

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Social Work

香港中文大學
社會工作學系



2024
Non-local Placement
港外實習

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This collection is dedicated to
non-local placement agencies,
donor of Big Fish Award,
donors of Linkage Award,
donor of Madam Tan Jen Chiu Fund, and
our teachers of the Department of Social Work, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

我們衷心把此文集獻給
港外實習機構、
「大余獎學金」捐贈者、
「靈機獎學金」捐贈者、
「譚紉就基金」捐贈者及
香港中文大學社會工作學系的老師們。



Message From Department Chairperson

Prof. TO Siu Ming
陶兆銘教授

Chairperson, Department of Social Work,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港中文大學 社會工作學系系主任

On behalf of the Department of Social Work at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, I would like to express our heartiest gratitude to the donors of the Big Fish Award, Linkage Award, and Madam Tan Jen Chiu Fund. With their kind consent, we have broadened the use of the funding in setting up the Non-local Placement Award for our students from the Bachelor of Social Science Programme in Social Work and the Master of Social Science Programme in Social Work (part-time and full-time). Their endless support to our Department is beyond description.

The Department of Social Work is committed to promoting high-quality social work research, practice and teaching. As a devoted social work training institution, one of our missions is to provide professional training and education for our students, with the aim of training them to become academic and professional leaders in social welfare and related fields - locally, nationally and internationally. To realise this objective, non-local placements offer many types of educational experiences encompassing anecdotal, experiential, academic, observational and cultural learning - all of which can facilitate students' growth, maturity and competence in diverse social work settings, and enhance their understanding of cross-border, cross-cultural and international dimensions of social work practice.

With our growing international connections, we are now able to procure non-local placements from various organisations in different regions. In 2024, we have successfully arranged placements in Australia, Canada, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Students taking these placements had to deal with challenges arising from differences in cultural backgrounds and social welfare systems. Nevertheless, with these challenges, our students were able to develop greater independence and problem-solving abilities in cross-cultural social work practice, which are assets to the students in their future practice. All of our students find their non-local placement memories unforgettable. They treasure this invaluable opportunity to learn and are eager to share with our donors their personal, academic and professional growth throughout the placement.

No great work can be done without the assistance of many people along the way, such as the great support, encouragement and assistance given by Dr. Au Yeung Kwok Wai, Eric, our Director of Field Instruction, and his fieldwork team. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the social welfare agencies and field supervisors for their strong and unflinching support to our students.

系主任的話

香港中文大學社會工作學系的「港外實習獎」得以成功設立，實有賴各捐贈者的慷慨資助。在此，我謹代表本系同仁衷心感謝「大余獎學金」、「靈機獎學金」及「譚紉就基金」的捐贈者。十分感激各位允許我們運用捐款為本系社會工作本科課程及社會工作社會科學碩士課程的同學們設立「港外實習獎」。你們對學系的支持，盡在不言中，學系上下必定銘記於心。

社會工作學系一直致力於卓越的社會工作研究、實務及教學。作為社會工作專業培訓機構，我們其中一個目標乃為本地、中國內地及國際的社會福利界培養學術及專業方面的人才。港外實習為學生提供了真實的生活體驗，不但能促進學生成長、完善其人格，還使他們習得在不同專業環境中實踐的能力。此外，同學可藉此機會從跨地域、跨文化及國際的角度，深入了解社會工作的實務工作，對他們學術及文化方面的發展均大有裨益。

本系與世界各地的聯繫越趨緊密，近年來已與不同國家的機構合作，為學生提供包括不同地區的港外實習機會。本系於2024年成功安排同學前往澳洲、加拿大、新加坡及台灣進行實習。

在港外實習期間，同學須面對文化差異以及與本地有別的社會福利系統所帶來的挑戰。縱然如此，他們並不退卻，而是因應這些挑戰，發展了獨立工作和跨文化社會工作實踐的能力。這對學生的社會工作專業發展之路，無疑有很大助益。同學都很珍惜是次難忘的學習機會，並花了很多時間及心力去準備這些文章，希望與各位捐贈者及所有老師同學分享實習經驗中個人、學術及專業各方面的成長歷程。

是次港外實習能順利進行，實有賴實習課程主任歐陽國緯博士與其團隊的付出。最後，我亦希望藉此機會向提供實習機會的機構及實習導師致以萬分的謝意。他們對學系的全力支持，為學生的學習及成長作出了莫大的貢獻。



Message From Director of Field Instruction

Dr. AU YEUNG Kwok Wai, Eric

歐陽國緯博士

Director of Field Instruction, Department of Social Work,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港中文大學 社會工作系實習課程主任

Reflecting on 2024, non-local social work placement was finally no longer affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the entry restrictions of some overseas regions. Our department successfully arranged a total of 17 students from our undergraduate and postgraduate social work programmes to have their placement. Besides the cities in Melbourne, Vancouver, Toronto, Taipei, Hsinchu, and New Taipei, a new placement opportunity at the Singapore girls' residential home was added this year. Reviewing the services nature, they include the hospice care, family counseling, mental health, gender equality and advocacy, women's protection, community work, and services for the elderly and youth.

Writing this summary of non-local placement always reminds me of the achievements and heartfelt stories shared by students upon their return. At the sharing session in September 2024, I heard about a student's experience accompanying a service user until his last moment and the student's own reflections. There was also a student who, using what she learned in the University, tried hard to engage with her clients, understanding their needs and to make them realized the importance of having someone accompany them through their challenges. One student shared encountering distrust from client, questioning how a placement social worker could effectively help others. Fortunately, after settling in, the student quickly gained the trust of her clients. Of course, much students analyzed the social welfare systems and social work professional practices of different regions and compared them with those

in Hong Kong, providing valuable suggestions. During the non-local placement, realizing that students always face various challenges such as cultural shock, living adjustments and expectation discrepancy in the practice. This is a challenging issue to our Department as well as to the students themselves. Fortunately, students were able to manage to resolve these challenges with the support of the Department, fieldwork supervisor, and placement agency, as well as holding on to their initial intentions of enrolling in social work. Some even transformed the encountered problems into personal growth and professional advancement after the placement. From my perspective, this is one of the precious aspects of non-local placement.

The stories shared by the students are genuine and sincere. I encourage you to read through the content of the booklet to understand what students encountered, done, felt, and thought in their non-local placement. Also, immerse yourself in witnessing their learning journey.

Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our Department, the non-local placement agencies, field supervisors, previous Directors of Field Instruction, donors of Big Fish Award, Linkage Award, and Madam Tan Jen Chiu Fund for their financial support. With the robust support from all parties, the development of non-local placement for these 20 years has been consolidated. Because of this valuable learning opportunity, students gained life-long experience to go further.

實習課程主任的話

回顧 2024 年，港外實習終於免受新冠疫情以及海外地區的入境限制措施的影響，我們最終成功安排共 17 名本科及碩士班同學進行實習。除了墨爾本、溫哥華、多倫多、台北、新竹、新北外，今年還新增了新加坡女童院舍的實習機會。整體服務性質包括善終安寧照顧、家庭輔導、精神健康、性別平等和倡議、婦女保護、社區工作和長者及青少年服務等不同範疇。

執筆總結港外實習時，我總會想起同學完成實習歸來的成果分享和那些真摯的「他鄉故事」。在 2024 年 9 月的分享會中，我聽到同學陪伴病患者至最後一刻的過程，以及她自己的反思得著。也有同學用盡學院所學，努力與服務對象建立關係，了解她們的需要，為的是讓她們明白到在成長困難當中有人同行的重要。亦有同學分享遇上服務對象的不信任，被質疑她只是實習社工又如何可以有效地幫助他人。幸好，同學安定下來之後，很快又獲得服務對象的信任。當然有更多同學分析不同地區的社會福利制度和社會工作的手法，並與香港作比較，極具參考價值。在港外

實習，有同學總會碰到文化差異和生活適應等種種問題，甚至與自己期望不盡相符，這是極具挑戰的一環。但同學都能在困難中堅守報讀社工的初心，加上在學系、實習導師和機構單位的支持下把問題解決。甚至有同學能將實習遇到的問題最終轉化成個人成長和獲得專業上的進步。這又是港外實習可貴之處。

同學分享的故事，個個真實而真摯。在此鼓勵各位友好細閱文集的內容，了解同學在每個港外實習機構所遇、所作、所感和所思。也投入其中，見證他 / 她們每段寶貴的學習歷程。

除了學系的一貫支持，在此我亦衷心感謝港外實習機構、各實習督導、歷年實習課程主任、「大余獎學金」、「靈機獎學金」及「譚紉就基金」的捐贈者。在各方友好的協力下，鞏固了學系在港外實習這 20 多年來的發展，也讓同學獲得畢生受用的經歷。

SWWK

Chinese Cancer & Chronic Illness Society of Victoria

Chinese Cancer and Chronic Illness Society of Victoria (CCCIS), formerly Chinese Cancer Society of Victoria (CCSV), was founded in 1996 as one of the Cancer Council Victoria's support groups. The Society was founded by social worker, Dorothy Yiu OAM JP (current Chairperson), in response to a request from the Cancer Council Victoria to address an urgent need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Chinese people who have been touched by cancer. Over the years, more cancer survivors and volunteers joined the Society to offer support to others, and to bring back their strength, confidence and hope.

