

C&R NEWS

Counseling & Rehabilitation Program Newsletter

(Red brick pathways leading to a metal and brick gate. Behind the gate lie trees and a red brick building)

The C&R Program Welcomes New Staff Member, Cassandra McClain

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Program is pleased to welcome Cassandra McClain, as the new Mental Healthcare Coordinator overseeing the launch and operation of the Clinic for Counseling and Assessment (CCA). Housed within the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program, the USC School of Medicine's CCA represents an exciting and impactful expansion of our service to the state.



Picture of Cassandra McClain in a blue shirt with a yellow sweater

Designed to address the significant unmet mental health and assessment needs in Orangeburg, Calhoun, Bamberg, Fairfield, and Chester counties, the CCA will provide accessible, high-quality care to rural communities that have long faced barriers to support. As a student-operated, faculty-directed clinic, it will also offer invaluable hands-on training opportunities—allowing our students to develop real-world clinical skills while making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families across the region.

We are thrilled to have Cassandra leading this important initiative. Below, she shares her vision for the clinic, her background, and her hopes for the communities we will serve.

"I am truly honored to serve as the Mental Healthcare Coordinator for the Clinic for Counseling and Assessment. I hold an MA in Clinical Counseling from Columbia International University and a BA in Psychology from the University of South Carolina (Continued next page).

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Cassandra McClain

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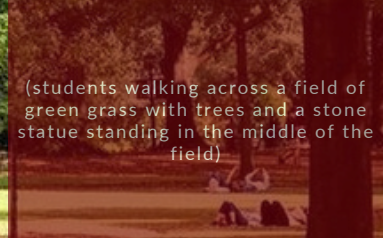
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(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

The C&R Program Welcomes New Staff Member, Cassandra McClain



The front of Building 1 of the School of Medicine with a campus sign.

“Over the course of my career, I have worked in community mental health, school-based counseling, higher education, and private practice—both as a contractor and a business owner. This role feels like a meaningful continuation of both calling and purpose. My niche is people. I am passionate about walking alongside anyone willing to do the work of self-discovery, healing, and growth.

During COVID, I saw firsthand the significant need for accessible, culturally competent mental healthcare in rural areas. The rapid shift to telehealth revealed how many individuals wanted support but lacked access due to geography, transportation barriers, cost, or provider shortages. These barriers affect individuals, families, and entire communities. I am committed to helping reduce these obstacles through the work of the CCA—both by equipping students as they prepare for the work of counseling and by helping provide high-quality services to residents in our target communities who may otherwise go without care.

Recently, I came across an old piece of writing describing my early vision for mental health work. In it, I wrote about my desire to “create a counseling organization that travels to small towns or plants quality counseling offices (and other medical resources) in towns where quality mental healthcare may be lacking or not available.” At the time, I was unsure how that vision would ever unfold. Today, being entrusted to help build the CCA, I can see how the pieces are beginning to fit together.

The mission of the Clinic for Counseling and Assessment aligns deeply with my own: to help individuals, families, and communities identify and utilize their strengths, overcome life’s challenges and barriers, and reach their full potential. I am grateful for the opportunity to support a clinic that not only expands access to care, but also strengthens the next generation of clinicians who will continue this work across South Carolina. When I’m not counseling or advocating, you can usually find me spending time with my family, serving with my sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., curled up with a good book, working on a puzzle, or enjoying a good flat white with a friend.

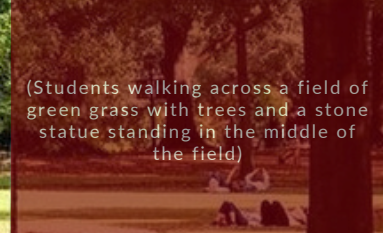
I look forward to working with all of you as we build a clinic rooted in service and excellence.” - Email: cassandra.mcclain@uscmed.sc.edu or CCA@uscmed.sc.edu Phone: 803-216-3697



A wide-view shot of the front of Building 1 of the School of Medicine.



