

# Rehabilitation and Health Psychologist

Sarah W. Clark, PhD

Governance and Membership Representative

*Please describe the area of psychology you practice. What does your day-to-day schedule look like?*

As a clinical psychologist working at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), my job involves a mix of direct patient care, interdisciplinary collaboration, training and education, and research. On a typical day, I have scheduled individual and group appointments to provide assessment and intervention, both in person and by telehealth. I am also frequently involved in meetings both at my local institution and beyond, working on research projects, developing education and training resources, and collaborating with colleagues to enhance care for Veterans with neurological conditions. Finally, a core part of my job is education and training: I provide clinical supervision for psychology trainees and also coordinate the externship program at our VA.



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*Were there specific factors that led you to choose this area of psychology? Was there a critical moment that changed your career trajectory?*

Professionally, I identify as a rehabilitation and health psychologist. Prior to graduate school, I had planned to work in outpatient mental health settings. However, during my graduate training in behavioral medicine, I found that I excelled in a fast-paced medical settings that emphasized collaboration and generalist skills within a specialty setting. From there, I had the opportunity to work on an inpatient brain injury unit, allowing me to flex skills in multiple areas including individual and family intervention, neuropsychological assessment, and interdisciplinary collaboration. I am consistently astounded by the resilience of people facing challenging circumstances, like disabling injury and illness. Sometimes the most important interventions are seemingly the simplest; as one prior supervisor emphasized: “be a human first” and validate reactions to abnormal and unexpected situations. The constant challenge to apply existing knowledge to new presentations, populations, and settings means no two days are the same, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

*What advice would you give to an ECP who wants to pursue a position or additional training opportunities in this area of psychology?*

The best advice I have for ECPs interested in health and rehabilitation psychology as an area of clinical practice is to get hands on experience, if you can. Seek training and opportunities in health-focused interventions, integrated care, and medical settings. Joining a professional network, like Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) or Division 38 (Health Psychology) is also a great way to learn about specific training opportunities and open positions. Flexibility is key, and there are probably more transferable skills and knowledge than one might expect. With knowledge of biopsychosocial models, psychologists can readily contribute in myriad ways, from direct intervention to public health efforts, in advancing physical and emotional wellbeing.