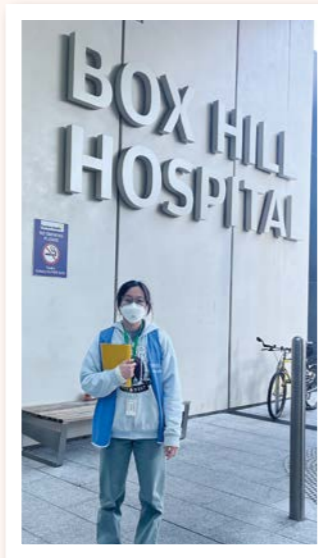
(Extracted from the website of Chinese Cancer & Chronic Illness Society of Victoria)

KWONG On Shin
Undergraduate Year 3



Doing MC for event Dying to Know Day in both Cantonese and Mandarin

My non-local placement at the Chinese Cancer and Chronic Illness Society of Victoria (CCCIS) inspired me hugely in a holistic way. In the entire process, I was granted trust and flexibility to do all services I would like to try that stretches from casual chats with volunteers to conducting home visits by myself, which brought me so many important insights for the social work field and me as a person. So, I would like to express my gratitude to our Department, CCCIS and all helpful staff members for working hard to make this placement possible. Without your support, this insightful journey for me would not happen.



Doing Hospital outreach in Box Hill Hospital

Other than that, I saw the importance of companionship when working with the clients and volunteers. At the possibly last stage of life, a lot of emotions will pass through clients' mind. They may feel helpless, hopeless and frustrated when people around them may be overwhelmed to discuss about cancer or chronic illnesses with them. At CCCIS, I have met a lot of warm-hearted volunteers who may be survivors or caregivers. They come to the centre regularly to discuss with members in distress. They would even conduct home visits to provide emotional support to members who are battling cancer at home. CCCIS is like a big family, where members bring comfort and courage to each other's life. It is so inspiring and touching to see how this person-centred attitude showed through the services provided, and how it really practically helped members.

When I was working in Australia, where the social work system is very different from that of Hong Kong, I took my time to understand the social work system there and learnt to find ways to research on suitable welfare resources. From this experience, I have learnt the importance of keep learning, as it is impossible to know everything before starting to serve. I learnt and found new information when I encounter clients with different needs. At the same time, I could use and build on my skills for identifying the needs of clients in different perspectives and connect services to their most immediate need.

Picture with the staff members



On the other hand, I learnt the importance of providing client-centred services. CCCIS regularly review and update the services and delivery model to accommodate the needs of clients. I can see that this is how trust between agency and client is built. For example, groups are conducted in a mixed mode via Zoom to engage clients that are too weak to go out, and via in person. It was not easy, but CCCIS staff members would keep trying to provide the best support to clients. From these small details, I learnt that there are a lot of perspectives that service providers can keep improving on, thus creating a better helping environment.

Doing crafts with group for people with dementia



At the same time, I learnt about the sense of urgency in social work practice in this field. As I was about to follow up on a case, I was rejected by them at my first attempt to reach out to them through phone call. However, soon came the news that the client had passed away abruptly. From the shocking experience, I felt the need of providing services and support to clients as soon as possible. Not only in this field, but also in all aspects of social work.

Furthermore, reflecting on the public education on life-and-death planning, social workers should act as role models to embrace such values. I witnessed my supervisor Dorothy acting as a role model, who does not treat life-and-death planning as a taboo. She would openly share about relevant issues and encourage everyone to do so. Her openminded attitude would allow Chinese service users, and people who used to see 'death' as a taboo, to become more openminded too.

Last but not least, the work culture on work-life balance and self-care made me aware that the social work industry should be friendly to both clients and service providers. Especially in this field, social workers may be constantly facing emotional situations or feeling helpless when their clients reach the end of life. Having placement in Melbourne, where supervisor and staff members value our mental health and wellbeing, made me realise the importance of having a self-care plan for a sustainable social work career.



Helping with Chinese meals service

My three months of placement experience have left me wanting more, and I even considered moving to Melbourne. During this time, CCCIS has provided me with numerous learning opportunities, ranging from individual cases to group work, as well as various community education activities. It was a comprehensive experience that allowed me to fully apply the professional knowledge I learned in class and achieve a cycle of reviewing and reinforcing my learning. Although the centre has fewer resources and a smaller scale than other local NGOs, mainly relying on member donations, limited government funding, and volunteers to maintain its operations, the centre's work approach is more flexible. We do not have to deal with cumbersome paperwork, which allows us to focus on the clients and base our work on their needs, truly achieving a person-centred approach.



Gardening program

Due to the large number of clients, I interacted with during this time and the diverse nature of the activities I participated in, I accumulated a wealth of experience in communicating with clients, enhancing my observational skills and adaptability, making it easier for me to handle unexpected situations at work. I believe that as a social worker, being able to adapt to changing circumstances is more important than possessing vast knowledge. When entering the field of social work, one realises that sometimes the difficulties and troubles faced by clients cannot be solved, and each person has different ways of addressing their issues. Therefore, there is no fixed intervention method or solution formula; one must have the ability to be flexible and adaptable, which is known as practice wisdom.



Family-like working environment

Family-like working environment



Finally, I am very grateful to have the opportunity of non-local placement as it has brought me numerous benefits and inspired me in terms of learning, living, and my outlook on life. I believe that experiencing a placement alone in an unfamiliar environment is a challenge that can enhance one's ability to deal with difficulties in life. Additionally, observing the lifestyles and working methods of local people can broaden one's horizons and eliminate blind spots that arise from being in a comfort zone.

Moreover, beyond learning professional knowledge and skills in social work during my placement, I also reflected on the meaning of life. The most precious memories at the centre are the life experiences shared by volunteers and clients, as well as the kindness and humanity they radiate. Most of them are elderly individuals over fifty who are experiencing or have experienced cancer and severe disease, they often share their experiences and thoughts with me, bringing new insights for my future development.

Cancer support group



Prostate cancer support group



Volunteer meals preparation

SWWK

Community Family Services of Ontario

Community Family Services of Ontario (CFSO) was incorporated in 1988 and is a non-profit, accredited professional counselling, family services and settlement agency with a focus on Chinese Canadians, which aims to offer both linguistically and culturally sensitive services to individuals and families in need of counselling and settlement services.

(Extracted from the website of Community Family Services of Ontario)

KAN Wai Ki
Undergraduate Year 3

I am grateful to have the opportunity to participate in the non-local placement in Community Service of Ontario (CFSO), Toronto, Canada. This is a wonderful trip for me to understand what it means by cultural diversity and inclusion, and also the situation of Hong Kongers facing as immigrants in Canada.

In embarking on this non-local placement, I expect to expand my knowledge and understanding of social work practices worldwide. In the settlement team, I managed to help newcomers find suitable government resources, including childcare benefits for new immigrants, recreational services for families, and retirement benefits for older adults. I gained valuable insights regarding the welfare systems between Canada and Hong Kong. Understanding the content of each welfare and engaging in the application process could let me discover the benefits and disadvantages of each welfare system. Chatting with clients and understanding their situations let me know about their concerns living under this situation. Chatting with people in the centre allowed me to realise different mindset, problems and things to be aware of under this system. For example, Canada's welfare system is concerned about the privacy of clients' information and the trust system. It gave me a profound realisation of how diverse systems and policies can influence their perspectives and approaches to welfare.



A view along the lake



Toronto logo

Having placement in this agency, with different teams and various interprofessional experiences, not only broadened my cultural horizons but also deepened my understanding of the unique knowledge and methodologies employed by other professions in treating clients. I am particularly intrigued by the differences in theory used for casework and the professional values upheld in social work practices outside of Hong Kong. I found that under different working cultures, the agency will put much effort into casework with different theories used in healing. There were practices in different approaches each counsellor used in learning sessions, which put theories into practice. Although I did not have cases using these theories, I learned a lot from their previous experiences and discussion of cases among placement students. Exploring these variations not only allow me to learn from their successful practices but also enable me to think of the appropriate approach and theory for me in future practices.

I also truly appreciate the cultural diversity and inclusiveness in Canada. The numerous programmes and policies, including those for the indigenous people, reflect a deep commitment to inclusiveness. As an immigrant country, Canada is home to a diverse array of people and nationalities. The lack of discrimination and the warmth and passion of the people always made me feel like I belonged, even in a new environment.



My last day in CFSO



Photo with CFSO members



Playing games with placement students

The lessons I've learned are not just academic, but deeply personal. Immersing myself in a new environment, I've learned to embrace diverse perspectives and contribute to the advancement of social work practices. The journey was not without its challenges, but the personal growth and adaptability I've gained are more valuable than any difficulty. These invaluable insights and experiences will not only enrich my social work practice in the future but also shape it, equipping me with a global perspective and the ability to adapt to diverse cultural contexts.

The non-local placement opportunity provided me with an amazing summer in 2024. My experience at the Community Family Service of Ontario has been incredible. I had the chance to work alongside a diverse group of students from different universities. Before diving into our tasks, we underwent four days of comprehensive training including introduction to all programmes, local policy, and skills training. Additionally, we visited several agencies at the start of our placement. As a student in a new country, these training sessions and agency visits significantly enhanced my understanding of local services and the community.

In setting my learning goals and task list, I was given considerable flexibility. I received thorough introductions and valuable advice that guided my decisions on what to focus on during my placement. The emphasis on the student learning experience was evident, and I was particularly impressed by the level of flexibility provided.

After the four days training, I chose to focus on casework and was given four cases. The service primarily emphasizes counselling without incorporating case management aspects, such as referrals for social services. This clinical setting is quite unique, especially for placement students in Hong Kong. Counselling skills are significant. Working on four cases of different natures was quite challenging, especially when one turned out to be a marital case. Fortunately, my supervisor provided extensive guidance during our supervision sessions, helping me to clarify my thoughts and strategies. I felt trusted and fully supported in my progress. The three hours of weekly supervision were both very helpful and enjoyable.



