

SECTION: PSYCHOLOGY

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INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING CLIENTS WITH ALOPECIA: INTEGRATION OF TRICHOLOGY AND BARBERING PRACTICES

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Hair loss is something that almost everyone has heard about, but only people who go through it really understand what it feels like. At the beginning it might look unimportant: a bit more hair on the comb, or a smaller ponytail than before. But with time it becomes more visible, and suddenly it is not just about hair, but about the way you see yourself every morning in the mirror. Alopecia, which is the medical term for hair loss, has many possible causes. It can be genetic, it can be related to hormones, it can appear after stress or illness. But whatever the reason, the experience is always more than just medical. It affects self-esteem, social interactions, and even relationships. This is why support for people with alopecia cannot stay limited to pills or medical advice. The problem has to be approached in a wider and more human way.

In the past, when someone started losing hair, the first reaction was to visit a doctor or just accept the change. Trichologists, who are specialists in hair and scalp, often explained the reasons behind the loss. They could look at the scalp under a microscope, run tests, and then give medical recommendations. This kind of knowledge is very important, because it gives people clarity. They stop blaming themselves and start to understand what is happening biologically. But the truth is that medicine alone rarely solves everything. A trichologist can tell you that your hair is falling out because of stress or an autoimmune condition, but that explanation does not make you feel any better when you are going to a party or sitting at work in front of colleagues. Many people feel uncomfortable, as if everyone is looking at them. This is why the role of everyday care, the role of someone who is not a doctor but is still part of your personal life, becomes very valuable.

Barbers are often the first people we think of when it comes to everyday care for our appearance. Going to the barber feels like part of a routine: you sit down, talk a little, and leave not only with a fresh look but also with the feeling that someone took care of you. For people who struggle with alopecia, such visits can mean even more. A skillful barber knows how to create an atmosphere where the client does not feel embarrassed or different. With the right approach, a haircut can hide thinner areas, or a completely shaved style can look neat and intentional instead of accidental. Some barbers also help adjust wigs or special hair systems so they sit comfortably and look natural. There are even techniques like scalp micropigmentation, where tiny dots are

applied to the skin to imitate the look of real stubble. Even though this does not bring hair back, it can seriously change how a person sees themselves and how confidently they face others.

What is interesting here is that barbering is not only about scissors and razors. Many clients treat their barber as someone they can open up to. While sitting in the chair, with the quiet sound of tools and maybe music playing in the background, people often share stories, worries, or frustrations that they might keep from close friends. For someone going through hair loss, this kind of simple conversation can be surprisingly powerful. It can take the weight off their shoulders, bring a laugh, or at least remind them that they are not alone with the problem. Medical specialists like trichologists usually do not have time or space for this type of talk, because they are focused on health and treatment. That is why combining the two worlds - the medical expertise of trichologists and the human connection of barbers - can create a form of support that feels complete. Each side covers what the other cannot, and together they offer something much stronger than either of them could provide alone.

Picture a normal situation. A man goes to his barber for a regular haircut. While trimming, the barber notices that the man's hair is thinning in patches that don't look like ordinary age-related loss. Rather than keeping quiet or just trimming the hair shorter, the barber brings it up gently and suggests the client see a trichologist to find out the cause. The man takes the advice, has an examination, and starts treatment. While the doctors deal with the medical side, the barber still plays an important role - giving haircuts that make the thin spots less obvious, helping adjust a wig so it looks natural, or simply making sure the client walks out looking tidy and feeling more confident. In this way, the person gets help from two directions: the doctor provides knowledge and treatment, while the barber offers everyday care and support. It seems like common sense, but in practice this kind of teamwork is still unusual and only beginning to develop.

