

A reflection on advances in scar management for occupational therapy in hand therapy

DATE

9 June 2026

PROVIDER

BAHT

STUDY TIME

2h

REFLECTIVE STRUCTURE

Rolfe

LEARNING ACTIVITY TYPE

Formal / Educational

WHAT?

I recently participated in a two-hour webinar hosted by the British Association of Hand Therapists (BAHT) focusing on contemporary advancements in scar management specifically within the context of hand therapy. The session provided a comprehensive overview, including updated protocols for scar assessment, which are fundamental to effective intervention planning. Furthermore, the webinar explored evidence-based practices for silicone gel application, various massage techniques, and crucial desensitisation strategies.

A significant component of the webinar addressed methods to improve patient understanding and adherence to treatment plans. This aspect highlighted the importance of empowering individuals with knowledge about their condition and the rationale behind prescribed interventions. Gaining insights into these specific desensitisation strategies was particularly valuable, offering practical approaches to managing scar hypersensitivity and improving functional outcomes for clients.

I also reviewed methods to enhance patient education, moving beyond simply providing information to actively fostering comprehension and engagement. This focus on patient adherence is critical, as it directly impacts the efficacy of therapeutic interventions and long-term scar maturation. The integration of these diverse elements, from assessment to patient-centred education, formed the core of the learning experience.

SO WHAT?

This webinar has significantly refined my understanding of scar management principles. I now appreciate the nuanced evidence base supporting interventions like silicone gel application, recognising that 'evidence-based' requires a critical evaluation of the specific research underpinning recommendations, rather than a blanket application. This understanding is crucial for tailoring advice to individual patient needs and scar characteristics.

My approach to desensitisation techniques has been substantially enhanced. I realise it is a systematic process of nerve pathway re-education, not merely exposure to different textures. This deeper understanding has implications for managing patient discomfort more effectively and improving their capacity to engage in functional activities. The webinar challenged my previous assumptions about patient education, underscoring that providing information is insufficient; active strategies are needed to truly enhance patient understanding and promote adherence, necessitating a more collaborative therapeutic relationship.

Ultimately, I recognise the sophisticated interplay between specific therapeutic techniques and effective patient education. The emphasis on enhancing patient understanding and adherence, alongside techniques such as massage and desensitisation, clarifies that these components are intrinsically linked and essential for achieving optimal scar outcomes. This holistic perspective is vital for comprehensive scar management in hand therapy.

NOW WHAT?

Moving forward, I intend to integrate the updated scar assessment protocols, as learned from the BAHT webinar, into my daily clinical practice. This will ensure a more standardised, thorough, and evidence-based approach to evaluating scar tissue in all my clients undergoing hand therapy.

I will also refine my recommendations and application guidance for silicone gels, ensuring they are aligned with the latest evidence-based practices discussed. This includes considering specific product types, application durations, and the evidence supporting their use for different types of scars and stages of healing.

Furthermore, I will actively employ the enhanced desensitisation strategies to assist clients experiencing scar hypersensitivity. This involves a systematic introduction of varied textures and pressures to reduce discomfort and improve their ability to tolerate tactile input, thereby facilitating greater functional use of the affected hand and improving overall occupational performance.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS MAPPING

Engage in evidence-based practice

This reflection demonstrates engagement in evidence-based practice by attending a webinar that discussed updated protocols and evidence for silicone gel application in scar management.

Change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, technologies and changing contexts

The learning from the webinar directly informs the intention to change practice by integrating updated scar assessment protocols and refining desensitisation strategies, demonstrating the ability to adapt practice to new developments.

Understand and use the scientific theories, concepts, principles and professional frameworks underpinning occupational therapy practice

The reflection shows an understanding and application of scientific theories and professional frameworks underpinning occupational therapy by focusing on evidence-based techniques and patient-centred approaches in scar management.