CN Tower in Toronto Downtown



Thousand Islands

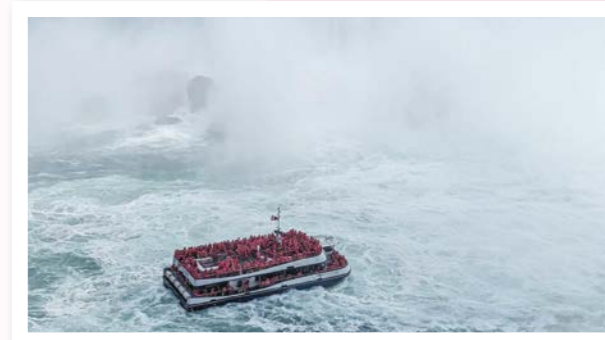
Team building day at Scarborough Bluffs Park



The team at CFSO is incredibly supportive and inclusive. They provided various learning opportunities tailored to my academic needs, including outreach programmes and group assistance. Additionally, placement students were also invited to participate in team building activities, team lunches and meetings. Besides my supervisor, other colleagues were also very generous in sharing their professional experience and opinions. The inclusivity I experienced truly reflects Toronto's diversity as a vibrant, multicultural city.

More importantly, I gained valuable insights through my placement and learned more about myself. The non-local placement allowed me to immerse myself fully in the role and step away from my usual environment. In that setting, I could concentrate on my learning experience and personal growth. Before the placement, I hoped to apply the knowledge I learned into practice, despite having many uncertainties in my head. I was aware that theory often differs from practice, and I worried about how well I would adapt to real-world scenarios. However, once I began working in a clinical setting, I often felt naive. I struggled to identify the appropriate intervention approaches and questioned my understanding of the cases. This struggle was both challenging and enlightening, as it pushed me to confront my limitations and seek clarification. During those moments of doubt, engaging in open conversations with my supervisor and field mates proved invaluable. Their guidance and perspectives not only helped me navigate complex situations but also reinforced my confidence in my abilities. I had a lot of self-reflection in this process, and gained insights both for my personal growth and professional development.

Non-local placement is a very precious opportunity that provides a unique learning experience. This placement was not just a professional experience, it was a journey of self-discovery that deepened my understanding of my strengths and areas for growth. It's a fruitful and rewarding journey.



Niagara Falls cruise



Information Booth at a Community Centre



Last day at CFSSO

I truly treasure having had the non-local placement at Community Family Services of Ontario (CFSSO) during this summer. Over these three months, through both my placement at CFSSO and my life experiences in Toronto, I have managed to achieve significant personal growth not just from a social work perspective but also as a human being. This transformative experience has deeply influenced my personal and professional development in several ways.

Firstly, I gained a deeper understanding of myself during this period. My colleagues at CFSSO were incredibly supportive and provided extensive training, sharing their personal experiences as social workers and the various challenges they faced. One remarkable moment stands out in my memory: I shared my own difficulties with a colleague, who then guided me through a process of self-reflection, helping me to uncover the underlying reasons behind my feelings. As humans, we experience a wide range of emotions, but we often do not fully understand them. As social workers who encounter our clients' emotions daily, it is crucial that we also listen to and understand our own feelings first in order to effectively handle clients' emotions and help them understand themselves better. This self-reflection has been invaluable, allowing me to empathize more deeply with my clients and reinforcing the importance of emotional awareness in our work.



Agency visit Carefirst



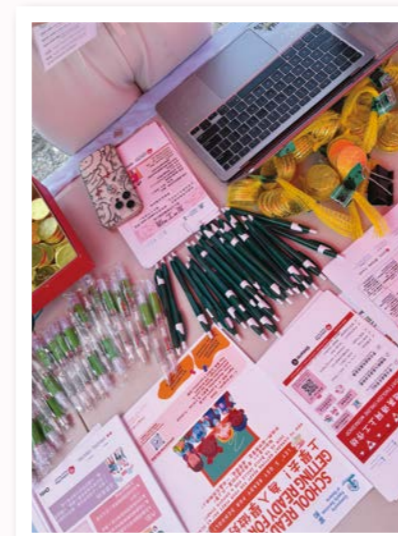
Agency visit HongFok

Agency visit TCCSA (多華會)



Secondly, the placement provided me with invaluable opportunities to connect with clients. Applying my counselling skills in real-world settings was both a challenging and rewarding experience. My supervisor allowed me to exercise flexibility within my role, enabling me to strengthen my skills and try various approaches I had learned. These real-life practices not only enhanced my professional capabilities but also instilled a sense of confidence in my ability to assist clients effectively. I witnessed first-hand impact of different counselling techniques and adapted them based on the unique needs of each client, reinforcing the dynamic nature of social work. Every client interaction helped me build a nuanced understanding of how to tailor my approach to meet their individual needs.

Lastly, the experience facilitated a profound connection with the broader community. Living and working in Toronto allowed me to gain an understanding of the social welfare system of another country. We visited different agencies focusing on mental health, elderly care, and child protection, which enabled me to appreciate their varied approaches and services. By communicating with professionals in these settings, I gained insights from their working environments, challenges, and methodologies. For instance, the policies in Ontario related to child protection are more fully developed compared to those in Hong Kong. Although my immediate actions may be limited, the knowledge and perspectives I gained from Toronto provide me with a new outlook on the social welfare system. In the future, we will be better equipped to observe service gaps and tackle them as social workers. Moreover, this exposure broadened my perspective and underscored the importance of building collaboration and networks within the community, which is vital for providing holistic support to those in need.



Community booth

In conclusion, the insights I gained through this placement were not just theoretical but practical and tangible. By participating in different community activities and programmes, I saw how interconnected our work is with the everyday lives of people in these communities. I observed how small, consistent efforts by social workers can significantly impact the wellbeing of clients over time.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Founded in 1973 by a passionate group of immigrant volunteers who wanted to contribute back to Canada, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has evolved into one of the largest social service agencies in Canada, which aims to promote the well-being of all Canadians and newcomers through services and advocacy that support their integration into an inclusive society.

SWWK

- **Austin Harris Residence**

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Austin Harris Residence is one of the assisted living facilities of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society. It is situated on the former Austin Harris Elementary School site at 5411 Moncton Street in Richmond. The facility was opened in April 2007.

- **Hillside Gardens**

Hillside Gardens is a family-oriented complex located in Southeast Burnaby at 7434 Kingsway. It consists of 15 three-story buildings providing 162 apartment suites from two to four bedrooms. Many Hillside Gardens residents are new to Canada. The current tenant mix also consists of some long-term residents, including immigrants or refugee families with diverse multi-cultural backgrounds. This project aims to provide the tenants with safe and supportive housing to make the transition into a new home and country easier for them. Through tenant support services, their ultimate goal is to encourage residents' independence and self-reliance. Regular resident programmes offered include a homework club for elementary students, adult ESL classes, health and educational workshops. In the summer, there are also children's day camps, field trips, multi-cultural family day and games carnival.

- **Senior Programmes**

Better at Home: Older adults maintain their independence and achieve healthy aging through our non-medical services that assist them with day-to-day activities. Our services are offered in the communities of Vancouver Hastings-Sunrise and Surrey-Whalley.

Prescribing Wellness for Older Adults: Older adults in Vancouver experience greater community inclusion, enhanced emotional well-being, and improved health outcomes through our culturally-appropriate services that bridge them to activities and resources in the local community.

Digital Literacy Exchange Programme: Newcomers enhance their digital literacy skills to use computers, tablets and smartphones, as well as build their confidence to access the internet safely through our interactive classes

Senior Academy: It aims to engage immigrant seniors in a wide range of activities to increase social connectedness, improve knowledge and skills that impact their physical and mental well-being, and support their ability to age in place.

(Extracted from the website of S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Austin Harris Residence

Austin Harris Residence is an assisted-living place for seniors who can mostly live independently but need a little help with daily activities. During my non-local placement, I got to dive into the daily routines at Austin Harris Residence, the Jackson Lam Adult Day Centre, and the Integrated Community Services for Seniors (ICSS Project), which serves as a vital information hub for seniors in Richmond. This experience has completely changed how I see elderly care and deepened my understanding of this often-overlooked population.

Understanding the Clients' Natures

Before this placement, I didn't have much interaction with seniors, and I admit I held onto some stereotypes, thinking of them as weak or overly dependent. But working in these three settings opened my eyes to the rich stories and experiences that each senior has. I was amazed by the spirit and resilience of the residents at Austin Harris Residence. Even with their physical challenges, they engaged in activities with such joy and laughter.

One moment that really stuck with me was I found out that many of the seniors were knowledgeable professionals in the past or before they had different illnesses. They are more than their present. The new observations started to change my mind and I raised the question of how to get along with them. As our role is to assist them in joining the activities, how can we balance providing assistance and letting them do things themselves? The seniors were really knowledgeable in the past, so in their later life, do they prefer to be treated like babies who need care, or to be allowed to do more for themselves? I think the staff in JLADC really experience the balance between these two conflicts. For example, many seniors in the centre need to use with the walker, the staff would return the walkers to them and show them how to stand up from the chair and move to the walker. Also, in the game session, they tend to encourage all the seniors to actively engage in the games (for example, speaking out the answers themselves, moving the chess pieces themselves), which require much participation and effort.



Visit at the Granville Island



Conducting the Program for the senior in the community

I also learned a lot about the social dynamics among the seniors. For example, during mahjong sessions at Austin Harris Residence, there were all these unspoken rules about seating arrangements and who could play with whom. It was fascinating to see how these relationships shaped their daily interactions. As I thought about my role, it became clear that I needed to be mindful of these dynamics when facilitating activities. Creating a respectful and understanding environment is crucial, especially for those who might be sensitive to loud noises or abrupt changes.

Tackling the Feelings Surrounding Life and Death Issues

Working in senior services means facing the hard realities of life and death. I remember my first month when I went on a home visit to see a senior who was in really poor health. It was tough to see her so frail and struggling to get the help she needed. Just a week later, I found out she had passed away at home, and that hit me hard.

That experience was one of the toughest moments of my placement. It made me confront my feelings about mortality and left me wondering if I could have done more to help her. But as I continued my placement, I realized that my role wasn't just about providing services; it was also about being there for them during their final stages of life.

