



ECOTHERAPY IN CELEBRATION: SUSS MCOU'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Gathering in Nature

On 16 August 2025, the SUSS Master of Counselling (MCOU) community marked its 15th anniversary at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Twenty-five participants - students, alumni, faculty, associate faculty, and programme advisory committee members joined ecotherapists Kae and Gary for a morning of ecotherapy, designed to reconnect counsellors with nature, self, and one another.



Walking Barefoot, Walking with Insight

During mindful walking, bare feet traced softened soil, damp grass, and rough gravel. Each sensation became metaphor:

- First hesitant steps mirrored the uncertainty of beginning therapy.
- Softened ground after rain suggested unseen forces that aid transformation.
- A brittle leaf recalled clients who seem fragile yet hold hidden resilience.
- Discarded shoes symbolised the protective barriers that sometimes distance us from authentic connection.

Here, nature was not backdrop but partner - an active participant in the therapeutic encounter.



Eyes Closed, Hearts Open

The session began in a bamboo grove beside the century-old tembusu tree featured on Singapore's five-dollar note. With eyes closed, participants were invited to sense rather than see. Reflections emerged: shifting posture reshapes perception, letting go nurtures safety, and awareness arises in the courage of a first step.

For many, sound grew sharper, and even taste seemed to awaken in imagination - reminders of the profound presence nature offers when we slow down.





Reflection and Grounding

These embodied experiences illustrated the essence of reflective practice: where lived experience deepens professional wisdom. By engaging in stillness and sensory awareness, counsellors encountered new layers of insight into themselves and their work.

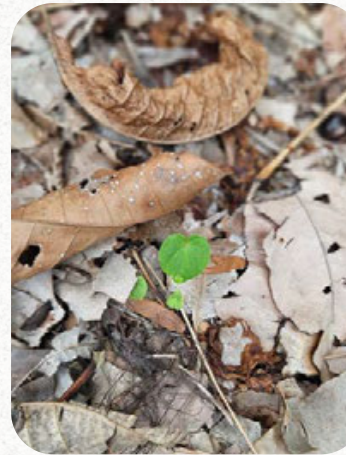
The morning closed in quiet gratitude: for the garden as teacher, for companions as fellow travellers, and for the reminder that counselling requires the courage to step gently, even barefooted into the unknown.



Continuing the Celebration

Festivities carried on over a shared buffet lunch, where connections between students, alumni, and faculty were renewed. More than a commemoration, the gathering affirmed a collective commitment: to deepen connection with self, community, and the practice of counselling.

Like roots intertwined beneath the soil, these bonds will continue to grow unseen yet strong. The 15th anniversary marks not only a milestone but a stepping stone.



Stay tuned - our journey together continues.

