

You *Can* do it all!

Charlotte Bosson began her career in massage and myotherapy in 2003 initially starting with an interest in helping others feel better. She's currently studying a Bachelor of Health Science degree in Myotherapy at Endeavour College. In addition, she's a single parent and has a successful business which she's been running for 12 years and which now employs a number of therapists. Charlotte shares her story ...

How on earth am I going to remember all these functional groups? I think to myself as I pore for hours over my books. I'm studying Chemistry and Bio-Chemistry as part of my Bachelor of Health Science Myotherapy course with Endeavour College. I'm almost half-way through the 13-week subject and my mind is full of information about electrons and chemical reactions.

To add some more pressure to the situation, I am working full-time, running a business with employees and I'm raising a daughter, who has just turned 13, as a single parent.

I always wanted to attain a degree but when I left school all those years ago, I just wanted to work and live life. Now at the age of 45, I am working towards a degree level qualification in an industry that I love and I know all my hard work will pay off.

In 2003, I studied the Certificate IV in Massage. Ever since, I've built on my

knowledge, attaining a Diploma of Remedial Massage and an Advanced Diploma of Remedial Massage (Myotherapy).

Some years ago, as a Remedial Massage Therapist, I found I was becoming complacent with my knowledge. I had perfected what had been taught to me when I first trained and kept up with my CPE requirements but new methods and thought processes meant there was so much more to learn. As my business grew, I started employing people to help me. Some of those people talked about new concepts or had fresh updated knowledge and this motivated me to increase my formal qualifications and so my higher education journey began.

The Advanced Diploma helped me treat more strategically and be more effective, building on my foundational knowledge as a Remedial Massage Therapist. Learning exercise prescription was a great adjunct to my knowledge as it gave me a way to help my customers feel better long after leaving my treatment room. I perfected my postural assessments and became better able to analyse the outcomes of special tests and range of movement tests. My treatment plans became more specific with better outcomes.

Our industry has developed so much in the last 10 years. Natural therapies are sought

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after by members of the public to complement their conventional medicine requirements. People are realising the benefits of combining natural and allopathic medicine for greater benefit.

Medical doctors and allied healthcare practitioners are all degree-qualified. Traditionally in our industry, many of us aimed to become Remedial Massage Therapists so we could offer health fund rebates, but in this ever-changing industry landscape, aiming towards a degree qualification will help keep us relevant.

Higher education is expensive, especially at degree level. I wouldn't have been able to consider it in previous years when raising a small child but as my daughter and my business grew, I've found it's something I can achieve. Over the next four to five years I'm going to be working away after hours, subject by subject, towards my degree.

I think increasing your formal education levels while working within the industry is a real advantage. I can apply concepts I learn to real life situations and it makes it easier to embrace the new concepts I'm learning and apply new knowledge immediately.

Some of my course can be conducted online and it's so great as a mature student to have access to higher levels of education while still raising a family and working full time.

I hope you find my story inspiring. Even if a degree qualification is not for you, at least be the very best therapist you can be at the level you are at. Don't let complacency overcome you and leave you behind as our industry prepares for an exciting more integrated health future.

Charlotte Bosson began her career in the massage industry in 2003 initially starting out with an interest in helping others feel better. She completed her Certificate IV, Diploma of Remedial Massage, and Advanced Diploma of Remedial Massage and is currently studying a Bachelor of Health Science degree in Myotherapy at Endeavour College. In addition, for this thirst for knowledge she has been running City Haven Massage Therapy for 12 years, employing a number of therapists and offering Myotherapy, Remedial & Oncology massage to the community in clinics, within nursing homes and in workplaces.

COMMUNICATION

Some top tips for communicating effectively:

- engage in active listening - listen, hear, paraphrase
- use professional language - and use lay terms if you are talking with people who are not health professionals
- ask open-ended questions
- include your clients in their treatment plans
- take extensive clinical notes
- set up a pressure feedback system - check in with your client during the massage to ensure applied pressure is adequate and comfortable
- follow up, especially if:
 - your clients are first time clients;
 - a deeper than usual massage was applied or
 - the treatment plan was changed during the session.



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