One particularly memorable home visit happened later on when I met another senior who needed constant oxygen support. Her son was really worried and wanted more information about medical resources. I could feel the weight of their situation. When my supervisor suggested calling 911, the senior firmly said no, expressing her desire not to involve emergency services in her final moments. It was heart-breaking to witness her acceptance of her condition, but it was also eye-opening to see how much her son respected her wishes.



Presentation on the bi-weekly learning in the touch-back session

Joining the Agency Event - Walk with Dragon



Graduation Ceremony in Student Placement Program (SSP)



Through these experiences, I learned that the most important thing I could do was to simply be present for them. I discovered that offering compassion, listening to their stories, and acknowledging their feelings can make a real difference. This realization brought me a sense of peace, knowing I could provide comfort and connection, even in their darkest moments. It was a powerful lesson about love, empathy, and the resilience of the human spirit that I'll carry with me in my future work.

Conclusion

Looking back on my time at the Austin Harris Residence, Jackson Lam Adult Day Centre, and ICSS Project, I feel incredibly grateful for everything I've learned. My perspective on aging has shifted, and I now understand how crucial it is to advocate for the dignity and independence of seniors. I'm committed to fostering inclusive and compassionate communities that celebrate the lives and stories of our elders. This placement has shaped my identity as a social worker and reinforced my passion for making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Hillside Gardens
KWAN Sin Hang
Undergraduate Year 3

Hillside Gardens is a family-friendly complex in Southeast Burnaby. It has 15 three-story buildings with 162 apartments ranging from two to four bedrooms. Many residents are newcomers to Canada and mostly low-income. My placement at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Hillside Gardens has been a transformative journey, both professionally and personally. Over twelve weeks, I worked in the community affordable housing unit, engaging with residents who are largely newcomers to Canada, many of whom are low-income families.

My first bouldering



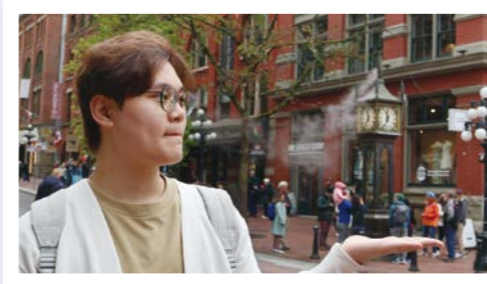
During my placement, I engaged in several key programmes designed to support and integrate residents into their new environment. One of the main initiatives was the CommNect Group- Connect to the community, which consisted of six sessions aimed at helping residents become more resourceful and thrive within the community. I utilized the Strategies and Skills Learning and Development (SSLD) model to cover essential topics like healthcare, language, and childcare. By employing creative methods such as social mapping, we made abstract community concepts more tangible and relatable for the participants.

Another significant programme was the Collage of Myself Group, which focused on fostering self-identity through expressive arts. We applied Positive Psychology principles to encourage children to explore their character strengths using collage art. This approach allowed them to express themselves creatively and develop a deeper understanding of their unique qualities. The Hillside Harmony Arts Fest was a highlight of my placement, where we showcased the work from both groups. This event aimed to enhance community belonging by applying the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model, identifying and mobilizing community assets for collective benefit. The arts fest provided opportunities for social interaction and personal growth. Throughout my placement, I assisted with the Summer Day Camp Programme, offering activities, games, and field trips for children aged 7-12. Additionally, I supported the BC Hydro Programme, which provided air conditioners to low-income families, ensuring they had access to essential resources.



You are gonna survive in your placement too!!

Having fun in Gastown



One challenge I encountered was recruiting participants, as many tenants had work commitments that made it difficult for them to join activities. To address this, I offered flexible session times and improved communication to boost motivation and engagement. This adaptability was crucial in overcoming barriers and ensuring the success of the programmes. Completing a placement abroad is undoubtedly challenging, and there were moments when I questioned my ability to succeed. Reflecting on my experience, I learned the importance of self-belief and recognizing my capabilities. The placement emphasized the value of cultural competence, highlighting the need to respect diversity, adapt communication styles, and connect effectively with clients. Being organised and planned was essential for managing the fast-paced environment. It was important to be proactive, asking questions and sharing my thoughts with the organisation. This openness ensured that I stayed aligned with the team's goals. When interacting with clients, I learned not to fear rejection; sincerely expressing my thoughts often made a positive impression. This experience taught me the significance of empathy and effective communication in building strong community connections. By embracing these lessons, I grew more confident in my ability to adapt and innovate in new environments. This experience has prepared me to face future challenges with greater assurance and a deeper understanding of diverse community needs.

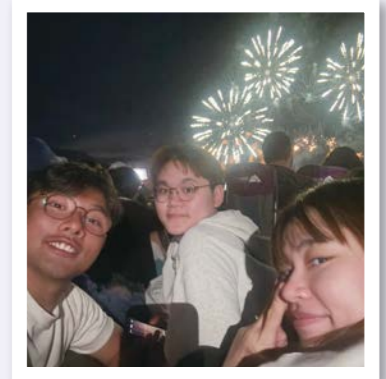
Despite a busy schedule during my placement, taking time to explore the city was crucial. Participating in cultural activities such as the Walk with the Dragon fundraising event and strawberry picking allowed me to connect deeply with the community. These experiences enriched my understanding of diverse cultural practices and strengthened my professional skills. Engaging in these activities enhanced my cultural awareness, helping me appreciate the rich diversity within the community. It prepared me to approach future challenges with greater confidence and empathy, fostering a more inclusive perspective. These events also opened my eyes to new perspectives, encouraging a sense of wonder and curiosity. They inspired me to embrace the unknown, continually seeking to learn and grow from every experience. This mindset of exploration and openness is invaluable in both personal and professional realms.



Nice weather and a breeze on Granville Island

Throughout the placement, I grew more confident in my abilities to adapt and innovate in new environments. The experience deepened my understanding of social work practices and the welfare system in Canada. I realized the significance of empathy, patience, and effective communication in fostering community connections. This placement at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Hillside Gardens has been invaluable

in enhancing my professional skills and cultural awareness. It has prepared me to face future challenges with confidence and a nuanced understanding of diverse community needs. I hope my experiences inspire fellow students to embrace new opportunities and learn from every interaction.



Fascinating fireworks show at English Bay

Introduction

Engaging in the non-local placement was both a rewarding and challenging experience. As a non-local placement student, I possess a comprehensive understanding of the parallels and distinctions in social policies, cultural traditions, social service frameworks, and the practice of social services between Canada and Hong Kong after the block placement in S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Senior Programme, Vancouver Canada. Through ongoing practice and reflection, I gained valuable insights that motivated me to enhance my readiness in delivering more appropriate and contextually relevant services to the seniors in the future.

Professional Preparation and Insights **Understanding Diverse Needs**

During my placement in Canada, I encountered a variety of seniors dealing with distinct contextual challenges. This included Chinese senior immigrants who faced social isolation due to language barriers, as well as feelings of loneliness and powerlessness stemming from being separated from their children. Furthermore, these individuals frequently encountered challenges in articulating their emotions and needs, which can be attributed to the reserved cultural norms prevalent in Chinese society. In response, I introduced the developmental group model, reminiscence therapy and person-centre approach to engage with the corresponding service user in individual case, group work and programme. Simultaneously, this experience compelled me to adopt a more culturally sensitive and open-minded approach in my practice, while as a social worker, we must always remind the importance of active-listening, being non-judgmental and having empathy to clients, while recognize service users by the strength-base perspective and formulate appropriate intervention strategies and plans based on the situation of service users themselves and the current environment in order to go through the whole process with service user side-by-side. In addition, engagement and building mutual trust with clients from diverse backgrounds are also essential to fostering effective communication and understanding.



Cultural Sensitivity and Adaptability

Working in Canada also allowed me to interact with culturally diverse communities and individual including Portuguese, Chinese and German seniors, which strengthened my understanding of the significance of cultural competence in social work practice. This experience enhanced my ability to adapt interventions and services to meet the unique cultural characteristics and needs of beneficiaries in Hong Kong, where cultural dynamics play a significant role in service delivery.

Welfare System

The Diversification of Roles and Effectiveness of Social Workers under Federalism and Multi-welfarism

The welfare support system in Canada operates at different government levels, with federal programmes like Old Age Security (OAS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP), provincial initiatives such as the Medical Services Plan and housing policies, and municipal-level community services. These systems can provide up to CAD\$2,700 in subsidies. Financially, the Government of Canada offers a higher rate and variety of support policies compared to similar senior welfare programmes like the Old Age Allowance and Old Age Living Allowance in Hong Kong, which had created a safety net and ensure to provide a certain quality of life for the seniors who living in Vancouver. Through the experience of assisting clients with applications for B.C. housing and senior bus passes, it reminds me that it is crucial for a social worker to maintain a keen sense on local welfare policies to help service users link and match corresponding resources through local social welfare policies by taking the role of facilitator and resource allocator.





Social Worker Experiences Service Model

The senior services programme such as “Digital Literacy Exchange Programme” are primarily focuses on informational and technical activities and output as structured classes, lectures, and intake assessments. These initiatives aim to promote the well-being of seniors and support aging in place, guided by a problem-solving model. In contrast, there are fewer services addressing social and interpersonal issues, resulting in limited group settings and networking-focused opportunities like mutual support groups and self-help groups for addressing personal challenges among service users. This prompted me to contemplate the significance of each activity and the importance of balancing our roles. As social workers, we steer away from employing a one-size-fits-all approach to service provision. Instead, we strive to flexibly utilize a range of comprehensive approach including the single usage or the mix and match of different strategies such as educational, developmental or mutual support groups etc., to address their issues after assessing the needs of service users. At the same time, it's essential to maintain sensitivity and sharpen observation on service users, identifying additional service needs and even potential crises within ongoing activities.

