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Developing Educational Resources for Hand Therapy Clinicians

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Developing Educational Resources for Hand Therapy Clinicians



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Introduction

In the demanding environment of a busy clinic, it can be a challenge to implement evidence-based practice (EBP). One strategy that has proven effective for facilitating increased EBP among clinicians is the development of toolboxes that summarize the existing literature and make recommendations for clinical practice. My capstone experience involved working with Select Physical Therapy to develop toolkits addressing challenging topics in hand therapy.

Site Description

Select Physical Therapy is a division of Select Medical which operates outpatient orthopedic rehabilitation clinics.

- Typically, adult population, ages 17-92
- A variety of diagnoses, including neurological, musculoskeletal, and systemic illnesses
- Growing hand therapy program; committed to evidence-based practice and education for both current and future practitioners.



Figure 1. Select Physical Therapy logo.

<https://www.texasocietyforhandtherapy.org/nancy-geers-award>

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Practice in hand therapy often requires significant education beyond entry-level; therefore, resources that summarize EBP are of great value to entry-level and experienced clinicians
- Advanced research skills required to conduct extensive literature review, appraisal of research quality, and synthesis of evidence
- Necessity of developing resources that address challenging topics identified by clinicians in current practice (scapular instability, ulnar-sided wrist pain, and thoracic outlet syndrome)



Figure 2. Hand and Wrist Poster (2000). Anatomical Chart Company, a division of Springhouse Corporation.

Literature Review Summary

- Toolboxes are an effective way to increase the use of evidence-based practice in clinical practice (Hempel et al, 2019).
- One of the most commonly reported barriers to implementation of evidence-based practice is the lack of time to dedicate to research and analysis; by pre-appraising literature and compiling it all in one place, this barrier is removed, and clinicians can easily access literature (Upton et al, 2014)
- Toolboxes have been utilized in pediatrics, low vision, and long-term care facilities to promote evidence-based practice with demonstrable success (Broussard, 2019; Iaboni et al, 2022; Schippke et al, 2017)

