

Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists

Ebby Sigmund

Level II- Fractures

24-26th February 2021

Introduction:

(100 words max; include details of who you are, why you applied for this bursary and your experience of the event)

I have worked mainly in the field of hand therapy for around six years after many years as a more generalist occupational therapist.

Treatment of patients with hand and wrist fractures was an area where I felt lacking in knowledge and confidence. I wished to develop my skills in this area so that I can offer a more comprehensive assessment and treatment for patients from early intervention to late stage complications or ongoing functional problems.

I found the course challenging but also extremely beneficial and I have been able to make use of my learning already.

Word count = 96

Topic:

(500 words +/- 10%; this will be uploaded onto the BAHT website and may be included in an e-bulletin. The topic of this report will be agreed in negotiation with the Director of Bursaries. The report should not contain any comments that are potentially damaging or libellous.)

The Level II Fractures course run by NES Hands was the first on-line BAHT validated course and was necessitated by the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic that has prevented the running of many face-to-face course throughout the year. The preparation for the course was excellent and included a parcel arriving in the post with various items to assist our learning during the course (not to mention a few sweet treats!). Many of the participants attended a pre-course half hour meeting that familiarised us with how the Zoom platform would be utilised during the course. This avoided any time being wasted once the course was underway.

Over three days, the course packed in a huge amount. There was an overview of relevant hand anatomy, although it would be important for anyone considering undertaking this course to be aware that participants are expected to have a good grounding and understanding of this. The types of fractures and principles of fracture healing were covered before moving on to assessment which included reviewing x-rays and tips on what to look out for on x-ray films. We covered surgical approaches and treatment with discussion about the pros and cons of these from a therapist's perspective.

We moved on to look at therapy approaches for various stages of healing in detail, including oedema and scar management, exercise and activity rehabilitation with lots of discussion generated between the physiotherapy and occupational therapy attendees. From there we moved on to looking at specific fractures, beginning at the wrist and working our way to the finger tips. Throughout this section of the course, we were encouraged to use a client-centred approach rather than a 'recipe book' of techniques. Our learning was maximised by frequent mini case studies, where we broke into smaller groups in virtual breakout rooms to discuss the question we were assigned.

While discussing treatment approaches we had practical sessions on splinting where we practiced making splint patterns. We also covered the use of kinesiology tape, a new method for many of the participants. We brainstormed activities and exercises for various scenarios and treatment stages.

Overall, I would highly recommend this course to anyone thinking of furthering their knowledge of hand and wrist fractures. A huge bonus in future will be the resources we were provided with, these included lots of samples of materials to try out in our own clinics and workplaces and a comprehensive manual covering the course material. Tips on other resources were shared by the course leaders and participants and I am sure everyone left with many ideas for new things to try or resources to explore.

I would also like to congratulate BAHT and NES Hands for successfully overcoming the challenges of translating a course that would usually be face-to face to an online format. I personally felt that it worked extremely well and the use of various on-line options such as quick opinion polls and break out rooms, along with regular mini-breaks, sometimes to find something in the house that could be used in therapy, kept it engaging and fresh. For those of us living far from major cities, it also meant that there were no travel or accommodation costs to find.

Word count = 531