

Cliff Tong, Postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (High Intensity)

What are you currently doing and who are you working for? Can you give a brief description of what you did from graduation up to now?

I am currently a 3rd year medical student on an accelerated graduate entry medicine course at the University of Leicester.

I graduated in February 2010 and spent 8 months working as Cognitive Behavioural Therapist for Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust before entering medical school. In my work I treated and cared for patients with a wide range of anxiety and mood disorders in a Primary Care environment.

Can you give a short outline of the course you studied at the University of Birmingham and how it benefited you?

I completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (High Intensity) in February. The course ran for 18 months, it consisted of two full days of teaching, practical workshops, and clinical supervision of real life cases. It provided me with the opportunity to develop skills to practise Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) confidently and competently as a professional psychotherapist in the NHS. I also think it helped me stand out in my applications for medical training.

How did you find your first year in Birmingham?

I really enjoyed my first year at Birmingham; it was tough working full time and also attending the course but it was made enjoyable by the excellent teaching and supervision. The course was well organised which was important as we had to cover a lot of material in a short time.

How did going to University as a whole benefit you?

As a working postgraduate student I found that going to university again helped me to develop more clinical skills as a psychotherapist. It helped me to build up my professional skills and ultimately helped to guide me to make a decision about my future careers.

How did you find campus life? Can you describe how it was to study here at Edgbaston Campus rather than in a City Centre location?

I found the Edgbaston Campus a really pleasant place to study. I appreciated the fact it was away from the hustle and bustle of the City Centre. It a nice and relaxing place to study, with lots of greenery everywhere. Although it wasn't in a city centre location all the facilities (library, restaurant, bar!) I ever needed were on campus so I never really found it a problem.

Any tips or words of wisdom that you would like to pass on to other students thinking of coming to study here?

I can only really speak about the School of Psychology, but the staff there were excellent and really supportive of students. My advice to other students is to seek support from the teaching staff if you feel you need it. They are always happy to help and more often than not you will find that you save yourself a lot of time!

What are your aspirations for the future?

I hope to finish my training to be a doctor and start working as a junior doctor. I hope to train in a medical speciality after this and aim to be a consultant one day! I always get asked which speciality! I'm still not sure at the moment but I'm sure I'll figure it out when I get there!



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