Volunteer-led Model

For most of the programmes including “Senior Academy”, regular events like Ping Pong and Karaoke classes are primarily led by senior volunteers, with workers serving as facilitators and supporters. Moreover, the concept of volunteering can be further integrated into local life. For instance, in programmes like “Better at Home”, which is a volunteer matching programme, workers initially conduct intake assessments and then match service users with suitable volunteer services, such as friendly visiting and grocery shopping. If various agencies enhance the autonomy and participation of seniors during groups or programmes in Hong Kong, not only can community cohesion be strengthened, but service users can also be empowered through such self-governing events or volunteer-led programmes, which enhancing their self-reliance and sense of efficacy. As result, this contributes to successful aging among the services users.

Tight-knit Bonding and Partnerships with Community Stakeholders

Through various services, it is evident that the workers in agency fosters strong collaboration with other community organisations to establish connections based on mutual trust and assistance. For instance, in the “Digital Literacy Exchange Programme” (DLEP), the organisation maintains a longstanding partnership with Richmond Library, offering software and hardware support such as rooms, projectors and e-system in the weekly digital courses for senior service users. On the other hand, in the partnership with the community centre operated by municipal government, agency will consistently share updated activity information with each other and distribute various leaflets across community centres to enhance visibility and ensure service users receive comprehensive and suitable support and services. These strong bonds prompt reflection on my role as a social worker, particularly in community-based services. Beyond fully understanding the array of services and resources available in the community, workers across different agencies should collaborate closely with each other in the community to maximize service utilization while this approach empowers service users to select the services that best meet their specific needs.

Fun Experiences

During the whole non-local placement journey, I was fortunate enough to visit different remarkable places including Granville Island, UBC farm, White Rock, Gastown, Queen Elizabeth Park, Stanley Park and further more with my field mates and colleagues. I feel truly grateful that my first non-local placement was filled with happiness, personal development, and unforgettable experiences.



Conclusion

“The practice and beliefs of social work are actually two sides of the same coin and cannot be separated”. As a social worker, I always remind myself to uphold the principles that need to abide by mentally, such as sincerity, non-judgment, empowerment and active listening etc. We strive to understand the life stories and preferences of our service users, and resolutely walk side by side with service users through the process. At the same time, in terms of implementation, we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the community environment and flexibly use the characteristics of different contexts to formulate appropriate service types and activities in line with community policies, with the objective of maximizing the welfare outcomes for our service users, while keeping work-life balance and enjoy the whole non-local placement journey.



SWWK

M.O.S.A.I.C. Multi-lingual Orientation Service for Immigrant Communities

MOSAIC is one of Canada's largest settlement non-profit organisations. Their newcomer services change the lives of immigrants, refugees, and individuals from diverse backgrounds in Greater Vancouver and throughout BC.

(Extracted from the website of M.O.S.A.I.C.)

An Unforgettable and Eye-Opening Adventure

I had the invaluable opportunity to serve in the Violence Prevention Programme for Women at the Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) in Vancouver, Canada, during the summer of 2024. Though my stay was brief, it was significant enough for me to cherish these three months for a lifetime. Here, I would like to share my experiences, lessons learned, and reflections on my role as a social work placement student and visitor.

Multiculturalism

Canada truly embodies a melting pot, rich with immigrants and their descendants. MOSAIC as one of the largest registered settlement and employment service organisations in Canada, primarily serves immigrants and newcomers. My team, which included my field mate and me, hailed from diverse cultural backgrounds, including the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Colombia, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Japan. In the remedial group I facilitated for women who had experienced intimate partner violence, all six members came from different countries.



Strolling on Granville Island with my fieldmate

Hiking Quarry Rock in Deep Cove with my CUHK buddies



On one hand, I felt fortunate to learn from everyone's unique languages and cultures, and to introduce Hong Kong to people from around the world. On the other hand, I constantly reminded myself to be sensitive and to practice cultural competence by valuing various cultural norms and beliefs while implementing activities and interacting with others. For instance, most group handouts and materials were translated into multiple languages to ensure the members felt comfortable and respected. We also held a potluck to celebrate the termination of the group, fostering cultural pride among the participants. I never imagined I would learn Hindi and Punjabi before coming to Canada as well!

Inclusivity

"Inclusivity" at MOSAIC extends beyond hiring staff with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds - it encompasses a non-discriminatory approach and cultural sensitivity to accommodate the diversity within the population.

In addition to gender-specific washrooms, MOSAIC provides universal washrooms for transgender individuals and a multi-faith meditation room for prayers. Assessment forms use "gender identity" instead of "gender," and there is a policy to refrain from wearing perfume to protect individuals with allergies. These efforts clearly demonstrate MOSAIC's commitment to creating an inclusive and safe environment for both staff and clients. It would be wonderful if similar thoughtful practices could be adopted in social service organisations in Hong Kong in the future.

Growth and Learning as a Social Work Student

During my placement, I practiced my professional knowledge and skills under the guidance of my fieldwork supervisor. For example, selecting appropriate theoretical frameworks to address service users' needs, facilitating group dynamics to build trustful and collaborative relationships, and conducting follow-up work. The clients I served often faced multiple forms of intersectional oppression, including sexism, ageism, and racism. As a half-Japanese Hong Konger, I take pride in my diverse heritage, but I have also faced discrimination. This personal experience shaped my desire to apply a strength-based approach in the women's support group and programmes (psychoeducational and parent-child workshops), recognizing each client's resilience and capacity for growth on their healing journey. To address the existing service gap, my field mate and I also provided childcare services for clients who were single mothers.

Participating in the Pride Parade



Additionally, I actively participated in the agency's training and activities. Assisting with musical shows and community dialogues organised by the Seniors Club inspired me to witness the capabilities of immigrant elder people. They memorized scripts in English and learned dance steps and lyrics for performances

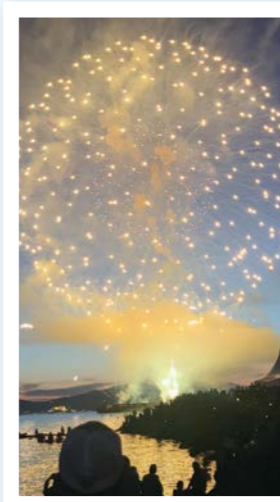
lasting over an hour. By joining the team's professional development day, I gained deeper insights into the history, perspectives, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples through a cultural walk at Sunshine Coast. Participating in the Pride Parade also allowed me to connect with the LGBTQ+ community. These experiences outside the office had enriched my learning and deepened my understanding of the diversity and nature of work within Canada's social welfare system.

Group members works of fluid art



Work-life Balance

This was my first time traveling outside of Asia, so I made sure to explore Vancouver as much as possible. My CUHK friends and I went sightseeing every weekend, visiting places like Granville Island, Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, the outlet mall, and a casino in Richmond, as well as the famous tourist spot, Gastown. If you enjoy nature as I do, I highly recommend visiting Grouse Mountain and hiking in Deep Cove. One of my most memorable moments in Canada was watching a breath-taking fireworks show at English Bay, a vibrant beach filled with crowds and picturesque sunset.



Watching fireworks - the highlight of the placement

In summary, I am extremely grateful that I chose to undertake my first block placement overseas. It stands out as one of the best decisions I have ever made. Beyond the fruitful learning opportunities and voyages, I also met and formed friendships with individuals with beautiful souls in this amazing country. For those planning to apply for non-local placements in the coming years: take risks and remember to both work hard and enjoy your journey! Cheers!



Stunning Sunset in English Bay

During my non-local placement in Vancouver, Canada, I had the opportunity to work with MOSAIC, one of the largest multicultural settlement and employment services organisations dedicated to serving the immigrant community and building an inclusive environment. My role focused specifically on the violence prevention programmes for women, where I collaborated with other helping professionals to develop and implement initiatives that support vulnerable populations.

In my placement, I focused on a self-love enhancement group for senior Chinese women, a Photovoice workshop focusing on women empowerment, and a leaflet publishing project. In the group titled “Learning, Loving, Positive Aging”, I collaborated closely with MOSAIC’s seniors club to support their commitment to eliminating elder abuse. A significant highlight of the group was a reframing workshop, where participants engaged in discussions about ageism, social stigmatization, and their identities. In the group, I have observed the immense value of approaching one another with an open heart. Engaging with group members through empathy, patience, and humility is essential, particularly given the generational and cultural differences. Building connections takes time; however, when we listen without judgment, we can foster genuine rapport.

Another important lesson has been recognizing the need to address service gaps. I have come to understand the significance of creating practical, informative, and durable psychoeducational and resource leaflets. I have developed materials on topics such as parenting advice, self-affirmation, community resources, and grounding exercises, available in both English, traditional and simplified Chinese. By placing myself in the users’ position, I have gained insight into their true needs. As placement students, we may be new to the environment and thus able to identify certain service gaps. It is important to reach out to supervisors and colleagues in a humble and respectful manner and to prioritize the best interests of your users.



Joining the Vancouver Pride Parade 2024 with My Friends



Survived from the Capilano Suspension Bridge!

Besides of my placement tasks, I have also actively taken part in a variety of events in Vancouver. I participated in various enriching events. I represented MOSAIC at the Pride Parade and engaged in indigenous learning trips to the Sunshine Coast, enhancing my understanding of local cultures. The Collingwood Days Celebration and the musical “Seniors Take on Things We’ve Never Talked About” showcased community spirit and the voices of immigrant’s communities. I also attended an All-Staff Meeting, which fostered connections with colleagues. In addition to my work, I explored Vancouver, enjoyed the fireworks at English Bay, the Capilano Bridge, visited different universities in Vancouver, and tried bouldering for the first time. My visit to Calgary allowed me to reconnect with old friends and experienced the stunning beauty of Lake Louise and snow for the first time during a memorable day trip to Banff.

