

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)

C&R Program Student Orientation - Creating Connections

On Friday, August 14, 2026, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program hosted its annual New and Returning Student Orientation event here on campus at the Floyd School of Medicine – Columbia. The full-day event brought together faculty, staff, students and alumni for a comprehensive introduction to academic resources, professional development opportunities, and community-building experiences.

The day began with a **Welcome and Program Overview session**, where faculty instructors joined students to highlight the Counseling & Rehabilitation Learning Community.

From there, programming branched into parallel sessions tailored for new and returning students.



A large group of C&R students listening to a faculty presentation at orientation.

New students attended an orientation hosted by SOM Student Services, with presentations from university partners and key personnel. This session ensured that students starting in Spring and Fall 2026 received a well-rounded introduction to the many support systems available throughout their academic journey.

Returning students took part in sessions focused on academic progression, including pre-practicum information, a practicum and internship panel, a comprehensive exam overview, and licensure preparation.

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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

C&R Program Student Orientation - Creating Connections

Following a **networking lunch**, the afternoon program emphasized peer-to-peer learning and alumni engagement. Later sessions brought the entire learning community together. Faculty facilitated a **Personal and Professional Development workshop**, covering counselor dispositions, ethical obligations, professional planning, netiquette, and the evolving role of tools like AI in counseling practice. Students then engaged in a **Reflecting Team Activity**, a therapeutic exercise emphasizing cooperation, transparency, and meaning-making within the counseling process. This activity was focused on hopes for success as folks enter their program and hopes of those returning for the new group of students

The day concluded with a **Learning Community Forum: Strategies for Success and Evaluations**, where students and faculty reflected on shared goals and planned for the year ahead. This annual orientation not only equips students with knowledge and resources but also fosters a spirit of collaboration and mutual support—a hallmark of the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program.

Student Quotes from Orientation

"Walking into orientation not knowing what to expect and not really knowing anyone else was very nerve-wracking, but it turned out to be such a universal bonding experience. The community of upperclassmen and

faculty was so welcoming and excited to meet the incoming students here that you couldn't help but get excited yourself. It really does feel like a learning community; you could feel the genuine passion and commitment in every focus group and large group session. Meeting so many different people in my class, the ones ahead, and faculty was exciting and, at times, overwhelming. I valued ending the day with the Reflecting Team Activity because it gave me a look at what's to come in this program as I learn more about myself as a future counselor and about others." - **1st Year Student, Kareena Deol**



A student presents to a larger group of students

September 7th, 2026:
Fall 2026 Health Insurance
Waiver Deadline

September 25th, 2026:
Graduation Application
Deadline

September 26th, 2026:
Run with All your Heart 5k

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!





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

C&R Program Student Orientation - Creating Connections

"Orientation was eye-opening to me this year. As a second-year student, this was my first time getting to hear examples of what practicum and internship looked like and the process it takes to get there. It made me excited to know where I am headed in the next few years and that I will have help and support from not only faculty, but my peer colleagues, past graduates and staff. Everyone is in my corner and wants to help me along the way." - Second Year Student, Catherine Cann



The first row of students listen to an instructor at Orientation.

Counseling and Rehabilitation Program Joins the Ollie Johnson Memorial Annual Health Fair

On July 31st, 2026, the C&R Program proudly participated in the annual Ollie Johnson Memorial I-95 Health Fair, an event dedicated to promoting community wellness, education, and access to health resources.

Faculty and students from the program hosted an interactive table, engaging attendees with information about counseling and rehabilitation services while also showcasing innovative tools like virtual reality technology used in therapeutic and educational settings. Visitors of all ages had the chance to try out VR headsets, sparking curiosity and meaningful conversations about the future of mental health and rehabilitation practices.



A red, white, and blue interstate 95 street sign logo.

The fair provided an opportunity for the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program to connect with the community, demonstrate its commitment to wellness and accessibility, and inspire the next generation of health professionals. Program representatives also shared resources on academic opportunities at USC, highlighting pathways for those interested in pursuing a career in counseling and rehabilitation.

The event not only honored the memory of Ollie Johnson but also reaffirmed the School of Medicine's mission to serve both its students and the broader community through education, advocacy, and innovation. Continue on to see some pictures from the event!



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

Counseling and Rehabilitation Program Joins the Ollie Johnson Memorial Annual Health Fair



Students Tiana Dobson and Olivia Curry pose for a photo with Dr. Stackhouse.



Tiana Dobson and Dr. Dawson assisting two individuals with virtual reality headsets.

CRSA Recruiting for Run, Walk and Roll with All your Heart 5k

In partnership with the Floyd School of Medicine, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Student Association (CRSA) will be hosting members for a Run, Walk and Roll with All your Heart 5k here on the FSOM Columbia campus on Saturday, September 26th.

[If you're interested in joining the organization, sign up using this form.](#) CRSA Members who sign up before the event will receive \$5 off their registration.

Med students from across campus are teaming up to get active while raising funds for Curing Kids Cancer. If you're not interested in running, that's fine too – CRSA will be hosting a shortened version of the 5k for members to run, walk or roll the beginning of the course as a group. Come out to support a great cause through CRSA!

