

# WHEN LANGUAGE SKILLS SUPPORT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR AN INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENT TO PASS HER PLACEMENT - A CASE STUDY

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## THE CASE

Sophia (Pseudonym) studies nursing at Unitec failed her first placement (an integral part of some of the courses on the program where students worked at hospital to be assessed on their capacity of nursing: interpersonal skills and theoretical knowledge)

# THE INITIAL APPROACH OF SUPPORT

Support her to improve her **conversational English language skills**

Organize for her to volunteer at Unitec Marae-a friendly and warm environment for her to feel relaxed and confident to improve her **interpersonal skills**

Organize for her to volunteer at the local CAB as a trained receptionist to again enhance her **interpersonal skills** (she was asked to quit as she would automatically attempt to answer customers' questions instead of referring them to trained volunteers at the back rooms)

She is apologetic even though she has done nothing wrong

She would lower her head and think, on hearing a question (even a greeting), and mumble her reply (with a faint voice) as if it was a test

I found out she had worked as a nurse in Beijing for over 10 years before she supported herself to leave China to study at Unitec

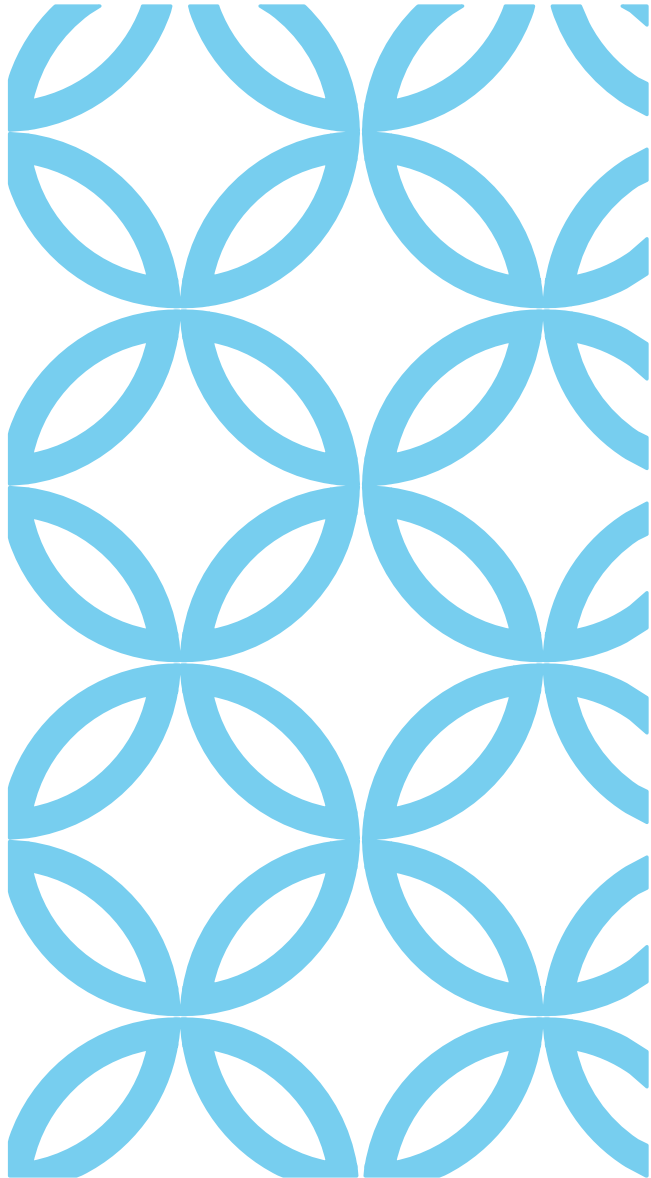
She grew up with a younger brother who had her parents' favour and she was blamed and scolded almost for just being there

**SHE FAILED HER SECOND PLACEMENT  
NEW APPROACH OF SUPPORT IS NEEDED**

# AN EVENT PRESENTED ITSELF FOR HER TO DEVELOP AND GROW

She was forced to move out of a flat by a verbally abusive and difficult landlord and she was thinking she had to give up on getting back her prepaid rent (almost ten thousand dollars) : **she knew her wrong** of leaving the flat early thus breaking the previously committed time-frame, thus thinking she had no right over her prepaid rent

This tells me about what our international students need to negotiate in their life at a foreign country: they live with their old beliefs and cultural/social constructs. **Without support, they would not know that they can live differently** from what they were taught or told by others in their previous lives



To **develop self-belief** that she can achieve her goals in life, through getting her pre-paid rent back,

To seek advice at the CAB as a way for her to use her interpersonal communication skills, and learn about the Kiwi culture and practice and find out for herself how things are done here

To **become her own champion** by talking to herself and comforting herself when approached/frightened

To practice the skills on campus with me and with anyone approaches her

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I AIM TO SUPPORT HER WITH **LIFE SKILLS** AS  
A HUMAN BEING IN THE WORLD

# THE PROCESS

The free legal advice and customer service at the CAB encouraged her to get her rent back,

My support helped her write a letter to the landlord with her bank account details and a request for her rent to be paid back to her account

She got the money back within one week.

She was overjoyed,

Her confidence and self-belief grew many folds instantly



# THE TRANSFORMATION THAT TOOK PLACE WITH THIS APPROACH

She passed her third placement and has returned to her year two study on the Bachelor's in Nursing program,

She is transformed to a relatively confident young lady, she would hold eye contact and speak with a clearly audible voice

She can be a good nurse on the ward, not only with sound knowledge, but also with a relaxed and relatively grounded presence in communications

She is still learning and developing on her journey through life, like any other human beings in life



# THE THEORIES I BASED MY APPROACH ON

Robert Kegan (1982) Evolving Self:

**Constructive-developmental perspective to human development:** we are on an evolutionary journey, we construct our own reality through meaning-making our life situations that we encounter

Robert Kegan (1982). The evolving self: problem and process in human development. Harvard University Press

Psychosynthesis BFM Map:

**Body-Feelings-Mind:** we are all three experiences at the same time and we are a center of consciousness and will, we become aware and we can direct (our responses rather than react to life situations)

Helen Palmer (2010). Psychosynthesis in the South Pacific: ontological and epistemological considerations of Aotearoa New Zealand [Psychosynthesis Monograph 10]. The Institute of Psychosynthesis

# DISCUSSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR ROLE AS TERTIARY LEARNING ADVISORS (OPTIONAL)

1. What would you do in this situation?

2. What does our role involve? Are we merely academic development or learning advisors? Are we not helping our students transform their lives?