



‘OUR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY’. RELATIONAL BEINGS: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR BOTH CLIENT AND THERAPIST

Cambodia’s civil war, problems in society, and as a country that is still developing; citizens still live with a degree of fear. Many are affected by PTSD, have feelings of mistrust, and lack positive relationships in their daily lives. Many Cambodians still do not trust each other enough, especially with the sharing of problems because they don’t feel safe with those who are around them.

When I started this Professional Counselling course I was happy because it had been my dream to be a counsellor. However, when I first started I had some worries about the course. Going back to school meant sacrificing my time. I knew I had to have a high level of commitment and my success in the course was completely dependent on my own abilities. Grades were dependent on participation and testing was regulated. I needed to do much reflection, which takes time, also physical and emotional strength. There were many differences between this course and courses I had attended previously. Although I had attained certificates before, I was aware these certificates were not really earned. There were lower requirements for group participation and engagement.

In comparison, success in this Professional Counselling course is something I can be proud of. The knowledge I gained was through my own abilities. I’ve reflected on my own growth. I’ve gained new knowledge and even received personal healing through the relationships with classmates through developing trust. We respect each other and accept our diversity. As we undertake counselling skills practice with each other, we follow the ethical framework and professional standards set by the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists. Committing to these standards means I was able to experience positive non-judgmental relationships with classmates, which made me feel safe enough to be vulnerable and share my life problems that had been deeply buried inside. Healing began within me!

Something else I really appreciated was those professors who were experienced in using good teaching techniques. Students encouraged each other to ask questions and the teachers have positive relationships in the classroom. As part of the course, we also receive personal therapy. This helps us to heal. The therapists we see are all highly trained professional counsellors, with years of experience and who also follow professional standards of counselling.

In conclusion, my studies enhance and improve my work. When I reflect on my client work, they are similar to me when I started the counselling course. When I first meet with them, they have trouble sharing their emotions and problems. They have lives affected by trauma and don’t feel safe sharing about their life problems with those around them. With the knowledge and experience I have received, where I practiced both being the counsellor and the client, I now appreciate the importance of a good ‘therapeutic relationship’. It is a ‘bridge’ that requires a strong foundation, so that both can continue walking together toward healing.

BIOGRAPHY



Nimol is in her second year studying professional health counselling at the University of Puthisastra.

