

A guide to confident conversations with your clients

This short guide will give you some **helpful conversation starters** to support **clients who have scalp psoriasis**.

Psoriasis affects around 2% of the population, with many people experiencing flare-ups on or around the scalp. **There is no cure**, so people must manage their condition over the course of their life.¹ The condition **can cause many to experience low self-esteem and anxiety**² and even a planned visit to the hairdressers or barbers can cause distress, with **two thirds of people with scalp psoriasis admitting to having postponed or avoided visiting the hairdressers/barbers**.³

If you have scalp psoriasis and want to have better conversations with your hairdresser or barber, see page 2

Tom Chapman is the founder of the Lions Barber Collective, an international collection of top barbers which have come together to help raise awareness and encourage people to open up about their mental wellbeing

Hair professionals are in a unique position to help our clients, through the trust and bond we build with them. We often have an incredibly strong relationship where **clients become friends and can share aspect of their lives with us**. I would like this position of trust to be used to **help those with scalp psoriasis feel at ease** with their condition, particularly considering the impact it can have on mental health. **Having confident and relaxed conversations with your client will lead to a more comfortable experience** and could do wonders for their general wellbeing.



Putting your client at ease

If your client hasn't mentioned their scalp psoriasis to you, it might be because they are self-conscious about it. Perhaps start a conversation by asking one of the following:

"I've had several clients in the past with psoriasis and they have all had their own way of managing their condition, so please let me know if you have any particular preferences on how I should approach your appointment today"

"Before we start, let me know of any requests for how I cut and style your hair, for example if you do not want me to use the hairdryer, would like the water a certain temperature or would prefer I use a certain type of brush, any requests like this, please do just let me know"

Practical tips

- ✓ **DO** smile and make eye contact with your client to make them feel comfortable and welcome
- ✓ **DO** offer to position your client in a quieter part of the salon if they wish to discuss any particular requirements discretely and follow your client's lead in terms of how comfortable they are discussing their psoriasis
- ✓ **DO** be present and actively listen during the consultation to help build trust and rapport and reassure your client and remember to say goodbye with a warm smile and a thank you
- ✓ **DO** reassure the client if they are alarmed by any thinning hair. Inform them that scalp psoriasis can in some cases cause hair loss, but the hair will normally grow back once the inflammation and scale has cleared⁴
- ✓ **DO** ask how your client is feeling. It can be as simple as beginning with asking how their day has gone. By actively listening to your client you will start to be able to pick up on how much your client wants to talk and if it is appropriate to ask more direct questions
- ✓ **DO** remove loose scales by gently brushing the hair – just be careful not to scratch the scalp
- ✓ **DO** carry out a patch test at least 24 hours before colouring hair – anything that touches the scalp has the potential to irritate it. Suggest postponing a treatment altogether if the scalp is broken/bleeding



A guide to confident conversations with your Hairdresser or Barber

This short guide will give you some **useful conversation starters** to help explain and discuss your scalp psoriasis **comfortably with your hairdresser or barber**.

Living with scalp psoriasis can be challenging. Research has shown that even **a visit to the hairdressers or barbers can cause anxiety**, with **two thirds of people with scalp psoriasis admitting to having postponed or avoided visiting the hairdressers/barbers**³. This short guide will give you some helpful conversation starters to help explain and discuss your scalp psoriasis comfortably with your hairdresser or barber.



Informing your hairdresser/barber about your condition

Being anxious or self-conscious about your scalp psoriasis is understandable but communicating with your hairdresser or barber is the best way to ensure a comfortable, relaxed and enjoyable appointment. Try to start a conversation, perhaps by asking one of the following:

" I have psoriasis on my scalp, can you please avoid any products that may cause irritation?"

" Please can I request that you are gentle around my scalp, as it can be painful when touched"

For more information on psoriasis, you can find a number of resources on the following websites: **The Psoriasis Association** (psoriasis-association.org.uk), **LEO Pharma's QualityCare™** (psoriasis.qualitycarebyleo.com).

To learn more about providing mental health support and a welcoming place for your clients to discuss their scalp psoriasis with you, please visit: **The Lions Barber Collective** (thelionsbarbercollective.com)

Practical tips for your appointment

- ✓ **DO** plan ahead, it may be beneficial to call up before your appointment to discuss any concerns with the hairdresser/barber who will be cutting your hair
- ✓ **DO** request a patch test before receiving a colouring – anything that touches the scalp has the potential to irritate it. Suggest postponing a treatment altogether if you are experiencing a flare up and skin is sore or painful
- ✓ **DO** request to be seated in a quieter part of the salon if you wish to discuss any particular requirement discretely
- ✓ **DO** explain to your hair professional how long you have lived with your condition and, if you are comfortable, the effects it can have on your day to day wellbeing. Barbers and hairdressers can be a great, safe place to talk