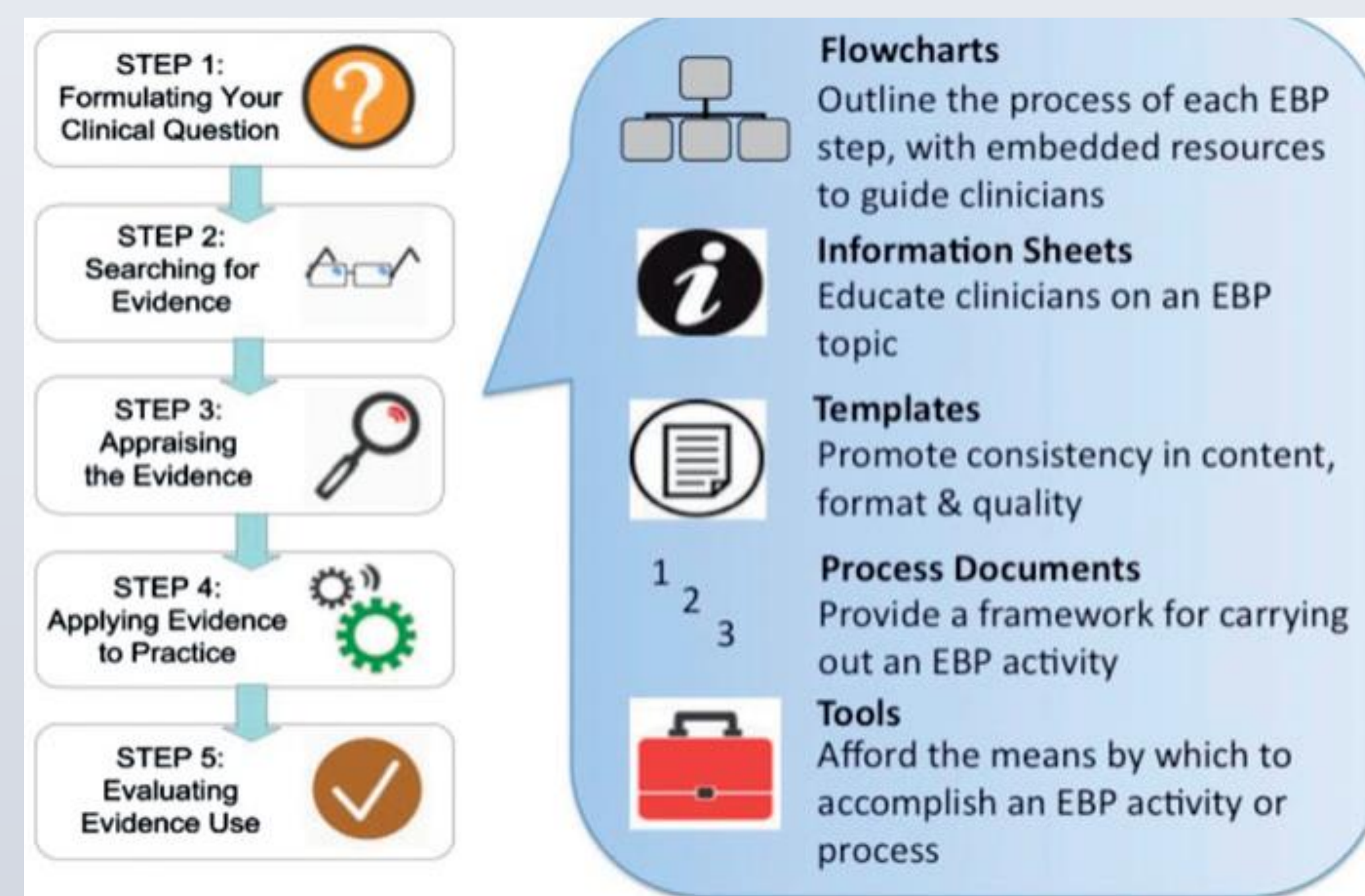
