



WELCOME TO HEROES

Your toolkit for making a difference.

Congratulations! You've joined HEROES (Health Education + Reliable Outreach + Empathetic Support). You're now part of an incredible network of stylists making a real difference for clients living with scalp and skin conditions. This toolkit is your guide to getting educated and empowered to support your clients even more.

What Is HEROES?

HEROES is all about equipping you with the tools and knowledge to be a trusted resource for your clients. This program is crafted for stylists, by stylists, with input from health care experts as well as people living with psoriasis.

Salons and barbershops aren't just about hair — they're places where people connect, open up, and feel supported. You're already a hero in your clients' lives; now you have extra support to make an even bigger impact.

"I believe that my job as a barber goes beyond making my clients look good. I want them to feel good and be healthy, too. While I can't diagnose skin diseases of the scalp, I can spot symptoms and advise my clients to see a board-certified dermatologist or medical professional."

Brittane T.

Mobile barber and social media manager who also has psoriasis



Here's What's Inside

As a HEROES member, you've unlocked a toolkit designed to transform your salon experience and help you better support clients with scalp conditions.

PART 1 Understanding Scalp Conditions and Psoriasis



Learn the basics about psoriasis — what it is, what it looks like, how it differs from dandruff, and how it affects the whole body. With this knowledge, you'll be prepared to guide your clients toward proper health care.

PART 2 Screening and Servicing Clients



Get tips from a dermatologist on what to look for. We also include a pre-booking screening checklist to share with your clients and ensure your team is ready to provide the best care.

PART 3 Providing Empathy and Support



This section includes engaging videos from a psychologist who specializes in chronic conditions, offering conversation pointers to build trust and make your clients with skin and scalp conditions feel comfortable.

PART 4 Quick Resources for Clients



Share with your clients a QR Code with valuable websites, webinars, podcasts, and more on skin and scalp conditions.

Understanding Scalp Conditions and Psoriasis

🤔 What Is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a chronic condition where the immune system speeds up skin cell growth. This causes skin cells to build up on the surface, creating scaly patches called plaques. These patches can be itchy, red, and sometimes painful. Psoriasis commonly shows up on the scalp, knees, elbows, and lower back — but it's more than just a skin condition.

👁️ What Does Psoriasis Look Like?

Psoriasis can look different on various skin tones:

- **Light skin:** Patches often appear red with silver scales.
- **Darker skin:** Patches may look violet or purple, with gray scales.

Psoriasis can vary depending on how much of the body it covers. For example, mild psoriasis covers about 3 percent of the body. Even mild psoriasis can impact quality of life, especially if plaques are located in highly visible or sensitive areas like the scalp.



Credit: top row: International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA);
bottom row: Adobe Stock, HEROES patient community

Understanding Scalp Conditions and Psoriasis

Scalp Psoriasis vs. Dandruff

Use this chart to learn the differences between dandruff and scalp psoriasis.

	Dandruff	Scalp Psoriasis
Causes	Common scalp condition, usually caused by dry skin, mild irritation, or excess oil	Immune system condition causing overproduction of skin cells
Appearance	Small white flakes on the scalp, often accompanied by oily or greasy hair	Raised, inflamed, dry, and scaly patches (plaques) on the scalp
Color of Scales	Usually white flakes	On light skin: silver-white; on darker skin: may appear darker, purple, or gray
Severity	Mild and common	Chronic condition
Affected Areas	Primarily the scalp	The scalp and other parts of the body, including joints (psoriatic arthritis)
Treatment	Treated with over-the-counter dandruff shampoos	Often does not respond to over-the-counter treatments, requiring prescribed topical treatments (e.g., medicated shampoos or creams) or systemic treatments

Understanding Scalp Conditions and Psoriasis

The **Whole-Body Impact** of Psoriasis

Psoriasis isn't just a skin problem. It's an inflammatory disease that can affect the entire body:



Physical health: People with psoriasis are at higher risk for heart problems, diabetes, and joint disease like psoriatic arthritis.



Mental health: Living with visible plaques can impact self-esteem, leading to anxiety or depression.

How to Support Your Clients



Show empathy: Try saying, “I know psoriasis can affect more than just the skin. How can I help you feel comfortable today?”



