

Getting To Know Our Students

Poon Kee Lee, Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) graduate



Kee Lee

is currently working as a radiation therapist at the National Cancer Centre and is a Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) graduate.

What attracted you to a higher degree programme at NIE?

During my 5 years of working with cancer patients as a radiation therapist, I often came across patients whom struggle with the psychological and emotional aspects of cancer. I had patients breaking down in front of me, and telling me that they were probably better off dead instead of burdening their family with their illness. I have also seen many patients who appear dejected and dispirited, especially after the side effects of treatment have set in. I felt powerless when dealing with such situations, as I do not know what to do or say. I then started to think about taking up a programme in counselling.

Has the programme been beneficial to you in bringing forth changes or apply what you've learned at work?

Going through the programme has enhanced my work as a radiation therapist at the National Cancer Centre. It increased my awareness of the possible distress and psychological issues that the cancer patients might be experiencing, and helped me to become more sensitive and competent in dealing with the different emotional conditions of the patients. In addition, my counselling training has equipped me with better skills and strategies to support patients whom struggled with special radiation therapy related difficulties, such as claustrophobia when being immobilised under a mask for treatment.

Tell us what do you enjoy most from the programme?

I enjoyed practicum the most. During practicum, I get the opportunity to interact with real clients and put into practice the knowledge that I learned in class. It was a truly enriching experience, being in a position to help the clients with their issues and difficulties. It was extremely rewarding to witness the improvements and growth that my clients made over the course of our counselling sessions.

What were some difficulties you faced from the programme?

One of my biggest challenges was doing group counselling with a group of 7-8 year old children that had different behavioural problems, during my second practicum. Having to manage children who kept screaming, running all over the place and refusing to comply with instructions was something that I had never encountered before.

What advice would you give to people who are interested in doing their postgraduate studies?

I would urge them to choose a field that they are genuinely interested in. Masters programmes are rigorous and demanding, and pursuing one that intrigue them will make studying a lot more enjoyable. If possible, talk to someone who has already completed the programme or are in the midst of doing so, in order to get a better understanding of the programme's demands.