tremendous challenges of being in treatment. These challenges include being away from home when they don’t want to be, following a set of rules they do not typically want to follow, and exploring painful issues from their past they would much rather avoid.

Of course, this idea of speeding up the maturation process through overcoming major challenges is not new. Many cultures including our own have seen countless children go off to conquer a mountain, serve as a missionary, or fight in a war, only to watch them return home a mature man or woman. That is the promise and hope of residential treatment for teens.
SOS Student Association

This Fall Semester, S.O.S. continued the lecture series meetings with Dr. Weinburg on things to think about and prepare for in developing a private practice. It also participated in the Tampa Bay’s 2nd Annual NEDA 5k on February 25, 2010 to raise awareness of eating disorders. There were over 400 walkers and about $60,000 was raised for treatment of these devastating disorders. Our S.O.S. team had 6 members from our program, including Dr. Dillahunt and three of our students doggies. Our group raised over $550 towards the total group. One of the S.O.S. topics you can look forward to this fall include: Private Practice Part Three. We will be participating once again in the community outreach program entitled “Take Back the Night!”. Join our organization, Serving Others Selflessly, on Blackboard and “Like” us on Facebook to get all the up to date information on what’s going on. We look forward to seeing everyone at a meeting or social this semester!

Photos are of the S.O.S. group at the NEDA Walk on 2/25/2012

**Left to Right:** Steve Colon, Tiffany Shillingford, Hope Shaw, Candance Austrich, Dr. Tina Dillahunt-Aspillaga, and Jessica Russo

**Top Center Photo:** S.O.S. meeting with Dr. Weinberg: Private Practical Part II

On April 29th, S.O.S. will be supporting the Crisis Center and their annual event - Take Back the Night.

The Graduation Social will be on 5/4, (location TBA) with a large number of graduates this semester; it is sure to be a massive hit!
Grants Update

Dr. Joan Reid’s grant application ($5000) “Assessing Trauma Bonding in Trafficked Youth” was selected for funding by the American Psychology-Law Society (APLS) Early Career Professional Grant Committee.

Kearns, W.D. (Investigator) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs “Extending Smart Home Technology for Cognitively Impaired Veterans to Delay Institutionalization” T-21 (PI, Jan Jasiewicz, PhD) - 7/15/2011-7/14/2012 - $650,952.

Kearns, W.D. (Principal Investigator) U.S. Department of Defense “Changes in movement variability and functional status in veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury receiving rehabilitation in the JAHVA Polytrauma Treatment Program (PTRP) and Student veterans” 9/1/2010-8/31/2013 $198,000.

Kearns, W.D. (Co-Investigator) Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality “Telemedicine for Mental Health Services for the Linguistically Isolated: A Pilot Study R03” (PI, Yuri Jang, PhD) 7/1/2011-7/1/2012 - $100,000.


Presentations


Dillahunt-Aspillaga, C. Santa Clara Valley Brain Injury Conference: Building on the Legacy of Coma to Community, San Jose, CA. Accepted, November 2011. Unable to present due to conflict.


On April 11, 2012, Dr. Tammy Jorgensen Smith will be presenting a poster on the One Stop Service Center Initiative at the national NCRE conference in San Francisco.

Ashley Morton (graduated in December 2011) will be presenting a poster at NCRE on the research she did through two independent studies last summer and fall semesters. The title of her poster is The Relationship between Social Support and Secondary Trauma in the Non-Military Spouse.

Ashley is also working for Dr. Jorgensen Smith as a research assistant this semester. Her primary role is to assist with follow-up research on the Microenterprise Training and Technical Assistance (METTA) model. Her position has been generously funded by USF’s Florida Center for Inclusive Communities - a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.


Reid, Joan A. Battered into Prostitution: From Intimate Partner Violence into Sex Trafficking. American Society of Criminology Annual Conference, Washington, DC, November 2011.