To mention my first Pride Parade in Vancouver, which lasted for weeks and featured many celebratory events. The atmosphere was incredibly welcoming and respectful; as I walked in the parade, pedestrians waved and supported us with smiles and encouraging words. It was inspiring to witness the strong sense of pride and identity among participants, who stood up for the rights they and others deserved. The awareness of vulnerable communities and the respect shown to everyone in society were truly admirable. I also had a lot of fun during the parade, making it an unforgettable experience.

My time in Vancouver provided valuable insights into its rich multicultural landscape. The city is home to diverse populations, as both my clients and colleagues hailed from various parts of the world. To meet the needs of service users, MOSAIC offers support through staff members who speak over 50 different languages, embodying the principles of humanistic and person-centred care. This approach ensures that services are delivered in ways that communities find comfortable and accessible.



Indigenous Learning Trip to Sunshine Coast



Community Health and Specialized’s Cluster Meeting

Furthermore, I gained significant knowledge about the indigenous culture in Canada after having the honour to participate in two indigenous culture learning events during my placement. I also had the opportunity to lead two land acknowledgments, which deepened my awareness of indigenous communities and their histories. I learned that the indigenous community experiences significant oppression and social exclusion, with alarming statistics indicating that one indigenous woman is killed every two days. This reality underscores the urgent need for the government and society to pay attention to these issues and provide immediate support. Verbal acknowledgments alone are insufficient; meaningful action and advocacy are essential to address these grave injustices and foster real progress for Indigenous peoples.

In conclusion, I want to sincerely thank our Department for its financial support, as well as Director of Field Instruction Eric and Project Coordinator Patrice for their encouragement. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow during my non-local placement in Vancouver. This experience has taught me so much about working with diverse communities. I encourage all students to take advantage of similar opportunities, as they can lead to valuable insights and personal growth.

SWWK

HCSA Community Services

HCSA Community Services is a charitable organisation with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status and a member of the National Council of Social Service. HCSA operates with a team of dedicated staff, volunteer teams, corporate and community partners, as they continue to serve the vulnerable in society, to give them a future and a hope.

HCSA Dayspring began in 2006 with one woman, Alice Heng, and her vision to help troubled women. Originally a hideaway of hope and healing for troubled women, the Dayspring team discovered a need to shelter girls who were victims of abuse and established Singapore's first Residential Treatment Centre in 2011 to provide a therapeutic intervention programme for young trauma survivors. In 2017, Dayspring transitioned into a Therapeutic Group Home and is today certified as a Trauma Systems Therapy programme. We offer a caring, safe and therapeutic environment to help teenage girls who have suffered the complex trauma of emotional, physical or sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; or household dysfunction.

(Extracted from the website of HCSA Community Services)

Firework Display in National Day



Shoes painting with volunteers



Trees in singapore

I had the incredible honour of participating in a summer placement in Singapore in 2024, an experience that proved to be both fruitful and unforgettable. My time there has become one of the most remarkable memories of my life. I worked at the HCSA Dayspring Residential Treatment Centre, which provides support for teenage girls who have experienced complex trauma. This role was challenging yet immensely rewarding, providing me with valuable insights into the complexities of human relationships and the healing process.

At the outset, I faced significant challenges in building relationships with the girls at the centre. Many of them were understandably sensitive to new staff members. They had encountered betrayals from loved ones, leading to deep insecurities on relationship-building, especially with someone from a different cultural background like myself. Despite these initial hurdles, the girls demonstrated remarkable patience and kindness towards us. They tolerated our accents and made efforts to engage, which helped create a more welcoming environment and built strong rapport time by time.

Throughout my time at the centre, I encountered numerous unforgettable experiences, making it difficult to highlight just one. However, one of the most profound lessons I learned was the importance of remaining calm and composed in the face of negativity. Several girls had a tendency to express self-harm and suicidal thoughts, which initially left me feeling shocked and unsure of how to respond. I realized that simply "being there" for them - listening without judgment - was often the most valuable support I could offer. It's crucial to let them know that they are not alone and that there is someone who cares.

In group activities, I also learned to communicate messages clearly and in a manner that was easy for the girls to understand. I observed that they often had a short attention span, which required me to adapt my methods and keep them engaged. Understanding their context and perspective was essential, especially given their history of victimization. As a social worker, it was my responsibility to identify their inner strengths and empower them, instilling hope that they could move beyond their past traumas. This approach reinforced the idea that they possess resilience and the capacity to overcome challenges.



HKD\$20 Hainan Chicken Rice from Hawker Centre

Beyond my work at the treatment centre, my daily life in Singapore broadened my horizons. Before arriving, I had heard numerous myths about the country that made me apprehensive. Concerns about the high cost of living and a perceived lack of entertainment loomed large in my mind. However, my three-month experience in Singapore dispelled these misconceptions. For instance, I discovered that meals at hawker centres were not only affordable but also delicious. A plate of Hainan chicken rice cost only about HKD\$20, which was a pleasant surprise considering the quality of the food. While there certainly are expensive dining options, majority of the food available was both affordable and delicious, emphasizing that choices greatly influence one's dining experience.

Many people have pointed out the similarities between Singapore and Hong Kong, yet my explorations revealed distinct differences as well. One noticeable aspect was the abundance of greenery in Singapore's urban environment. The presence of trees lining the streets highlighted the city's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

Last group session's photo taking time with group members



More greenery not only improves air quality but also contributes to the overall aesthetics of the city. Additionally, the multicultural fabric of Singapore, with its diverse nationalities coexisting harmoniously, fosters a sense of inclusivity and community.

One of the most remarkable moments of my stay was celebrating Singapore's National Day. The atmosphere was electric, with citizens proudly displaying the Singaporean flag outside their homes. I was particularly impressed by the tradition of composing a new National Day song for each year's celebration, accompanied by fireworks, parades, and various performances-experiences that I had not encountered in Hong Kong. On National Day, many people dressed in the flag's colours of red and white, symbolizing their pride and sense of belonging. The vibrant atmosphere at night, with everyone joining in the celebrations, was an unforgettable experience that showcased the unity and spirit of the nation.

Overall, my non-local placement was not merely a job at the treatment centre; it was an invaluable opportunity to immerse myself in a different culture, step outside my comfort zone, and gain deeper insights into the human experience. The challenges I faced and the lessons I learned have enriched my understanding of social work and strengthened my resolve to make a difference in the lives of those I serve.

In conclusion, my placement in Singapore was a transformative journey that extended far beyond professional development. It was a unique blend of personal growth, cultural exploration, and meaningful connections with individuals who, despite their struggles, inspired me with their resilience and strength. This experience will undoubtedly shape my future endeavours in social work and continue to influence my outlook on life.



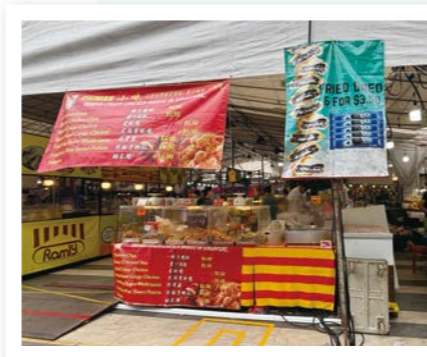
A journey of growth and discovery

My placement experience in Singapore has been genuinely transformative and enlightening, emerging as one of the most impressive learning opportunities in my life. This profound journey of growth and self-discovery has significantly impacted both my professional and personal development.

Practical Application of Theoretical Concepts

My exposure at Dayspring has equipped me with a trauma-informed lens, enhancing my understanding of clients facing challenging pasts. I had the opportunity to engage with both theoretical concepts and practical applications to support girls who have experienced trauma. Working within the framework of Trauma System Therapy (TST), the centre provided a structured approach to trauma interventions, which was instrumental in my learning. Collaborating with the residential team allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. Interacting with the girls and closely observing their behaviours offered invaluable insights into how trauma manifests in their emotional and behavioural responses. This has deepened my awareness of how trauma impacts various facets of their lives, from family dynamics and social relationships to their pursuit of career aspirations.

Each experience and lesson fuels my aspirations ahead



Exploring the diverse facets of the city

Finding Motivation in Every Step

Navigating the complexities of working with girls impacted by intricate trauma was both intellectually and emotionally challenging. These clients, often exposed to trauma at a young age, face difficulties across multiple areas, including struggles with self-concept, attachment issues, and challenges in emotional and behavioural regulation. Rebuilding their regulatory skills and facilitating their reintegration into society demands significant effort. Throughout my three-month placement, I longed to witness their growth. My supervisor reminded me that skill-building requires time and that every small step forward counts. Practicing patience with both the clients and myself became essential. Sometimes, I was anxious about my performance and was eager to see immediate results. Acknowledging each small achievement fostered hope and motivation for both them and me to persist in our efforts. Even in those brief three months, the newly admitted girls made notable progress; they began to establish connections with staff and learned to express their feelings.

Inspiration from the Clients

Although my role was to provide support for the girls, I found them to be a wellspring of inspiration. Despite their difficult pasts, these young individuals nurtured dreams and aspirations, showcasing remarkable determination, strength, and compassion. Some have a clear vision for their futures, driven to achieve their goals, while others demonstrate perseverance in the face of hardships. Their talents shine through their dedication and effort, and many exhibit a nurturing spirit, genuinely caring for those around them. They have taught me the true essence of resilience, and I carry their lessons with me as I navigate my own journey.

A place that holds a special place in my heart



Personal Growth

Beyond my professional development and the insights gained from interacting with the girls, this experience marked my longest time away from home, prompting meaningful self-reflection. The solitude allowed me to explore my emotions more deeply, fostering greater self-awareness. Managing daily life and exploring the city independently enhanced my confidence and cultivated a sense of autonomy. While the challenges of staying far from home were evident, each obstacle became an incredible lesson in problem-solving, and I truly enjoyed this time!

