

## Introduction

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# Rehabilitation Counseling

When our most strident rehabilitation efforts were unsuccessful in a particular instance, my supervisor once asked me: “Well, what did you expect? What did the consumer expect? Were these expectations similar, or very divergent?” I had given this matter no thought whatsoever, and was not even sure why it mattered. Decades later, our colleagues in counseling psychology identified expectations as a common factor in all major counseling approaches, and one that weighs heavily in terms of ultimate outcome. From 1999–2002, the National Institute of Rehabilitation Research funded a three-year project through Virginia Commonwealth University. The project reviewed the importance of two “common factors” from counseling psychology – expectations and the working alliance – and attempted to study these in a vocational rehabilitation counseling context. The specific focus of this project was the importance of “matching” the expectations of counselor and the consumer. Simply stated, the procedure involves identif-

ying and resolving differences in expectations between counselors and consumers as early as possible in the rehabilitation process. After Dr. McMahon and colleagues review the history and theoretical background of this procedure, Dr. Chan and colleagues outline development and validation efforts regarding two new instruments: *Expectations About Rehabilitation Counseling* (EARC) inventory and the *Rehabilitation Working Alliance Inventory* (RWAI). Finally, Shaw and colleagues illustrate how to use the EARC and how it may improve both the quality and outcomes of vocational rehabilitation efforts.

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