**Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists**

**Zoe Miles**

**Hand therapy in practice**

**What have a learned and how I am using it in practice.**

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| **Introduction:** I work as a band 6 within an NHS Hand therapy unit full time. I work with both plastics and orthopaedic patients, and I set off on the ‘road to AHT’ in January 2022. I’ve been doing this via the full Msc in Hand Therapy at the University of Derby. This report is on my fifth module of the masters, Hand Therapy in Practice. I am so grateful to BAHT for helping me make my dream of becoming a AHT a reality by assisting with some of my course fees.  |
| **Topic:****The Hand Therapy in Practice course presented me with two challenging assessment components: a VIVA and a 2000-word essay. While the VIVA was undeniably intimidating, it proved to be the most valuable aspect of the course, for my personal learning. One specific takeaway from the VIVA aspect was learning and memorising different assessment criteria and the application of different treatment modalities. One of which was the Budapest criteria, which has now become an invaluable tool in my ‘hand therapy tool kit’, whenever I’m dealing with patients that present with CRPS type symptoms. The course was laid out in such a way that once one had employed the Budapest criteria to assist with diagnosis, an easier way to tailor treatment plans to patients' specific needs was taught. This facilitated more of a seamless approach to treating these patients. Learning this way and being assessed through an oral exam, not only enriched my clinical skills but also reignited my commitment to ongoing learning and professional growth.** **Another significant area of learning within this course for me personally, was the distinction between, and the various components of sensory re-education and desensitisation. This was an eye-opening practice, as it revealed gaps in my clinical knowledge that I was not initially aware of. Delving into these concepts has had a reflective impact on my practice as a hand therapist. I can now better assist patients in managing hypersensitivity and regaining tactile comfort, enhancing their overall experience during the rehabilitation process. This newfound expertise in sensory rehabilitation has not only improved my ability to provide effective care but has also enhanced the patient experience.** **The essay component of this module, much like other Msc modules, revolved around critical appraisal skills, which continue to prove to be multifunctional and relevant in numerous facets of life. Developing these skills have helped empower me in my decision-making, assist with the way in which I communicate with my team members and patients; and have taught me to stay adaptable and well-informed. Consequently, I feel more encouraged and confident as a professional within the field of hand therapy. I encourage others thinking of doing their masters, or even a stand-alone module to do this course (I believe it is also an accredited BAHT level 2 course when done as a stand alone module)– as it has by far been my favourite module on the Msc journey.** **BAHT – I also just wanted to thank you for the bursary and opportunity to continue to extend my learning. I will continue to learn and develop my skills, and teach others what I learn. The financial and professional support from this organisation is greatly appreciated in assisting me with my dream of becoming an AHT.**  |