As I look back on this chapter in my life, this placement experience has shaped my perspectives, instilling in me a deeper appreciation for resilience. As I move forward, I carry with me the valuable lessons learned, which serve as guiding light for my future endeavours.



Every girl has her unique strengths

The Garden of Hope Foundation

勵馨社會福利事業基金會

The Garden of Hope Foundation upholds Christian values in its pursuit of justice and love. They are devoted to preventing and eliminating gender-based violence and co-creating a gender-friendly society through a diverse array of services and initiatives. Their hope is for everyone to enjoy the nobility and glory of life in a society free of gender-based discrimination and violence.

(Extracted from the website of The Garden of Hope Foundation)

SWWK

新竹分事務所

陳婧

社會工作社會科學碩士課程（全日制）一年級

自己策劃的拼裝全「家」桶性別活動大合照，看見大家都很快樂，我也很滿足



在勵馨基金會新竹分事務所實習的這三個月中，我在專業及個人成長上亦有不同的學習和體會。踏入社工學習之路短短兩個學期，便需要開展第一次實習，實屬挑戰。我想趁自己仍是學生這身分，去體驗外面的世界，因此選擇了海外實習，而這次旅程亦令我非常難忘，且無悔。

勵馨是個以性別倡議起家的機構。這是我第一次接觸關於性別的特別服務，例如目睹家暴兒童、性侵害、青少年懷孕等，所以在實習前，我希望開放自己，得以接收這些新事物。這三個月讓我對性別刻板印象有所反思。起初我在想，作為在性別機構服務的社工，應該本身是很開放、毫無定型想法及偏見的人吧？但漸漸認識到，反轉刻板印象並非一夕之間能做到，我們每個人都是獨特的，從小到大的經歷建立了我們根深蒂固的價值觀、處事方式等。容讓自己去打開眼光探索，過程中若發現自己的偏見，再慢慢地學習更多，漸漸調整。覺察與反思，才是最重要的。在一次訓練營中，我與一位四十多歲的家庭主婦聊天。她在生小孩後，辭職做家庭主婦。現在兒子長大，所以重新回到學校學習，希望可以為婦女平權的社區事務付出更多。在與她的交流中，感受到她對性平議題的關注，我佩服她可以突破社會的主流論述，勇敢做自己想做的事。社會建構了許多框框，但人的思想是自由的。



每次活動都會用封箱膠紙寫名字，活動後，我都會收藏這些膠紙，作為紀念。這張上面畫有我最愛的向日葵

在實習開初，我經歷了許多不安，自己一個來到外地工作，在生活及職場上，都需要時間適應，而與人的「連結」就大大減少了我的不安。友善的同工們經常會關心我們，例如邀請我們一起叫外送、介紹餐廳等。此外，在實習中也有許多跟訪、與機構同工開會討論的機會。雖然我是實習生，但同工們亦重視我們的聲音，在過程中，切身從同工身上學到許多。此外，起初的我對自己的年齡缺乏自信，但我漸漸地開始學習接納自己的年紀。醫生幫病人治病，不需要自己得過那個疾病才能醫治好對方。同樣地，當社工提供服務時，即使年齡及歷練比服務使用者少，亦不能非黑即白地代表自己是沒用處的。學習接納自己，不被年齡框住，年紀小，同樣能對對方感到好奇、產生連結、為其感動。



某天下班，在回家路上看見彩虹

最後一天上班，在機構門口的照片，很不捨



還記得在實習第一天的日誌中，我寫了一句話：給自己時間，慢慢成長。有時並沒有所謂「標準」去衡量「好與不好」。達到了，就是好；未達到，或許就是不好。更多的，是在於每次的經驗中，學習把目光著眼在自我覺察及反思。路途遙遠，未來的路還很長，讓自己慢慢成長。



同工在辦公室養的貓，叫做「窩窩」，職銜是「療癒專員」，工作累了可以摸摸牠

勵馨基金會的同事們十分照顧海外實習學生，會經常給我們好味的小食和水果

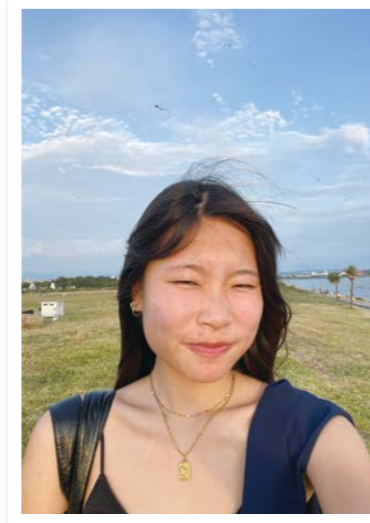


很高興在畢業前的最後一個夏天能有機會到勵馨基金會的新竹分所進行實習。雖然三個月的時間不長亦不短，但卻令我對性暴力相關的服務和性別觀點有新的看法和視野，同時也讓我更認識了自己其他的可能性。

在台灣服務期間，我發現到勵馨的服務觀點從來不在於要為少女們解決她們的「問題」或者是視她們為有特定標籤的服務使用者，但更多的是想要協助她們擺脫「年輕母親」、「媳婦」、「女兒」，甚至乎是「女人」的這些標籤，再鼓勵及支援她們培養自己內在和外在外可發展的能力，真真正正地成為一個「人」。香港的社工服務中雖然不時會提及到這種要協助服務使用者達到「Self Actualization」的說法，但礙於時間、資源限制，感覺香港的社工大多都比較忽視要協助服務使用者找回「人」自身的價值，而更多地思考如何滿足服務使用者的需要或資源整合。但在台灣工作的經驗讓我感受到，其實再多的物資、經濟支援亦不及社工或實習學生對少女、受家暴兒少們的真切關懷。只有她們感受到自己身邊原來仍然有人相信自己的能力、不會以以往的經歷標籤她們，才是足以使她們又重新出發或開展新生活的動力。而再多金錢、奶粉、尿布，都不及社工的陪伴和關心。在台灣這種醒悟，我相信是在香港實習未必會有機會經歷到的。



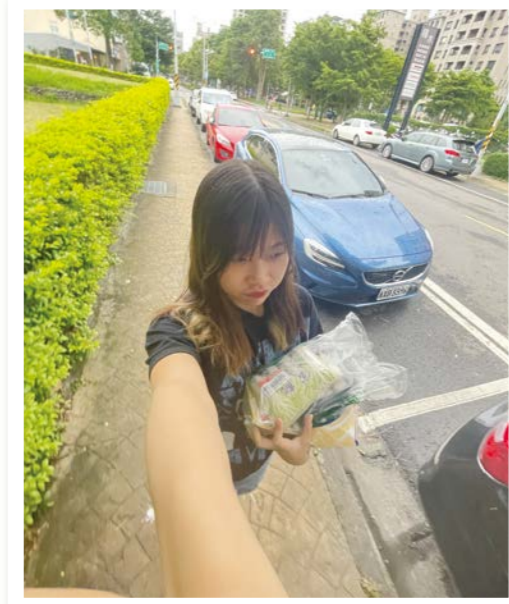
與 Fieldmate 在星期六 OT 完去參加台灣的戶外音樂節



假日到新竹和台北的景點遊覽 - work life balance 還是有的

除此之外，在台灣的實習歷程中我亦有機會更進一步認識自己個人的特質及未來的取向。在去台灣實習以前，我自認是個頗獨立和沈著的人，但到台灣生活以後我才發現自己原來還可以有很多面向。在勵馨開放、鼓勵、包容度高的環境下，我發現自己原來比想像中的更加活潑、勇於表達自己的一切感受和意見。同工友善、真誠的相處模式令我更有勇氣在一個全新的環境中發掘自己不同的可能性（不論是工作上還是個人成長上），亦令我感受到實習的本質應該是實驗性、具有創新性的。雖然在台灣工作的日子過得「快活」，但亦令我感受到自己對在香港工作仍然有一份期望與牽掛，是我去海外實習前未預想到的。最後，我亦有幸在是次海外實習中結識到來自碩士課程和台灣的其他社工同學，以及大學外聘的督導阿紫。我們在這三個月互相學習、共同成長、互取長處、互補短處，亦是實習中一難能可貴的連繫。

或許在多年後果，我便會忘記在台灣實習的種種細節，但我想我不會忘記這三個月中感受到原來人與人相處可以此般真切，亦願來年到台灣實習的同學可有難忘和收穫滿滿的旅程。



學習自己生活!! 買餛飩 煮飯!! (台灣的食物有點油膩 - 有點難難每一餐都出去食)



第一次嘗試以繪本閱讀作為活動的 Means-(還要用普通話!!!) 但同事和督導都給予了十分多的支持和鼓勵



營隊農務體驗 - 採收火龍果

引言

這個暑假，我有幸在台灣的花漾青春館實習。這段經歷為我的暑假增添了無比的意義與難忘的回憶。在實習的過程中，我學習了許多，也體驗了許多，收穫豐富。值得一提的是，這是中大首次與花漾青春館合作，寶貴的機會來之不易。所幸在實習期間，我得到了督導和台灣實習同學的支持，讓我更深入地了解了台灣與香港在青少年服務及文化上的差異。能夠在此實習，確實是一段獨特且珍貴的經歷。

花漾青春館

花漾青春館是一所專為 12 至 18 歲青少年提供服務的機構，主要以情感教育和性別教育為核心，並提供多元化的服務形式，如個案工作、小組活動、社區工作和據點經營等。不僅青少年受惠於這些服務，我在實習期間也見證了學校、國際教育團體及其他機構紛紛慕名前來參觀與合作。