Education is also beginning to play a role. Some barber schools have already introduced basic lessons on scalp and hair health. These don't turn barbers into doctors, but they give them the ability to recognize when something looks unusual and when it would be wise to suggest a medical visit. On the other side, trichologists are starting to understand that clients don't only want long explanations about hormones and treatments - they also want short-term solutions that help them feel presentable right now. That's why in some cases trichologists and barbers work together to come up with a style plan for the client during the treatment process. This is a step toward a more complete, human-centered approach.

Technology is becoming a real game changer for people dealing with hair loss. In some barbershops today, you can already find simple digital scanners that show a clear picture of the scalp. Instead of guessing in the mirror, clients can actually see where the hair is getting thinner and follow how it changes over time. This makes the whole process less stressful, because progress is easier to track. At the same time, new wigs and hair systems are being produced with the help of 3D printing. They are lighter to wear, fit the head more comfortably, and look far more natural than the older versions ever did. For many people, this offers a real alternative without going through surgery.

Another direction that is getting popular is the use of natural lotions and care products for the scalp. These are often created when doctors and cosmetic specialists work together, which makes them both safe and practical. All of this shows that innovation is not always about something huge or expensive. Sometimes it is the small improvements that make everyday life more comfortable.

Still, there are challenges. One problem is that barbers and trichologists rarely work together officially. Most cooperation depends on personal relationships and informal advice. There are no common systems, no official programs that link the two professions. Another problem is that clients themselves often do not know about these possibilities. Many people with alopecia think their only options are medicine or acceptance, but in reality there are many in-between solutions that can help. Also, both professions have to respect each other's limits. Barbers cannot act like doctors, and trichologists cannot always solve the emotional and stylistic side. Finding the balance requires time, training, and mutual respect.

If we think about the future, it's not hard to imagine things moving in a better direction. You could have a place where trichologists and barbers work together in the same building. In one room a person could get a medical check-up, and right next door someone could help with styling, wigs, or other cosmetic solutions. And if the client feels stressed about their condition, maybe there would also be someone to talk to about the emotional side. Training could also change - barbers might learn a bit about scalp health, while trichologists could learn more about everyday appearance. If this became normal practice, people with alopecia wouldn't have to choose between medical help and cosmetic help. They could have both at once.

It's important to keep in mind that alopecia isn't just about hair falling out. For many people, hair is tied to how they see themselves, to gender roles, or even cultural traditions. In some places hair stands for beauty, in others it's connected to strength or maturity. Losing it can feel like losing a part of yourself. That's why solutions can't stop at pills or treatments. They also need to cover the emotional and social sides of the problem. When medical science is combined with the creativity and care of barbers, people are treated as whole human beings, not just as patients with a scalp issue.

In everyday terms, this means that a man who starts losing hair in his twenties does not have to feel ashamed. He can see a trichologist to understand the reason, but he can also go to a barber who helps him find a new style that feels confident. It means that a woman who notices thinning hair after pregnancy is not left alone with stress but finds support in both medical advice and cosmetic solutions. It means that older people do not feel invisible but have tools to adapt with dignity. These small examples show why integration is so valuable.

If you think about it, the real change in this area isn't just about fancy machines or new medical products. The real progress shows up when people from different sides actually decide to work together. A trichologist can explain what is happening to the scalp and offer treatment, while a barber can take care of how the person looks day to day and make them feel comfortable. When both roles connect, hair loss doesn't feel like such a heavy or isolating problem anymore. Instead of being only about embarrassment or trying to hide, it becomes something that can be handled in several

ways. Someone can leave the doctor's office with medical advice and then go to the barbershop and walk out feeling more confident about their appearance.

This kind of teamwork is still new and not very common, but it already proves something important: there is no single way to deal with alopecia. It's not just medicine, and it's not just style. Real help happens when scientific knowledge meets practical skills and genuine human understanding. At the end of the day, the goal is to make the person feel at ease in their own skin and remind them that their value has nothing to do with how much hair they have.

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ПСИХОДІАГНОСТИЧНІ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ЦІННІСНИХ ОРІЄНТАЦІЙ СТУДЕНТІВ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

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