Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies
Mental Health-Rehabilitation Counseling

About the Program

The CAGS Program in Mental Health Counseling with a Concentration in Rehabilitation is a unique graduate program. Mental health and rehabilitation counseling share a commitment to increasing the quality of life for people with disabilities and mental health issues. This interdisciplinary program draws from psychology, education, behavioral sciences, biological sciences, philosophy, engineering and law to prepare clinically skilled, knowledgeable, and committed rehabilitation and mental health professionals.

Consistent with the mission of Salve Regina University, the CAGS in Mental Health is committed to offering a professional program in mental health counseling that encourages professionals to promote universal justice for people with disabilities and to advocate for accessible, effective, evidence-based mental health programming. The program has been developed with the belief that opportunities for people with mental illness should be equal to those of all other citizens. All individuals are vital resources for the betterment of society, and we celebrate that diversity.

This 12 credit program is offered in the evenings in Warwick, RI. It is designed for those professionals who have a master’s degree in counseling that is fewer than 60 credits required by licensure in RI, MA and most states. It is modeled on a national standard for Mental Health Counseling licensure, enhancing eligibility for licensure in many states. It is recommended that students explore the specific requirements for a licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state where they intend to practice. Students may take additional credits, as needed, to meet academic requirements for licensure as a mental health counselor.

Students may obtain internship placements in a variety of clinical settings and work with a variety of client populations of their choice. Examples of internship settings include community mental health centers, adoption agencies, family service agencies, alternative education programs, psychiatric hospitals, children and adolescent residential programs, and other related social service agencies.

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As people become familiar with their illness, they recognize their own unique patterns of behavior. If individuals recognize these signs and seek effective and timely care, they can often prevent relapses. However, because mental illnesses have no cure, treatment must be continuous.

Individuals who live with a mental illness also benefit tremendously from taking responsibility for their own recovery. Once the illness is adequately managed, one must monitor potential side effects.

The notion of recovery involves a variety of perspectives. Recovery is a holistic process that includes traditional elements of mental health and aspects that extend beyond medication. Recovery from serious mental illness also includes attaining, and maintaining, physical health as another cornerstone of wellness.

The recovery journey is unique for each individual. There are several definitions of recovery, some grounded in medical and clinical values, some grounded in contexts of community and some in successful living. One of the most important principles is this: recovery is a process, not an event. The uniqueness and individual nature of recovery must be honored. While serious mental illness impacts individuals in many ways, the concept that all individuals can move towards wellness is paramount.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMH)
About Salve Regina
Salve Regina University is an independent, coeducational institution serving approximately 2,500 men and women from 35 states and 16 nations. Its 80-acre oceanfront campus is in the Ochre Point historic district of Newport, Rhode Island, and includes 48 new and adapted buildings. The University is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

Admissions requirements
Salve Regina University evaluates the total application package. Applicants must have completed a master’s degree in a counseling discipline from a regionally accredited college or university.

To apply to the CAGS program
The following materials must be submitted:
• Complete online application: apply.salve.edu/GradCE
• Official transcripts from each college or university attended
• Personal statement
• Two letters of recommendation from a person able to evaluate the candidate’s academic potential. Letters should be submitted via the recommendation form:
  www.salve.edu/sites/default/files/filesfield/documents/RecommendationForm.pdf
• Students who are currently enrolled in one of Salve Regina’s master’s programs should complete the application form designed for internal candidates which may be found at:

The 12 credit CAGS is comprised of four courses beyond a 48 credit degree in counseling including two internship classes.

RHB603: Psychopharmacology for Mental Health Professionals examines the fundamentals of drug pharmacology, drug interactions, and current psychotropic medication protocols along with herbal and nutraceutical complements to psychotherapy.

RHB605: Counseling and Rehabilitation in Mental Health examines all aspects of the major psychiatric disorders along with the symptomatology as presented in the current issue of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM5) and ICD 10. Recommended treatments including biological, behavioral, cognitive and psychosocial and how to interview and use assessment tools in conjunction with the DSM are examined. This course provides advanced skills in the applications of assessing human experience for counseling purposes including clinical decision-making, diagnostic assessment, clinical interviewing, and treatment planning; and holistic considerations within assessment.

RHB608: Advanced Internship I and Seminar in Mental Health focuses on developing the skills needed to implement the principles of mental health. In addition, students participate in the weekly seminar by bringing case examples to the class for discussion and applying evidence-based practices to improve clinical practice based on trauma-informed care. Students continue to work as a mental health counselor interns 20 hours per week for a minimum of an additional 500 hours. Students are supervised one hour per week under the supervision of a licensed onsite counselor approved by the University.

RHB609: Advanced Internship II and Seminar in Mental Health is the second part of advanced internship, with an emphasis on trauma-informed care. Students continue to develop the skills needed to implement the principles of mental health. In addition, students participate in the weekly seminar by bringing case examples to the class for discussion and applying evidence-based practices to improve clinical practice based on trauma-informed care. Students continue to work as a mental health counselor interns 20 hours per week for a minimum of an additional 500 hours. Students are supervised one hour per week under the supervision of a licensed onsite counselor approved by the University.

Following the completion of the 60 credit hours of specified graduate study, a person must complete a minimum of two years of supervised clinical experience. This would include 2,000 hours of direct client contact offering clinical or counseling therapy services, with an emphasis on mental health counseling. RI regulations require that counselors working toward licensure receive a minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision spread over the two-year period, by an approved supervisor, before being eligible to sit for the national licensing exam. This requirement varies from state to state.

Courses are offered at our Center for Adult Education in Warwick, R.I.

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