Encourage self-care: Gently remind clients to stay connected with their health care providers. For example: “Tracking symptoms and visiting a dermatologist can help manage the long-term effects.”



Offer practical comforts: If a client is experiencing a disease flare, adjust your hair care techniques to be gentler or offer breaks.

Why This Matters

You're not expected to treat your clients with psoriasis, but you can create a welcoming space to let them know they're not alone. Every appointment can be a step toward making them feel valued and respected — inside and out.

Screening and Servicing Clients

✨ How to Use the Pre-Booking Tool

Use this **quick checklist** to help you or your staff understand and cater to your clients' skin and scalp needs.

Here are a few ways you can use the pre-booking tool to better understand your clients' concerns and conditions before their appointment:

- Print it out for you, your staff, or the client to fill out.
- Save it as a PDF to fill out online.
- Email it to the client as part of the appointment confirmation.

“There is nothing worse than going to a salon and being treated like you have the plague. People want to feel comfortable. A stylist should be able to help the client leave the salon feeling uplifted and beautiful.”

Tamiko J.

Hair stylist and mom of person living with eczema





Before your appointment, we'd like to ask you a few quick questions so we can give you the absolute best care for your skin and scalp.

Name:

Service:

Stylist:

Appointment Date:

Appointment Time:

Are there any specific hair care products, fragrances, or ingredients that you are allergic to or prefer to avoid?

- Yes
- No

Please specify:

Do you have any preferences or concerns regarding water temperature during the hair wash?

- Yes
- No

Please specify:

Do you have any concerns about the use of hair tools, heat styling tools, or chemical treatments on your hair and scalp?

- Yes
- No

Please specify:

Have you noticed any changes to your scalp or hair health that you'd like to discuss with your stylist? Please check all that apply.

- Flakes or dandruff
- Scabs or sores that never completely heal
- Itchiness or irritation
- Burning or stinging sensation
- Hair loss or shedding
- Excessive dryness or oiliness
- Other (please specify):

Have you been diagnosed with any skin or scalp conditions that you feel comfortable sharing? Please check all that apply.

- Psoriasis and/or psoriatic arthritis
- Eczema or atopic dermatitis
- Seborrheic dermatitis
- Alopecia or hair loss
- Scalp inflammation or redness
- Other (please specify):

Screening and Servicing Clients



Q&A with **Dermatologist** Dr. Elle de Moll

As salon professionals, understanding and effectively managing clients with scalp psoriasis can set your service apart. Dr. de Moll shares her top insights here. **Elevate your salon game in minutes.**

Q: Does the temperature of the water matter when washing hair with scalp psoriasis?

A: “Temperature of the water is not super important to scalp psoriasis management. Avoid too hot a temperature that may burn or irritate the skin.”

★ **TIP:** *Ask your clients what temperature they prefer.*

Q: What is the ideal hair-washing frequency for those with scalp psoriasis?

A: “More frequent washing is helpful. Medicated shampoos, such as over-the-counter options like MG217 Medicated Conditioning, Coal Tar Formula Shampoo (3% coal tar), Neutrogena T/Sal® Therapeutic Shampoo (3% salicylic acid), and Dermarest Psoriasis Medicated Shampoo Plus Conditioner (3% salicylic acid), should be focused on the scalp/skin, not the hair shaft itself.”

Q: What's the recommended washing frequency for Black individuals with scalp psoriasis?

A: “Black hair can dry with too frequent washing. One of my favorite product lines is the Royal Oils line developed by the Head & Shoulders team specifically for Black hair. Prescription medication from the dermatologist can also be applied to dry scalps.”

Screening and Servicing Clients

Q&A with **Dermatologist** Dr. Elle de Moll

Q: What are the best brushing or combing techniques?

A: “Gentle brushing and scalp technique is crucial. Many people try to ‘scrub off’ the scale. This can make the scalp tender, cause bleeding, and even worsen the psoriasis over time.”

Q: Should certain hair treatments, like coloring, straightening, or braiding, be avoided?

A: “Any chemicals should avoid being placed directly onto skin affected with psoriasis. Yet with the right precautions, patients with psoriasis should style their hair however they like, including braids and coloring.”