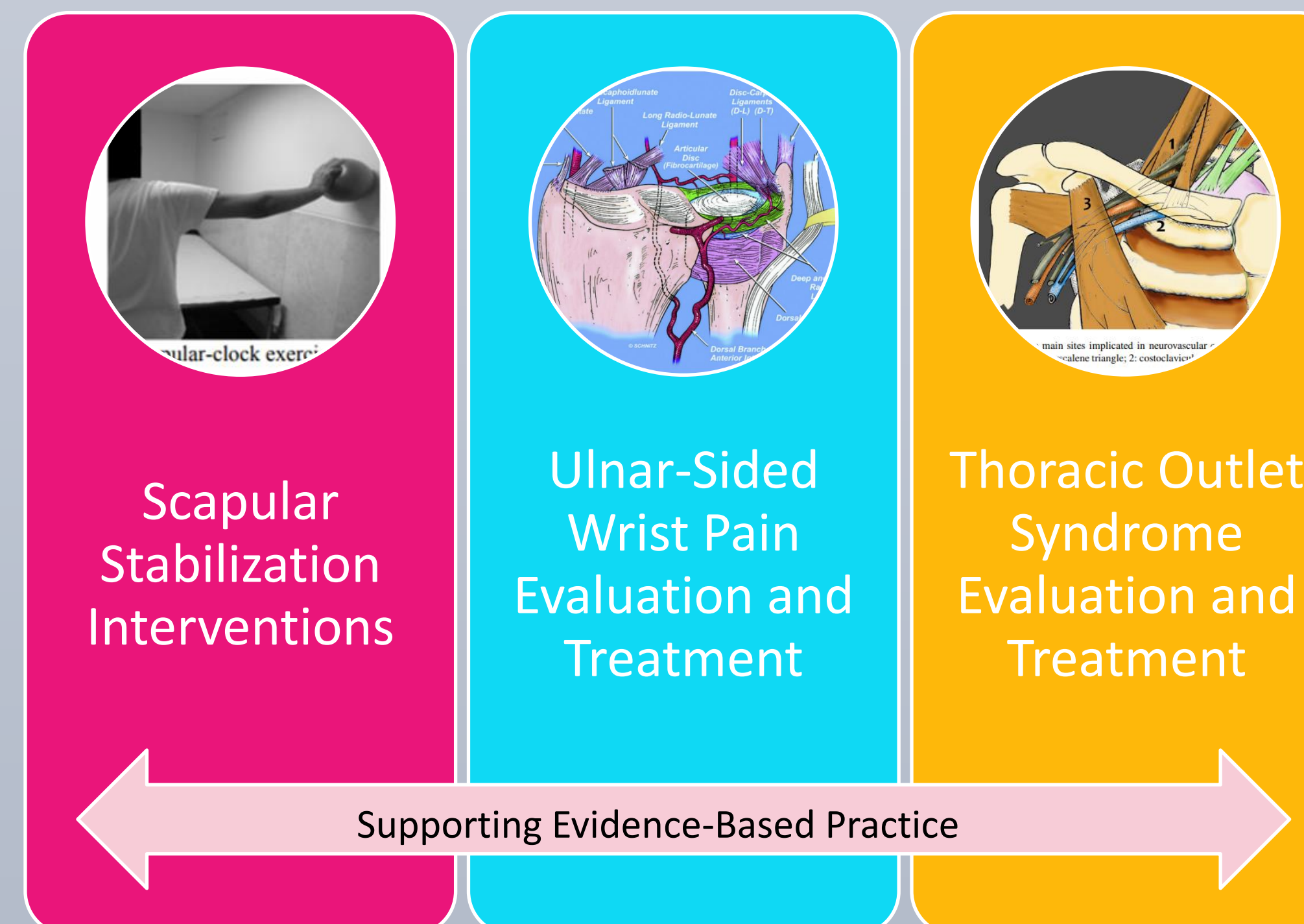