- [CRSA Membership Registration](#)
- [Run, Walk and Roll with All your Heart 5k Registration](#)



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

CRSA Recruiting for Run, Walk and Roll with All your Heart 5k



Run with all your Heart

Med students team up to host the Run with all your Heart 5K at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine!

8 AM - Registration

9 AM - Run Begins



**Register
OR Donate!**



Curing Kids Cancer is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. As such, any donation is tax-deductible.

September 26th, 2026

6311 Garners Ferry Rd.
Columbia, SC 29209



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

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Farren Stackhouse Attends NAMRC 31st Annual Training Conference

The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) 31st Annual Training Conference is a professional development and networking event bringing together rehabilitation, workforce development, and human service professionals from across the country.

Held July 22–25, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, the conference featured engaging presentations, educational workshops, networking opportunities, and discussions focused on multicultural rehabilitation, leadership, advocacy, equity, workforce inclusion, and best practices in serving diverse populations.



National
Association of
Multicultural
Rehabilitation
Concerns



Dr. Farren Stackhouse.

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Program was represented by our own Dr. Stackhouse who attended as a panelist alongside fellow counselor educators.

“It was a pleasure to represent the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program at the 31st annual NAMRC Conference in Atlanta, GA. The conference theme, Driving Excellence & Innovation: Cultivating Practitioners, Scholars, and Future Leaders in Rehabilitation Counseling, emphasized the importance of advancing excellence, innovation, and leadership within the field. As a panelist alongside fellow counselor educators, we shared aspects of our professional experiences, with an emphasis on intersectionality, professional identity development, and advocacy within academic spaces. We highlighted strategies for persistence, leadership, and community building to support the advancement of emerging scholars in counselor education.” – **Dr. Stackhouse**



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Program Coordinator, Patrick Demery Preparing for Paternity Leave

Hi all! Patrick Demery, the Program Coordinator for USC's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program here. As many of you know, my wife, Lianne and I will be welcoming our first kiddo here in a few weeks (September 6th due date 😊). During the time following, I'll be observing a two week paternity leave.

While I'm away from the office, Program Coordinator, LaVonn Scott will be filling in to assume my duties. Please see LaVonn's contact information below and direct any questions her way during this time. Once I return to the office in mid September, I'll be catching up and responding to all emails that may have been sent.



Patrick and Lianne opening gifts at the baby shower.



Dr. Sacco-Bene cuts a cake.

Looking forward to sharing baby pictures with you all soon – in the meantime, check out these pics from the baby shower hosted by Dr. Sacco-Bene and the C&R crew! Thank you sincerely to all of my FSOM family who attended.

Email: LaVonn.Scott@uscmed.sc.edu
Phone: 803.216.3316

Celebrating Our Summer 2026 Graduates: Kristin Jackson and Abigail Johnson

The University of South Carolina's Counseling and Rehabilitation Program proudly congratulates **Kristin Jackson and Abigail Johnson**, our Summer 2026 graduates!

As they complete this important chapter of their academic and professional journeys, Kristin and Abigail represent the dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence that define our program. Their accomplishments reflect countless hours of learning, growth, collaboration, and preparation for meaningful careers in counseling and rehabilitation.

Please join the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program in celebrating **Kristin Jackson and Abigail Johnson** on this outstanding achievement. We are proud of all they have accomplished and look forward to following their continued success.

Congratulations, Kristin and Abigail! We wish you both continued success as you begin this exciting next chapter. Forever to thee!



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

Blackboard: Did You Know?

Did you know that [BlackBoard's Rehabilitation Counseling Learning Community tab](#) contains an entire section devoted to the Portfolio Process? The Portfolio Process is for your personal and professional development. While there is no set format for your portfolio and the process is not graded, portfolio is a required part of the program and leads directly to your practicum and internship experiences.



Blackboard

By using the link above, you can navigate to the Portfolio Process Handbook which was designed to aid you as a step by step guide and source of information for all things portfolio related. By utilizing the Portfolio Process Handbook, you'll be able to stay on top of your goals and reflections each semester so that you can reflect periodically on your experiences, learning, and overall development.

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: APA Title Page

The title page is the first thing a person sees when reading your paper, so is important to make a good first impression! Students should usually use the student title page format and include the following elements, in the order listed: Paper title, Name of each author, Affiliation for each author, Course number and name, Instructor name, Assignment due date. Do not forget page number 1 in the top right corner of the page header!

Source: American Psychological Association.



Rajah looks at the camera with his pretty green eyes.

Pet of the Month

Meet our pet of the month, the 1-year-old American Pitbull Terrier and Labrador Retriever Mix Rajah! "Rajah is originally from Birmingham, Alabama, taken in by the Greater Birmingham Humane Society as a stray puppy. My sister originally adopted him, but when her schedule at the hospital became too busy, I was happy to take him off her hands. He is the sweetest, derpiest guy, always ready for playtime. The zoomies after dinner are his favorite hobby, and he really likes Greenies." - **C&R Student, Kareena Deol**

Show us your pet by filling out the form below:

[Pet of the Month](#)

Save the Date

Fall 2026 Health Insurance Waiver Deadline -
September 7, 2026

Graduation Application Deadline - September 25,
2026

Run with All your Heart 5k - September 26, 2026 -
[Register here](#)

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