

Massage Therapy Today

Putting Knowledge into Practice

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RMTAO Interviews:



Aaron Rutter, educator with the RMTAO's continuing education program

What is your background and how did you get into teaching?

I was born, raised and educated (Queen's University) in Kingston, Ontario. My first career choice was to be a physiotherapist, and a close second was to be a teacher. After two years of being a physiotherapist, I decided to become qualified to educate future physiotherapists. I have always loved to learn. This has led to two postgraduate certifications. I am a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Manipulative Physiotherapists, hold a Certificate of Advanced Manual and Manipulative Physiotherapy and have been certified with the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute.

I enjoy physiotherapy because of its large and ever-changing scope of practice. We are able to diagnose patients and will soon be able to send them for diagnostic tests such as X-rays, sonograms and magnetic resonance imaging. This gives me so many opportunities to continue my journey of learning. It's exciting for me and my patients!

Tell us about the program and some of the courses you teach.

In 2009 I teamed up with the RMTAO

to offer a "Certificate of Excellence in Assessment." The primary objectives are to promote the highest-quality continuing education program and to validate the credibility and knowledge of RMTs. This certification will elevate the standard of care provided by RMTs and help them base their practice on the most recent evidence-based assessment and treatment. To earn the certification, RMTs must attend one-day courses over a three-year period of time. My favourite courses to teach are those involving the spine.

What are some of the benefits for a student or RMT taking your program/course(s)?

Most RMTs find their assessment and clinical reasoning skills are poor when graduating from college. My courses help to fill that gap and improve the therapist's confidence when developing a clinical impression (a "diagnosis"). If you haven't made the correct clinical impression then how will you know what to treat? Improving your confidence and skills in assessment is the biggest benefit of my courses.

Are there any core lessons or ideals you would like your students

to take away from your program/course(s)?

The core lesson that I want students to take away is that you must educate your patients on the importance of an assessment. Too many patients have the impression that a 45-minute massage means lying on the table for 45 minutes, instead of 45 minutes of your time. If you take the time to do a proper assessment on the first day then your patients will have much better outcomes within a shorter period of time.

What advice can you give to new students or new graduates?

The main advice that I give to my students is to listen to the patient first. Never rush the subjective examination. The patient usually tells you what is wrong, especially if you ask the right questions. Then you can use your objective examination to prove or disprove the clinical impression you gleaned from the subjective examination. ■

Aaron Rutter, PT, BScPT, FCAMPT, CAFCI, is a manual and manipulative physiotherapist in Peterborough. He loves to play ultimate Frisbee and, of course, educate health care professionals.