Fall 2011 Graduates

- Kaley Brown
- Susan Case
- Jennifer Chavarro
- Melissa Cooper
- Sandra Cortes
- Vincent Cosentino
- Melissa Critelli
- Anne Darnell
- Morgan Ednie
- Jessica Futoran
- Angie Gibney
- Amy Gierhahn
- Cynthia Gonzmart
- Mellisa Gooden
- Misti Green
- Marisel Kandell
- Sara Marr
- Sean McLawhorn
- Amy Menke
- Alison Middleton
- Nathaly Miniello
- Ashley Morton
- Denise Nicholas Williams
- Amber Paul
- Alexandra Pisa
- Kristina Risola
- Catherine Schurman
- Christopher Scott
- Courtney Stern
- Amanda Tatko
- Katye Tuttle

Welcome New Students! Spring 2012

- Rachel Burnett
- Kelly Carroll
- Ann Dean
- Ashley Dressel
- Victoria Fernandez
- Casey Fox
- Danielle Friedman
- Ellen Garnett
- Samantha Gutierrez
- Chanelle Henderson
- Julie Junkerman
- Carroll Kelly
- David Kent
- William McCormack
- Brittany McLaren
- Cecelia Marchese
- Shaina Nunes
- Robyn Snow
- Jade Stevens

Years of Service Awards

In January of 2012 our department had two faculty members and one staff member recognized for their years of service at USF. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Gary Dudell (5 years), Becky Karas (10 years) and Dr. Rick Wienberg (30 years) not only for their years of service but also for the wonderful contribution they are to the department and our students success.

Left to right: Dr. Rick Weinberg, Becky Karas, Dr. Gary Dudell
2012 Calendar

April
10- S.O.S meeting on Counselor Wellness
27- Spring 2012 classes end
29- S.O.S event (Take Back the Night)
30 - Final exams begin

May
4- S.O.S Graduate Social
4-5: Spring commencement Tampa
7 - Non degree-seeking student registration begins
14 - Summer A & C first day of classes
28 - Memorial Day

June
1- SAVE THE DATE! 40th anniversary
   RMHC banquet & reunion
22 - Summer A last day of classes
25 - Summer B first day of classes

July
4 - Independence Day
20 - Summer C last day of classes

August
3- Summer B last day of classes
4- Summer Commencement
27- First day of fall classes

September
3- Labor Day

http://rmhc.cbc.usf.edu

The department website now contains a copy of the course sequencing for the MFT and Addictions Certificate. These course sequencing lists can be found on each of the certificates description page at the bottom. The Behavioral Health Certificate will have its course sequencing list posted in the next month. The course sequencing for each certificate lists which classes will be offered each semester for the next two years. This will assist students in planning when to take certificate courses during their program.
Our Mission

Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is an interdisciplinary field and, as such, draws from many related areas. For example, included in this interdisciplinary program is information drawn from psychology, education, behavioral sciences, biological sciences, philosophy, engineering, and law. As an interdisciplinary field, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling attracts faculty members from a full range of disciplines and related programs as they enhance diversity of thought and add richness to the academic and research needs of the department.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is to promote quality services for individuals with differences in abilities and to help the state meet its human service needs in the areas of rehabilitation and mental health through teaching, research and service.

About the Masters Program

The graduate program in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling is fully accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE). Upon completion of the 60 credit hour program, graduates are prepared for careers as both rehabilitation and mental health counselors. The training program includes experiential learning, emphasizes psychological, social, medical, and vocational aspects of disability, and also develops and refines personal adjustment and mental health counseling skills.

The Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling offers both a non-thesis and thesis program.

Graduate Certificate Programs

The Department offers four graduate certificate programs to provide students with the opportunity to specialize skills and knowledge according to future career goals.

Marriage & Family Therapy. Students develop skills to diagnose and treat mental, emotional, and relationship disorders from a systemic framework.

Behavioral Health Counseling. Students develop an in-depth understanding of holistic theory and practices within the counseling process, and holistic perspectives and approaches to wellness.

Substance Abuse Counseling. Students develop an understanding of the addiction cycle and its application within the counseling process.

Rehabilitation Technology. Students develop an understanding of current and emerging rehabilitation technology, medical aspects of disability and career and lifestyle assessment.