

Healing through the power of listening

SIT scholar believes that patient care first starts with compassion and understanding, not just theoretical knowledge

Physiotherapist Darren Lim often faces doubts about his healing abilities from new patients, especially those who are fearful or resistant to therapy.

"One patient who had a stroke would start crying and shaking whenever I approached her with my physiotherapy equipment, and her blood pressure would shoot up due to her anxiety towards medical staff," he recounts.

In such tense situations, Mr Lim would pause to give his patients more time to express their concerns before gradually acclimatising them to the treatment.

"With this particular patient, I hid my equipment before I approached her," he says. "Only after she had gotten more comfortable with my presence did I then bring out the walking frame for her to use."

When Mr Lim prioritises their comfort and trust, he has always found success in designing and customising solutions for his patients at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. He credits his empathetic, people-centric skills to his education at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), where he graduated from as a scholar in the physiotherapy degree programme in May last year.

Finding a support network

Post-graduation, Mr Lim continues to maintain contact with his fellow physiotherapists through an "SOS" WhatsApp group, sharing experiences and advice.

"I applied for the bond-free SIT Scholarship with the intention of expanding my network and was

also drawn to the prospect of joining a community of like-minded individuals," says the 25-year-old Nanyang Junior College alumnus.

"Additionally, it gave me various opportunities to network with peers, attend workshops and take on leadership roles.

These experiences broadened my horizons and helped me grow as a person," he adds.

He was also inspired by the scholars' exuberant energy and diverse passions, which showed him that success and leadership can take on various forms.

"I learnt to listen to how they did it, and that helped to make me more open-minded," he reflects.

Through the clinical practice education he received at SIT, which is part of the university's curriculum, Mr Lim gained experience in a variety of healthcare settings. Within a year, he was deployed to five different healthcare institutions for his clinical placements: Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Ng Teng Fong Hospital, Bukit Batok Polyclinic and an NTUC Health nursing home.

He also discovered the multiplying power of working together.

"The strongest team is one that has people who can bring different things to the table," he notes.

"The more diverse the skills we

have, the more powerful the team can be."

During his university days, especially at the height of the pandemic, Mr Lim was part of a group of SIT's physiotherapy students who provided academic and emotional support

to one another over online sessions.

He also realised that while scholars should try to embody positive values as ambassadors of the university, they need not conform to the stereotype of being the most prominent person in the room, as everyone possesses their own qualities.

"I learnt that you don't have to lead from the front; you can also lead from the back," he says.

Becoming an empathetic listener became his priority. This approach has transformed his patient care skills, where he prioritises understanding over imposition.

"A leader does not have to be all-assertive, but one who works with you on your specific needs," says Mr Lim.

"When people feel heard, they will open up so I can help to heal them."

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Mr Darren Lim
 Recipient of the
 SIT Scholarship



Scan for more on the SIT Scholarship.



In his role as a physiotherapist, SIT scholar Darren Lim prioritises patients' comfort and trust. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

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