

Field Learning towards Helping Professions

As one of the elective subjects at senior secondary level, Health Management and Social Care (HMSC) provides learning contexts for students to take on responsibility for good citizenship in building a caring society.

The field learning in HMSC also provides students with opportunities to participate in or organise learning activities in various forms, in which they can learn to apply relevant strategies and develop a thorough understanding of HMSC concepts, so as to better prepare for future careers in related sectors.

Interviews with Graduates (1) – Whole-person Treatment

Q : Do you think HMSC is useful for your study in the medicine programme?

A : HMSC has helped me recognise the significance of “holistic health”, which is about more than just curing a disease. In addition to enquiring about patients’ medical history and conditions, I also pay attention to their social needs and access to proper supporting services. In the HMSC curriculum, I have learnt that hospital care falls within secondary medical care; and medical care also includes primary medical care which highlights the importance of disease prevention. Such knowledge has helped me ponder how I can help patients at different levels, from disease prevention to rehabilitation.

During my placement at a hospital, the first patient I soon met was a chronic patient who suffered from bone fractures. At first I simply focused on the treatment of his injury, but then I came to learn about his many concerns. He was worried that his home was too small for a wheelchair that could fit his large body. Eventually, with the assistance of an occupational therapist, his home environment was improved.

Through the study of HMSC, I have learnt how to take care of others and realised that patients are not just a case, but individuals who need whole-person care from disease prevention to rehabilitation.

Q : Do you think the field learning experience is useful in equipping you with the effective communication skills with patients?

A : Definitely. My field learning experience at senior secondary level was focused on elderly services. While we now often provide medical services to elderly patients, some of my classmates may find them difficult to communicate with. I understand that the elderly come from a different generation, speak a different language, and that they may be hearing-impaired. Therefore, when we talk to them, we have to speak louder and adapt to the way they talk, so that they can understand what we are saying. Field learning has taught me certain basic skills for communicating with elderly people.

Q : Do you have any study tips for your fellow students?

A : Firstly, you have to foster an interest in the subject. Secondly, you should keep an eye on news about healthcare and social welfare, and then apply the theories you learnt in class to authentic cases, so that you can know more about the underlying causes and the viewpoints from different perspectives. When revising for examinations, you should make clear which theories and concepts have to be thoroughly learnt and which only require a basic understanding of the content. Being organised with knowledge is crucial to performing well.



TAM SIU YAN

Faculty of Medicine, CUHK



Yiu Yi Ching shared her experience in a talk

FROM RESISTANCE TO COMMITMENT

Sharing on Field Learning Experience (1)

Yiu Yi Ching, Mercy *Department of Social Work, CUHK*

I used to find it hard to get along with elderly people. Since a young age, I had to learn about tolerance and patience when communicating with my grandmother, who has -intellectual disabilities. At that time I did not really understand her, but simply catered for all her needs with tolerance, and even took it as an unpleasant job to stay with her.

The Pureed Meal Challenge

When we learnt about the topics like ageing population and healthcare financing in Secondary 5, our teacher took us to experience the daily life of an elderly. It began with tasting a pureed meal, which was made by mashing nutritious food into fine puree for elderly with chewing difficulties. Although its appearance honestly turned my stomach, I still went through with it for learning purpose. After the first bite, I suddenly felt worried about getting old, when I might have such thing as my daily meals. That moment reminded me of my grandmother. I considered it an unpleasant job to look after her, as I had never been empathetic to her situation and thoughts by putting myself in her shoes.



Community Walk

In this field learning activity, we dressed up like elderly people with difficulties in mobility by wearing a pair of reading glasses that were wrapped in tape and carrying some sandbags, and then walked through the streets with the



aid of a crutch or a wheelchair. As we were certainly not as agile as others, passers-by gave cold-shoulders and shot unfriendly glances, which imposed great pressure on us. I wondered why elderly people have to go through these undeserved treatments while they already have a lot on their mind while walking. Have those people ever realised that they will get old one day too? How would they want to be treated when they become the ones in a wheelchair? Fortunately, we could soon take off our “costumes” and be ourselves again. But not for the elderly people! They had no choice but to bear their physical burdens in silence.