Q: What is the ideal salon environment for people with psoriasis?

A: “Many of my patients say they are more comfortable in a private setting — such as with curtains or a dressing-room like scenario. This allows them to not feel publicly on display with their skin conditions.”

★ **TIP:** Ask your client if they’d like to book their appointment at a less busy time.

Q: What are some key takeaways you wish every stylist/barber knew about psoriasis?

A: “Psoriasis is a genetic condition affecting two percent of Americans. The scalp is a super common place for skin involvement and can often be a presenting symptom. If it seems like too much to be dandruff, then it is too much.”

Screening and Servicing Clients

Q&A with **Dermatologist** Dr. Elle de Moll

Q: Why is it pivotal for people to realize that psoriasis is a systemic disease — and that it won't go away with over-the-counter shampoo or products?

A: “Psoriasis is a chronic systemic disease. For some people it may be mild and can be managed with over-the-counter products. However, some people go on to have much more widespread skin or joint involvement. Patients with more widespread disease are likely at higher risk for other comorbidities, including cardiac risk factors due to the widespread inflammation. In this scenario, involving a health care provider is extra important to manage all aspects of risk.”

RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS

What new information did you learn about psoriasis that will help when screening and servicing clients?

What changes will you make to improve the salon experience for clients with skin and scalp conditions?

How will you guide a patient with scalp psoriasis to seek proper treatment?

Providing Empathy and Support

→ Empathy Training Video Series

Watch **Laurie J. Ferguson, PhD**, explain how to have empathetic conversations with your clients.



Styling with Empathy: Psoriasis vs. Dandruff

Learn how psoriasis differs from dandruff and how you can ask your clients about it.



Styling with Empathy: Avoid Projecting Your Feelings

Learn what *not* to say when talking to a client with psoriasis.



Laurie J. Ferguson, PhD

Laurie Ferguson, PhD is a clinical psychologist who offers expertise on patient-centered programming and educational needs that come with chronic health conditions. Her area of research focuses on developing resilient attitudes and behaviors, particularly in times of chronic pain and stress. Dr. Ferguson has a private therapy practice in Tappan, NY.

Quick Resources for Clients

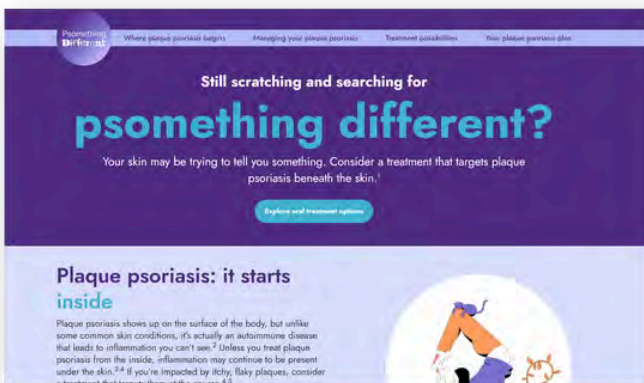
You're not just helping clients feel great about their hair — you're also a trusted source of information. Here are some patient-friendly resources you can share with your clients who are showing signs of psoriasis or who are already living with the condition:



InsideOutDisease.org

Get key facts about psoriasis, tips for diagnosis, and managing both physical and emotional impacts.

[Learn more](#)



PSomethingDifferent.com

Access resources for understanding plaque psoriasis, including differentiating it from other scalp conditions like dandruff.

[Learn more](#)

Knowledge Is Power

“There’s an issue with patients not knowing that psoriasis extends beyond the skin,” says Dr. Khattri, a triple board-certified dermatologist, rheumatologist, and internist.

“Knowledge is power and the first step is for patients to know the other manifestations associated with psoriasis — and then to see a provider who looks at the full picture.”



