INTRODUCTION TO REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY

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• Definitions
• Practices & Settings
• Rehabilitation Psychologists
• Case Example
• Why I wanted to become a rehabilitation psychologist?
DEFINITION

- Rehabilitation psychology is the study and application of psychological principles on behalf of persons who have disability due to injury or illness.
- Rehabilitation psychologists, often within teams, assess and treat cognitive, emotional, and functional difficulties, and help people to overcome barriers to participation in life activities.
- Rehabilitation psychologists are involved in practice, research, and advocacy, with the broad goal of fostering independence and opportunity for people with disabilities.
- (American Psychological Association, 2020)
PRACTICES & SETTINGS

• Common settings:
  • Acute inpatient rehabilitation (e.g., TIRR, Rancho Los Amigos NRC)
  • Subacute rehabilitation facilities
  • Outpatient rehabilitation facilities
  • Day programs (often for brain injury survivors)
  • Home health (e.g., https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/home-health-services)
ACUTE REHABILITATION
Common problems to treat:

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Stroke,
- Spinal cord injury (SCI)
- Limb loss,
- Sensory loss,

- Rehabilitation Psychologists

- Burn injury,
- Chronic pain,
- Multiple sclerosis (MS) and
- Neuromuscular disorders
TBI: EXAMPLE OF SDH
SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)

- American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA) Impairment Scale
- Grade A to E
- E.g., C4 ASIA A = complete injury resulting in tetraplegia
- T10 ASIA D = very incomplete injury resulting in paraplegia/paraparesis
REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGISTS

• Psychotherapy for emotional coping, adjustment, sleep & chronic pain issues;
• Behavioral management for impulsivity, physical/verbal aggression;
• Evaluation and treatment of family/caregiver coping and adaptation;
• Neuropsychological and Psychological Testing
  • Cognitive and psychological functioning;
  • Behavioral observation methods; and
  • Culturally sensitive interviewing techniques.
REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGISTS
(CONT’D)

• Facilitation of healthy team functioning
  • MD (PM&R, internal medicine, other consultations such as Psychiatry)
  • Nurses (Floor nurses, infectious control, techs), RTs
  • Physical Therapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech Language Pathologists (SLP),
  • Social worker (SW), Case managers (CM), etc.; and
• Enhancing use of assistive technology, including co-treatment with other disciplines.
CASE EXAMPLE
CASE EXAMPLE

Omitted
WHY I WANTED TO BECOME A REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGIST
THANKS!