Thanks to this learning experience, I am more able to learn about and look at social policies from the perspective of elderly people and realised that they are widely perceived as a liability. I think there is a need to change this public perception, and that is why I have chosen social work as my future career.

Reflection from a Secondary 4 Student

Yiu Yi Ching's sharing gave me a better understanding of how hard the lives of the elderly are. They are subjected to discrimination merely because of a slower walking pace. Everyone will get old, and no one likes to be discriminated against. We should take the initiative to take more care of our seniors at home, be empathetic to their needs, and reduce their sense of loneliness.

In the story shared by Leung Chong Yip, Ah Sing was nicknamed and bullied by his colleagues due to his different ethnicity, skin colour and body odours. Through field learning activities such as home visits, we were able to find out more about their living environment and be empathetic to their difficulties. The experience has prompted us to think about how we can work to break down these barriers and make the abstract concepts more concrete. (By Chan Yung Yi from Kit Sam Lam Bing Yim Secondary School)



Students from Kit Sam Lam Bing Yim Secondary School



Leung Chong Yip shared his experience in a talk

DISCRIMINATION

Sharing on Field Learning Experience (2)

Leung Chong Yip, Alex

Division of Social Science, Community College of CityU

Chips, Coke, Social Divide and Inclusion

Ah Sing is an Indian who lives in a flat on the fifth floor of an old building. Its dining room is so small that it can only accommodate a table and a few plastic chairs, and its long corridor is cluttered with sundries.

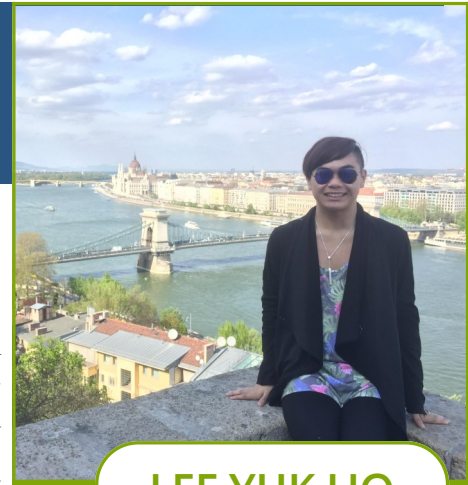
Ah Sing's family earns about \$14,000 per month. After paying the rental of \$6,000 as well as water, electricity and gas bills, his family of four lives on around \$8,000 plus, which is less than \$2,000 for each person. Take me as an example, I spend around \$109 on meals, which adds up to already \$3,300 per month.

You may wonder why Ah Sing did not find a better job to improve his living conditions. The fact is that he was once upset and bullied verbally by his colleagues by nicknaming and teasing him about his body odours. Being edged out, he gave up his stable office job to work as a driver, at the cost of less family income.

On that day, Ah Sing treated us to chips and coke, but as an athlete I kept myself away from what we think of as "junk food". Until now I did not realise that his family might have been eating those chips as their main meals, and the coke might have been his attempt to show hospitality despite earning a meagre wage. This made me feel really sorry. I used to believe that Hong Kong is a place free from discrimination, and that ethnic minorities were simply taking it as an excuse of not working hard enough. Inspired by Ah Sing's experience, I aspire to speak for the disadvantaged community.



Interviews with Graduates (2) – Fighting Poverty Through Education



LEE YUK HO

Education and Social Sciences, HKU

Q : What made you study education?

A : In a field visit under an HMSC elective study on poverty, I had the chance to learn more about the lives of tenants in sub-divided units in To Kwa Wan and the situation of working poor families. It is my deep belief that knowledge reshapes destiny and that quality education enables poor students to build competitiveness and upward social mobility, which in turn can help them leave poverty for good. That is why I have chosen education.

Q : Do you have any study tips for your fellow students?

A : The best study strategy is to use concept mapping to consolidate and link up the many concepts and theories from different HMSC topics. In the examinations, applying the concepts across different topics can make your answers more concrete. Moreover, as the subject is closely related to our society, paying attention to social issues can not only facilitate your understanding of concepts and theories, but also make your ideas more thorough and convincing.

