Pacific Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program

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In 1974, Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RRCEP) were developed in each federal Regional Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). RRCEPs were constituted to meet the following objectives:

1. to train newly employed and inexperienced rehabilitation counseling personnel of State vocational rehabilitation agencies in the basic knowledge and skills of rehabilitation counseling practice in the public rehabilitation program;

2. to train newly employed State agency staff at the administrative, supervisory, professional, subprofessional or clerical levels in order to develop needed skills for effective agency performance;

3. to provide training opportunities for experienced State agency personnel at all levels of State agency practice to upgrade their skills and to develop mastery of new program developments dealing with significant issues, priorities and legislative thrusts of the State-Federal vocational rehabilitation program; and

4. to develop and conduct training programs for staff of private rehabilitation agencies and facilities which participate closely with State rehabilitation agencies in the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

Region IX ORS established a Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program at the California State University at San Diego. Because of the unique needs of rehabilitation programs in Hawaii and the Pacific Basin, a satellite component was placed at the University of Hawaii.

Pacific Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (PRCEP) serves approximately ninety rehabilitation counselors and supervisors plus the administrative and clerical staffs of state agencies and private rehabilitation facilities in Hawaii, Guam, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Since Pacific state vocational rehabilitation agencies do not have personnel for staff development, they rely almost solely on PRCEP to provide in-service training for all personnel.

To fulfill the above-stated objectives, PRCEP has provided over 335 days of training for 516 trainees. This training has been conducted on Guam, Saipan, Oahu, Kauai, Hawaii and Maui. The program can be understood best through a description of the training it conducts.

PRCEP conducted orientation training for newly-hired rehabilitation personnel in Hawaii, integrating two components: a one-week orientation and a six-month-long series of four-hour, semi-monthly training sessions. The week-long orientation introduced counselors to basic knowledge and skills necessary for effective functioning. Among topics explored were history and philosophy of the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program, overview of the rehabilitation process, preparation of the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program, and knowledge and utilization of community resources.

The six-month training sessions dealt with medical aspects of disability, job placement, caseload management, and interviewing skills.

For Hawaii Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division counselors, PRCEP conducted several short-term training programs. These were entitled "Training Interpreters for the Deaf," "Implementation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," "Management and Supervisors' Training," and "Job Seeking Skills."

PRCEP also presented short-term training
sessions for Guam's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, supervisors, and facility personnel. Guam training included "Caseload Management, Rehabilitation Planning, and the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program," "Basic Considerations in Serving the Severely Disabled," "Facilitative Case Management," and "Counseling and Job Seeking Skills Training."

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands rehabilitation personnel received the following short-term training: "Basic Rehabilitation Planning and Case Recording," "Basic Considerations in Serving the Severely Disabled," "Counseling and Job Seeking Skills Training" (in conjunction with Guam training), "The Individual Written Rehabilitation Program and Other Rehabilitation Forms and Policies," and "Community Awareness of Rehabilitation" in the Marshall Islands, Ponape and Truk.

The Annual Rehabilitation Conference, "Rehabilitation in the Pacific 1976: Serving Persons with Severe Disabilities," was conducted in Honolulu, in March 1976. Over 130 participants from rehabilitation agencies, private facilities, and counselors from Guam, Hawaii and Trust Territory attended the three-day conference.

Unique needs and varied backgrounds of Pacific Basin rehabilitation personnel require a special approach to continuing education. Individualized learning centers related to rehabilitation of disabled clients are being developed. Located in or near a state vocational rehabilitation office, the centers will be available for continuous use on an as-needed basis decided by the local vocational rehabilitation supervisor. Such materials as videotapes, audio tapes, slide-tape presentations, books and other self-teaching materials are being collected. There will be two Rehabilitation Learning Resource Centers, one on Guam and the other in Honolulu.

Future directions for PRCEP include continuation of present objectives. In addition, local training resource development will be undertaken, both within the agency and in the community. Technological resources for educational communication will be explored, with particular emphasis upon reaching remote areas of the Pacific Basin. Implementation and expansion of Rehabilitation Learning Resource Centers in Honolulu and on Guam will be continued.

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