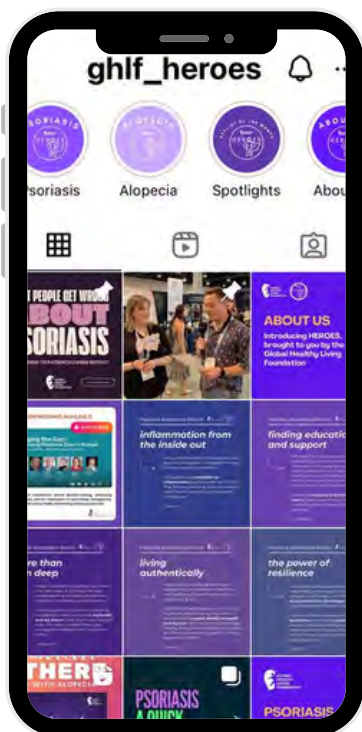
Congratulations You've Reached **HERO** Status

Congratulations! You're on your way to transforming your client's salon experience and better supporting their skin and scalp conditions.

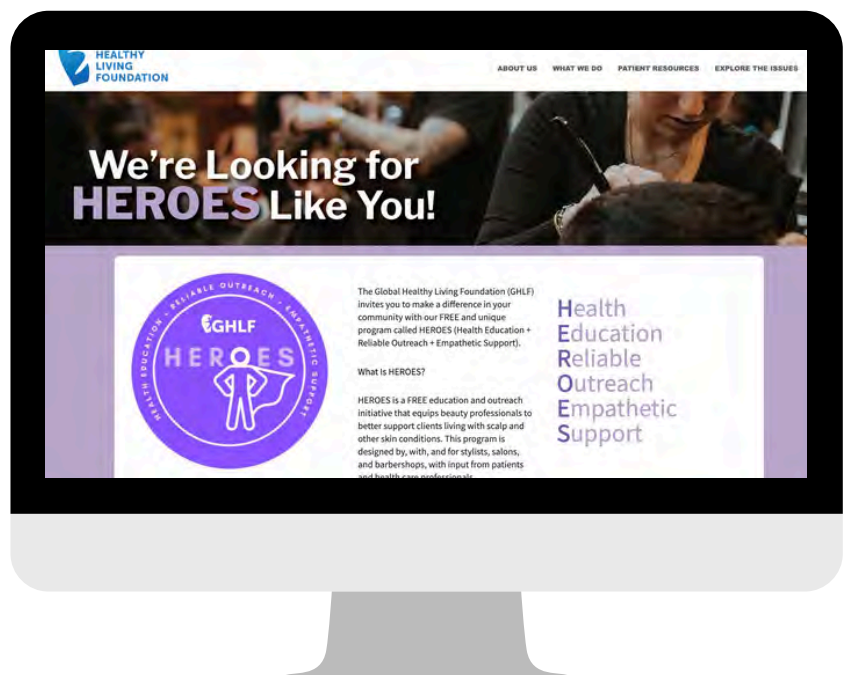
Before you go, make sure to print or download your badge (on the following pages) adorned with a helpful QR code. This badge shows you're ready to start making a difference for your clients.

Hang or place the badge somewhere visible at your station or in your salon so you can show off your HEROES knowledge to your clients living with skin and scalp conditions. Tell them what being a HERO means to you and offer the QR code for instant access to free resources.

Thank you again for your commitment to stopping the stigma and learning more about skin and scalp health. We look forward to seeing the incredible work you'll do as a member of HEROES, tag us on Instagram at [@ghlf_heroes!](https://www.instagram.com/ghlf_heroes/)

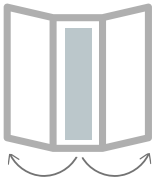


[@ghlf_heroes](https://www.instagram.com/ghlf_heroes/)

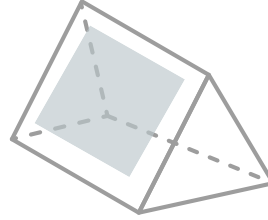


ghlf.org/heroes/

① Fold paper along the dotted lines so that flaps are folded back behind the image in the middle.



② Bring the folded flaps together behind the image in middle, forming a triangular prism with the image facing forward.



① Fold along these lines

Concerns about scalp health?

**ASK ME WHY
I'M A HERO.**

SGHLF HEROES

① Fold along these lines



Having concerns about your scalp health?

ASK ME WHY I'M A HERO.

HEROES is a FREE education and outreach initiative that equips beauty professionals to better support clients living with scalp and other skin conditions. This program is designed by, with, and for stylists, salons, and barbershops, with input from patients and health care professionals.

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