(Students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)



Save the Date

December 5th, 2025:

Counseling and Rehabilitation
Program Friendsgiving Event

[RSVP HERE](#)

Dec 13th - Jan 3rd, 2025:

ARCA Jingle Run 5K

[RSVP HERE](#)

Dec 15th, 2025:

Fall 2025 Commencement
Ceremony

[INFO HERE](#)

January 7th, 2026:

Spring 2026 Tuition and Fee
Payment Deadline

January 12th, 2026:

First day of classes for the
Spring '26 semester

February 27th, 2026:

Professional Speaker Series
featuring Dr. Judy Daniels

February 27th, 2026:

Spring 2026 Comprehensive
Exam

February 28th, 2026:

Spring 2026 Learning
Community Saturday Event

CHECK OUT OUR
SOCIALS!



Join us for the Fourth Annual Counseling and Rehabilitation Friendsgiving Event!

To express our gratitude for our students, alumni, colleagues, and the community partners, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program at the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine -Columbia invites you to our Fourth Annual Friendsgiving Open House Event on **Friday, December 5, 2025 from 11:00am-1:00pm.**



A shot of 3 seated students from the student-made video invitation.

In case you haven't had a chance yet, check out our [student made Friendsgiving video invitation](#) then [RSVP](#) using the link below.

Details:

What: Counseling and Rehabilitation's Fourth Annual Friendsgiving Open House

When: Friday, December 5 from 11:00am-1:00pm

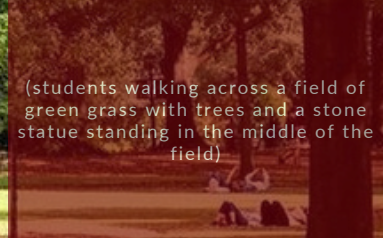
Where: School of Medicine Columbia campus (6311 Garner's Ferry Road)

[RSVP HERE](#)



An orange student-made flyer!



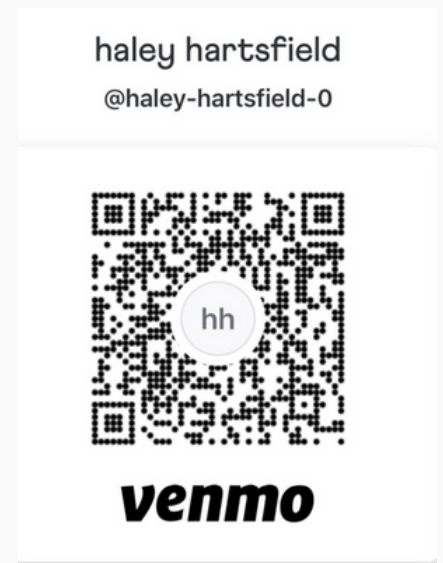


(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Counseling and Rehabilitation Student Association (CRSA)

Looking for an opportunity to connect with fellow C&R Program students? Consider signing up to become a member of CRSA. Each month, CRSA hosts student focused events designed to build relationships within our learning community and strengthen our presence within the greater community. Take a look below for a wrap up of November's CRSA events!

To become a member of CRSA, simply Venmo \$15 to CRSA Treasurer, Haley Hartsfield along with your full name.



CRSA November Events

Wednesday, November 19th

CRSA recently hosted a Virtual "Safe Space" Meeting on Wednesday, November 19. The holidays can bring up a mix of emotions – joy, stress, loneliness, or everything in between. CRSA was happy to provide a safe space to share, reflect, and connect with peers as the holiday season approaches.



Holiday season has arrived!

Winter Clothing Drive

Cold weather is here, and many in our community could use a little extra warmth. CRSA is collecting new or gently used coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and blankets to help keep others warm this winter.

When: November 5 – December 5

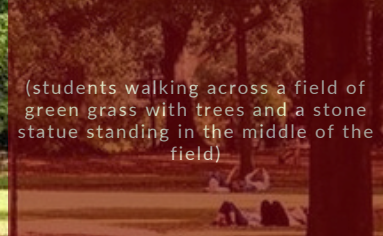
Where:

- Drop off items to Patrick's office (Suite A6), or
- Use the Drop-Off Box located in front of the elevator leading to the C&R Program's Office space in Building 1

Every item makes a difference – thank you for helping us spread warmth and care this season.