Figure 3. Tools for Improving Evidence-Based Practice. (Glegg et al, 2016)

Capstone Project Description

My focus areas were education and clinical practice skills. My goals for this project included:

- Increasing my knowledge of evidence-based practice in hand therapy, familiarizing myself with current research as well as current practice trends
- Develop resources for clinicians for current challenging topics in hand therapy in order to gain a better understanding of the toolkit development process and current practice trends in hand therapy
- Continue to develop clinical practice skills beyond entry-level competency gained in level 2 fieldwork to prepare for certification in hand therapy



Learning Objectives Achieved

- Enhanced knowledge regarding hand therapy literature and current practice trends
- Developed resources to education clinicians at a national level about EBP
- Improved clinical skills and foundational knowledge of upper extremity rehabilitation in preparation for certification in hand therapy
- Obtained certification in administration of physical agent modalities

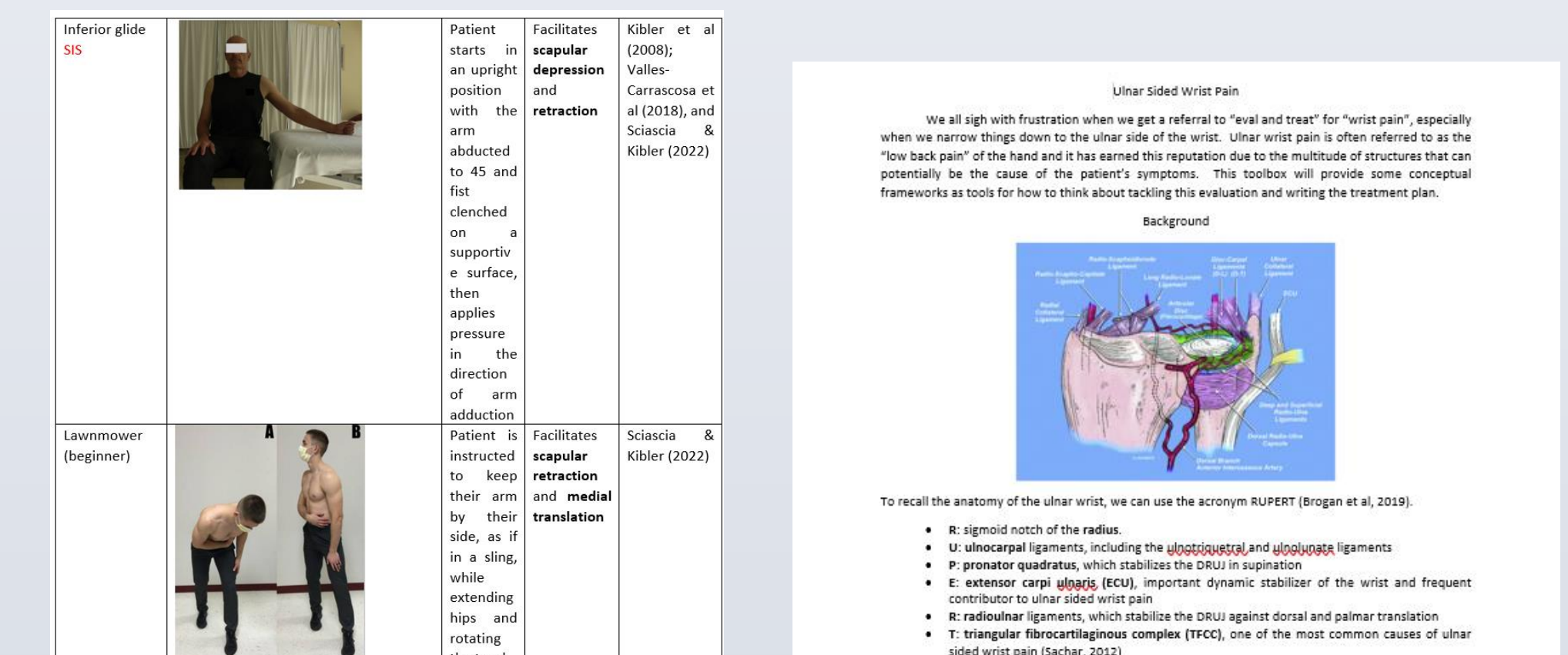


Figure 4: Excerpt from scapular stabilization toolbox.

Figure 5: First page of ulnar-sided wrist pain toolbox.

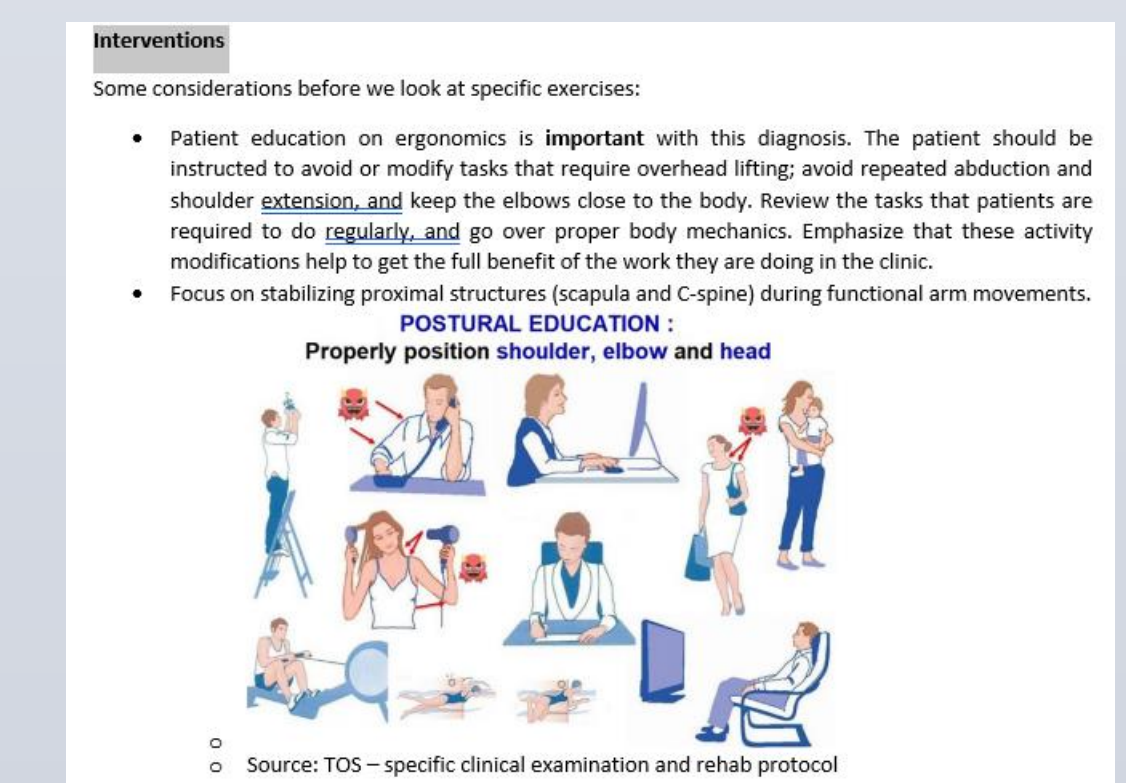


Figure 6. Excerpt from Thoracic Outlet Syndrome toolbox.

Implications for OT Practice

- Occupational therapists who are currently practicing and treating upper extremity pathology can avail themselves of these toolkits in order to improve their use of EBP.
- Toolkits are proven to be an effective method of providing information to practitioners about the evidence behind current trends in clinical practice
- More research is needed to identify best practices for occupational therapists working in outpatient clinics with orthopedic injuries, as most research is done by and focused on physical therapy outcomes
- Toolboxes can be assembled and used in other practice settings depending on the area of need.

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