

Scholarship Stories: Mr Wong Tung Hou Kevin

Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance)



Congrats on receiving the Ong Tiong Tat Master's Degree Scholarship. As a Behavioural Therapist, can you share with us what brings you joy?

In all my interactions with the autistic adults and their caregivers, I was always energised with a sense of purpose and meaning that I had nurtured over my years working for their cause. I was frequently reminded not only of the challenges that individuals with autism continue to face, but also of their unique and endearing individual personalities. My interactions with the caregivers also have always encouraged and inspired me; I learnt much from their continued resilience and positive attitudes towards giving their best to their children. I see myself continuing this small contribution, which may grow to something bigger in tandem with the community's combined efforts to bring greater support to the lives of individuals with autism and special needs.

As a recipient of the Ong Tiong Tat Master's Degree Scholarship, Mr Wong Tung Hou Kevin shares his experience as a Behavioural Therapist in the special needs industry, and how NIE's Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) programme has sharpen his professional and personal acumen.

That's very inspiring, Kevin. Can you share some challenges you have observed during your professional practice?

Having worked in a special education (SPED) school for children and young adults with autism for five years, I grew to become intimately aware of the challenges faced by these individuals and their families.

One of gaps professionals in the special needs industry have observed is the care and support individuals with special needs require as they transition to adulthood. Many organisations recognise this gap in the special needs landscape and have made efforts to address this concern.

As part of being a scholarship recipient, please share with us the community outreach activity you were engaged in.

I joined Eden Activity Club (EAC) as a volunteer after I started to pursue my full-time studies in NIE as I felt that it was an appropriate and meaningful step to take—I had the relevant skills and experience to continue to contribute, and I could stay meaningfully connected with the autistic community which I hold dear to my heart.

What were the highlights of your stint as a volunteer?

As a volunteer, I assisted in organising various activities on Saturday mornings; these ranged from baking, inline skating, soccer, and healthy lifestyle classes and workshops. Through these activities, I helped ensure that participants' autism needs were met, and I supported their engagement in the activities and their interaction with others. I also involved caregivers and encouraged them to support their children in the activities. A bigger project I was involved in was an 8-week long "Walk and Hike" programme, where I planned walking routes in various locations for morning walks on Saturdays. The objective was to introduce them to these walking trails, encourage them to build a habit of engaging in regular fitness activities, and provide them the opportunity to socialise with one another.

So, how has the Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) (MACG) programme offered by the NIE impacted your professional practice so far?

Even as I progressed through my studies in the Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) programme, I can certainly say that the courses I have taken throughout my first two semesters had greatly benefitted me. As someone who does not have any prior professional counselling experience, the courses provided me with extensive breadth and depth of foundational knowledge that I am sure will stand me in good stead as I pursue a future career in counselling.

I have learnt much from professors who inspired me and who imparted their wisdom from years of clinical practice and academia, as well as peers who come from diverse backgrounds with years of experience in varied helping professions. I particularly appreciate the many fruitful group and class discussions, as well as opportunities to engage in role-play and real-life practice of counselling skills, as these allowed us to learn through experiences in the class. Another pivotal aspect of the programme that I also greatly appreciate was the emphasis on professional, ethical practice through a nurturance of reflective practice and self-awareness. Course materials and assignments required us to engage in a lot of reflection on our own personal selves and experiences—our attitudes, values, and beliefs—to consider how all these might affect our counselling practice and contribute to better therapeutic outcomes for our clients.

If you could turn back time, will you still have chosen to pursue NIE's MACG programme?

NIE's MACG had always been my first choice to receive the necessary professional training to become a counsellor. It is a rigorous programme offered by a renowned and reputable institute of higher learning and fully certified by the Singapore Association for Counselling (SAC) as a training programme for Registered Counsellors.

Thank you, Kevin, for your time. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours as you strive to leave a lasting legacy among those you serve in the special needs industry!

Mr Wong Tung Hou Kevin is a graduate of NIE's Master of Arts (Counselling & Guidance). NIE's Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) is a course-work oriented professional degree designed to prepare new entrants into the fields of counselling and guidance as highly competent and caring counsellors.



For more information on the Master of Arts (Counselling and Guidance) programme, please visit <https://ntu.sg/nie-macg>.