The CRSA winter clothing drive flyer.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Students and Staff Attend Orangeburg Wilkinson Highschool Career Fair

On November 6th, the C&R Program represented the School of Medicine at the Orangeburg Wilkinson Highschool Career Fair. Counseling and Rehabilitation student Graduate Assistants were on hand to speak to interested high school students about the program and graduate school in general. By sharing their personal perspectives as recently enrolled graduate students, they were able to make connections and provide valuable insight for younger students interested in the counseling field.



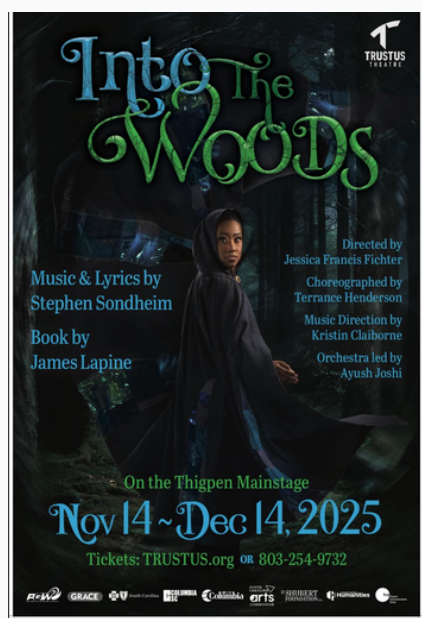
A group of students engage at the OW high school career fair.

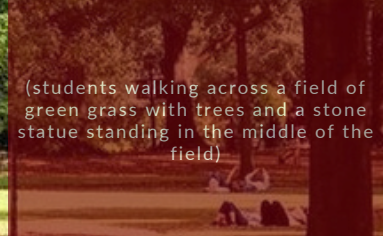
"It was great to see how many students were really starting to put thought into their career paths. There were several participants as young as 15 who took the time to ask thoughtful questions about college and the options available through the school of medicine. While this particular group of students tended to be more interested in sports medicine and related fields, this career fair still allowed us the opportunity to support and promote the school of medicine as a whole. Most of these students won't be considering graduate programs for a few more years, but I hope that we have at least planted the seed that there's more to learn and explore after undergrad." - **Kylie Torres - 1st year student**

Student Highlight: Katrina Garvin Stars in “Into the Woods”

Go see our very own first-year student, Katrina Garvin, in the TrustUs production of Into the Woods! This beloved musical intertwines classic fairy tales like Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and more into a single story that explores wishes, consequences, and what happens after “happily ever after.”

[Purchase Tickets HERE](#)





(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Publication Alert!

Please join us in congratulating Spring '25 C&R Program graduate Nic Collins on the recent publication of his new book titled **“Advance: Discover Alignment and Authenticity Through Living in Concert with YOUR Situation”**.

In *Advance*, Nic invites you to step off autopilot and into alignment with your most authentic self. Drawing from personal struggles, breakthroughs, and lived experiences—from nearly two decades in corporate sales and wrestling with depression to van-life reflections and ultramarathon grit—he shares raw stories and practical realizations that cut through the noise of expectation and conditioning.

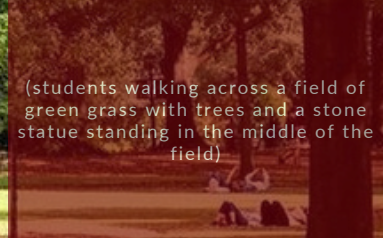
[Grab your copy here](#) or join Nic for a live book signing **Sunday, Dec 7 at Craft & Draft on Devine St from 1:00pm-3:00pm**. Copies will be available for signing at the event.

BlackBoard: Did You Know?

