

# Rehabilitation

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Rehabilitation psychology is a specialty area in psychology. Rehabilitation psychology takes all the studies and applications of psychology and focuses it on people who have disabilities and/or health conditions, usually chronic. This is a way to make sure that an individual's health and welfare, independence and choice, functional abilities, and social roles are at the individual's highest capabilities.

Rehabilitation psychologists can work in a variety of settings. They can work in acute-care hospitals, agencies that assist with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and other diseases of the nervous system, assisted living centers, long-term care facilities, health clinics, hospitals, drug rehabilitation centers, or physical therapy centers.

### **Populations Served**

Rehabilitation psychologist work with a wide variety of people. Clients may have a variety of physical, sensory, neurocognitive, behavioral, emotional, and/or developmental disabilities. They may also work with people who have been diagnosed with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, strokes and other problems that can come along with aging, amputations, neuromuscular disorders, chronic pain, cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, and limb weakness. Some work with people who have developmental disorders such as mental retardation or autism. Psychiatric disability, substance abuse, impairments in sensory functions might also be something a rehabilitation psychologist might work with.

### **Treatment Techniques**

Clinical Practice - Clinical practice focuses on trying to help individuals and their support systems with, and adapting to, the effect of injury or illness. Depending on what the client's needs are now and as they change in the future, the rehabilitation psychologist would recognize the implications of the client's injury or illness and relate it to the client's life. Sometimes the rehabilitation psychologist is part of a multidisciplinary team to maximize the clients functioning level. Another part of clinical practice of a rehabilitation psychologist is maximizing the client's social participation, their participation in activities, recreation, education, and employment.

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