營隊農務體驗 - 移植蓮子

情感教育區是據點經營的一部分，設有三大展區，分別是探索區、關係區和鏡子房。青春期的青少年經常會面臨各種迷茫和困惑，而在這個區域，透過創新設計的道具與展覽空間，青少年有機會進行自我反思與學習。在這個過程中，中心的社工全程陪伴，幫助青少年探索自我、認識情感，並協助他們覺察自己與他人之間的關係。

實習經歷

實習期間，最令我印象深刻的是參與了一個為期四日三夜的營隊。營隊的前幾個晚上，我負責帶領團體討論，這對我來說是一次非常具挑戰性的任務。然而，幸運的是，機構的夥伴們在每次團體討論後，會與我詳細討論每位參加者的需求與情況，這使我能夠適時調整活動內容，以更好地滿足青少年的需求。



營隊晚上團體的活動照片

情感教育區 (探索區) - 探索青少年在青春期可能面對的困惑



此外，機構給予我極大的彈性，允許我策劃和主持各種活動，並在個案工作中提供多方面的支援與指導，幫助我拓展視野，提升專業知識。這些寶貴的經驗讓我深感感激，也讓我在實習中獲得了全面的成長。

總結

這次實習經歷讓我深刻感受到社工在服務使用者成長過程中所扮演的重要角色。台灣的經驗更促使我反思自己為何選擇從事助人工作，並激勵我努力成為一個充滿溫度的人，能夠在未來的專業道路上陪伴和支持更多有需要的人。



與個案一起手作

新北分事務所 (恩心家園)

吳凱盈

社會工作本科課程四年級

與少女互拍唯美照 1



很感恩有來到台灣實習的機會，讓我有不同的見識和學習。這次暑假來到恩心家園進行為期三個月的實習，參加了多元的活動，如參與機構敘事治療的課程、參觀勵馨的物資中心等，也更瞭解台灣的不同福利、教育制度和 문화，開闊眼界；在與台灣同學交流中，也更多瞭解台灣人相對港人悠閒的生活模式，反思我們的生活態度；更有機會與當地人相互交流兩地政策，分享對社會時事如垃圾徵費、兩岸時局的看法，談天說地，都是很寶貴的經驗和時光。

實習中讓我感受尤深的是要更多地相信案主的能力。在實習時會常擔心自己說錯話，碰到案主的傷口，使案主受傷。但在接觸下發現她們雖然為過往經歷而感傷心，卻仍能坦然面對發生過的事情，這也再次提醒了自己不要只看案主有需要的部分，而是多看見他們的長處，並學習不要自我束縛，更快地建立關係。事實上這次實習我遇到的少女們都較成熟及有自己的想法，世界上天南地北的議題，可以是與自然奇聞相關的地平論、美人魚，又或是人生觀的探討如對二戰、天堂地獄的存在、以暴制暴、好人壞人的標準和看法，她們都能言之有物地談論，讓我確切地感受到何謂「不可叫人少看你年輕」。我們可以將對方不只當作社工實習生與案主，更是有想法知識交流的人。我們不僅僅是助人者或困於過往歷史和瑣碎現實的人，我們的視野可以跳脫於日常生活之外，有更多的思維震蕩和衝擊，建立一段另類的關係。實習中也看見少女們有一定自省的能力，也願意有所改變。在與她們建立關係的時候，我深刻感受到作為社工很重要的一個身份便是成為願意聆聽包容她們感受的人，提供她們梳理想法和情緒的空間，學習觀察她們更多的強項，不放棄地陪伴她們作出即使緩慢但仍重要的改變，是這份工作很重要的意義。



跟少女們一起玩桌遊

在台旅居三月，實習之餘，我也把握機會好好感受台灣的生活，忙裏偷閒享受台灣特色美食和日用品。當地不少商店採用薄利多銷的經營模式，食物保持新鮮有質素之餘，生意也很好



此外，我也看到自己需要改進的地方，除了細微處如聲綫的調整外，也看到自己習慣條件反射式地提供答案給問題詢問者，卻忘記思考案主詢問背後的想法，更多地瞭解案主的心路歷程及作出介入；另外我也會掙扎在案主自決及教育。一方面我相信案主的能力，同時因為自己的成長經歷也偏向自由嘗試的生活方式，因此不自覺地我也投射自己的想法，輕視及錯失了教育的時機，但另一邊廂，我也需要尊重案主的自決權利，不能過多地干預。在個案工作的切入點上，何時該說，何時該說的尺度對我而言仍需要更多練習才能正確拿捏。

實習旅途中最讓人感到幸福感動的時刻，除了與案主關係的建立，便是看見少女在各方面的成長，如更多地厘清自己的想法和需要、學習忍耐、與人磨合、能夠按捺恐懼、接受失敗並一次次地再挑戰，讓自己也有所反思，並備受激勵。

凡此種種都帶來各種豐盛獨特的體驗，收獲難忘的回憶。期望自己能延續實習中的學習，訓練自己有更好的溝通能力、觀察案主的需要、謹守愛與公義的原則、一點點地成長，將來成為俯仰無愧於心的社工。



與少女互拍唯美照 2



仍記得在實習最後一天離開家園的時候，她們攔在門前不讓我離開，希望我能再回來探望她們... 很感恩少女們願意接納我這個只能與她們相處2個多月的陌生人

MacKay Memorial Hospital

馬偕紀念醫院

MacKay Memorial Hospital, under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, was established in memory of Dr. George Leslie MacKay who followed in the footsteps of his Master by coming to Taiwan with the message of salvation for all men. Even in those early days, Dr. MacKay was concerned for the whole person and ministered to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each patient.

(Extracted from the website of MacKay Memorial Hospital)

SWWK

安寧療護教育示範中心
余曉琳
社會工作社會科學碩士課程（全日制）一年級

與同事們的合照，感謝他們在這三個月的支持與照顧！



安寧是一個理念

在未開始實習之前，我認為「安寧」僅指安寧病房或中心，一個專門為晚期病人提供舒適環境和治療的地方，旨在讓他們更平靜地度過最後的時光。

然而，這三個月的實習裏，我發現「安寧」不僅是一個具體的場所，更是一種以病人為中心、關懷病人甚至其家屬的理念。這理念的實現需要每位團隊成員的共同努力和追求，讓病人能夠有尊嚴地善終，家屬也能在這段艱難的時間中找到安慰。



有同事主動參加小組活動，製作花束送給病人和家屬，傳遞愛與祝福

同工們不求回報的付出

在中心裡，不同成員同心協力，只為一個共同目標——希望病人能善終，家屬得以安慰。

從同事的分享中，我了解到有一位末期病人最後的心願是去日本旅遊，但身體狀況限制使他的願望難以實現。為了滿足這位病人的願望，社工師和靈性關懷師投入了大量心血與時間，在病房中創造一個「日本」。社工師特地請與中心距離很遠的農夫朋友幫忙砍下一棵樹，然後將木頭千里迢迢地運送回中心。靈性關懷部的同事們也親自將假櫻花花瓣和假樹枝一一黏在木頭上，最後合力製作了一棵美麗的櫻花樹。他們犧牲了大量的時間和心血，旨在幫病人和家屬圓夢，實現「安寧」。

此外，「安寧」並不僅僅屬於病人，安寧團隊也會將這份關懷延伸至病人家屬。我們希望在病人即將離世時，能陪伴家屬走過這段艱難的旅程，並在病人去世後，幫助他們減輕哀傷與失落帶來的痛苦。我曾目睹多位護理師和其他團隊成員，為了讓即將離世的病人的小朋友能多陪伴母親，與親戚進行了長時間的磋商。他們甚至特別調動中心資源，安排房間讓小朋友能夠過夜，以便與病人共度最後的時光。這份努力展現了「安寧」的真正意義——在困難時期，為所有人帶來支持與安慰。

在這三個月，我深受醫院同工們與病人及家屬同行的經歷所感動。即使超出工作範圍，許多同工仍主動付出，讓人印象深刻。這些感人的瞬間激勵著我，讓我更有動力為病人和家屬提供更好的支持，正如許多同工所做的一樣。

個人反思：愛和痛苦是同時存在的

無論是對於病患還是他們的家人，面對死亡都是極具挑戰性的。然而，正因為他們面對這份沉重而令人窒息的苦難，他們所表現出的愛也同樣是沉重而深刻的。在生死存亡的關頭，這些家屬仍然毫不動搖地守在病患身邊，不離不棄。儘管自身極需關懷和支持，他們仍然毫不猶豫地將自己的需求置於次要，全心全意地照顧和愛護病人，陪伴著他們度過生命的最後旅程。我相信，若非痛苦如此沉重，這份深情的愛也不會如此彰顯。



與中心大樓的合照



工作人員協助家屬製作送給病人的禮物，為病人送上祝福

大多數晚期病患和他們的家人可能只看到了「苦難」這個外殼，而工作人員們幫助他們認識裡面的核心「愛」是極為重要的。

我記得有位處於生命晚期的伯伯參加了小組。在不同工作人員的協助下，他為一直艱辛照顧自己和其他家人的女兒製作了一個相框，並寫下了一張心意卡，感謝她多年來無私付出，並祝福她在自己離世後能夠幸福、平安和快樂。在製作過程中，我們為伯伯拍攝了多張照片，並讓他與相框和心意卡一起合照。我相信這份禮物和照片中的回憶，能在伯伯去世後為女兒帶來一絲安慰。

我也記得有一位女士特地從海外回到台灣，探望生命即將結束的母親。她向我哭訴自己的無力感，看到媽媽受盡折磨卻無法減輕她的痛苦。然而，她未曾注意到的是，每當她在母親身邊時，母親展現出的笑容是我認識她以來最燦爛的。至親的陪伴與愛，對病人而言就是最大的力量來源，讓她能夠勇敢面對死亡與恐懼。



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最後，非常感恩能夠有這次海外實習的機會。這段經歷不僅促進了我在個人和專業上的成長，也讓我在安寧療護領域獲得了更深刻的認識和體會！

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