Did you know that BlackBoard’s Rehabilitation Counseling Learning Community tab contains a section devoted to “Student Services and Resources”?

This tab contains a link to the SOM’s Campus Therapist contact info, comprehensive SOM Library resources, Active Shooter Resources and info on how to contact and utilize the USC Writing Center. Be sure to take a look so that you’re up to date on these resources that are completely free for C&R students.





(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Save the Date for ARCA's Jingle Run 5K

[Register HERE](#)

ARCA
AMERICAN REHABILITATION
COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

JINGLE RUN, WALK, & ROLL VIRTUAL 5K

ARCA SPONSORED FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE

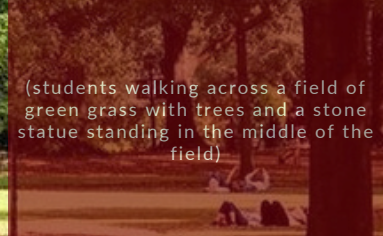
Virtual 5K runs from
December 13-January 3
Registration Opens **Ocotober 20**

\$30

Registration
per person

**Proceeds go to ARCA's Maki Fund and
to support ARCA student members.**

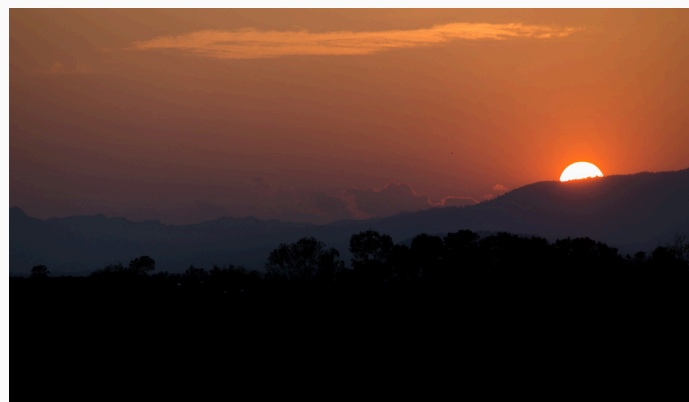
INDIVIDUALS & TEAMS WELCOME!



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Wellness Corner

As the days grow shorter and daylight savings time comes to an end, many of us may notice shifts in our mood and energy. Less sunlight can impact our mental health, sometimes leading to lower motivation or seasonal blues. To support your well-being, try getting outside during daylight hours, even for a short walk. Staying active, connecting with others, and practicing good sleep habits can also help keep your mind and body balanced during this seasonal transition.



The sun sets behind a mountain to represent daylight savings time coming to an end.

Writing Tip: APA Citation of a Movie

Did you know there is a specific way to provide an APA citation for a movie? Below is an example of what a movie citation might look like:

Director, D. D. (Director). (Date of publication). Title of motion picture [Film]. Production company.

Don't forget to include a hanging indent on the second line of your citations! (Source: <https://owl.purdue.edu>)



Alyssa's cats pose for the camera!

Pet of the Month

Meet Stormi, Jasper, and Buttons! Before these sweet babies became adopted siblings (and cuddle buddies!), all three were strays looking to find their forever home. But rest-assured, they found it! Nowadays they spend their time snuggling and enjoying a good head scratch. – **C&R Student, Alyssa King**

Show us your pet by filling out the form below:

Pet of the Month

Save the Date

12/5/2025 - Counseling and Rehabilitation Program
Friendsgiving Event - 11:00am-1:00pm - [RSVP](#)

12/13-1/3- ARCA Jingle Run 5K
[Register HERE](#)

25/15/2025 - Fall 2025 Commencement
Ceremony- [INFO HERE](#)

1/7/26 - Spring 2026 Tuition and Fee Payment Deadline

1/12/26 - First day of classes for the Spring' 26
semester

2/27/26 - Professional Speaker Series featuring Dr. Judy
Daniels

2/27/26 - Spring 2026 Comprehensive Exam

2/28/26 - Spring 2026 Learning Community Saturday
Event