

RMTBC Scholarship Essay Competition

Bridging the Gap: Life After School

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Before this program, I thought my quads were on my arms and deltoids were a kind of robot. I am amazed at how much information can be inserted into a brain in a year and a half, and how competent I feel with that knowledge in both my brain and hands when treating conditions and bodies. With mostly review left in my program, I start to feel back at the beginning – “The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know.” (1) We are trained to be entry-level practitioners. This means our knowledge and techniques allow new RMT's to treat people in a safe and effective manner. I think a big challenge once I graduate will be feeling confident in my growing skills. I think this confidence comes from accepting there is always more to learn, from taking big first steps – like going back into a treatment room without getting signed off by a supervisor, from surrounding myself with mentorship opportunities, and of course continuing education. I am looking forward to the next step, school has been great, long, and hard – but with it comes dealing appropriately with these new challenges.

My clients will be looking at me for guidance, support, knowledge, and confidence. Currently, in my clinic and outreach internship I can ask questions to my supervisors on the best course of treatment. I can re-enter the treatment room with confirmation. I imagine my first treatment as an RMT without this added support, and understand what a big step this will be. Although I feel competent in my treatments, I will have to go forward without assurance. I think this transition will be the largest challenge; a challenge that is mostly a mental game. I understand the importance of confidence – not for myself, but for my client – to feel confident in me and the treatments I can provide. I think this step will have to be a ‘fake it till you make it’

situation. I am up for the challenge and will hopefully find a place to start a career with likeminded individuals that are willing to provide some support in the initial transition.

I have been following job postings, readying myself to get into the real world and have been drawn to clinics that are advertising opportunities for mentorship. I understand there is so much more to learn, and especially with a transition from school to a workplace, I feel like the challenge will be greatly reduced by working in a team offering mentorship. Whether formal or informal, this type of learning offers a bridge between two worlds. It would be so beneficial to have a person I can go through a few case studies with at the end of the day, a few days a week, for the first few months of being in a clinic. I would be able to continue learning new techniques from seasoned professionals. But more importantly during this transition, I will have an open ear, someone to provide positive and constructive feedback, a person to just say (hopefully) ‘you’re doing alright’.

The opportunity to pursue continuing education courses after school is so exciting. I have browsed through the options, and get excited with the breadth of options. When I learn a new technique in class currently, I get to practice it on a client base that understands I am a student. They are often happy for me to try something new, and the fumbles that come along with it. I think it will be a learning curve to enter the workforce as a student, and to understand how I will always *be* a student. I have to marry two ideas: of being a confident healthcare professional and a learner. I think this balance has to do with practicing techniques as fully as I can in the CEC and practicing at home. It has to do with communicating clearly with my clients about my skills and to also communicate about my learning. I think these two ideas – being a student and a

professional – is true in many aspects of life, and as long as I am clearly communicating that I will be trying a new technique and have an open dialogue with the client for feedback, I hope the client will respond well. Instead of having the excuse of a school clinic for my learning, I can reinforce life as an excuse for learning.

I can only imagine what the world outside of school will be like. The transition from my schools' safety net to being a professional health care practitioner will be a challenging and rewarding experience. Finding types of support, through mentorship and continuing education, for example, will help bridge the gap. Confidence will be paramount in how smoothly the transition will go. Extra communication with my clients when using new techniques and getting feedback if something is feeling 'pokey' or does not feel good will foster a good professional learning environment. Most importantly, reminding myself that continual learning is always a vital goal, while at the same time providing quality treatments that are safe and effective will be such a rewarding challenge. I am looking forward to it.

