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TIA JONES

Associate
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Taking Care of Yourself For The Longterm

Skin Inc.'s Associate Managing Editor Tia Jones shares what's on her mind.

It's October. we've made it through the lazy, hazy days of summer.

This can be an opportune time to watch the leaves change color. It reminds me of my time in the tri-states picking apples, eating cheese curds and visiting the farmers market to grab apple cider donuts. This can also be a time to focus on longevity, well-aging and mental wellness. Taking the time you need to slow down can help support mental wellbeing.

Pros can help their clients maintain and facilitate mental wellness in the treatment room by creating environments that make them feel relaxed.

In this issue we're looking at how the slow and steady approach to chemical peels can help with hyperpigmentation; the importance of barrier health can contribute to better results of a chemical peel; and the ways sensorial spa experiences can elevate wellness.

Since October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we're looking at the role estheticians can play in oncology skin health and advocacy, and how being seen while navigating a cancer diagnosis can be part of the healing process and make clients feel safe.

Hopefully, the information in this issue of *Skin Inc.* resonates with you and is useful. If it is, please share with another professional that you think would benefit from it. We all know that information is most valuable when it is shared.

Remember in this season to take care of yourself.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tia Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tia" and last name "Jones" clearly visible.

Tia Jones



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Renew, Refresh, Revive

By Tia Jones

Fall can be a time of renewal. The cooler breeze and falling leaves make it a time for slowing down and resting.



1 Skin Purification

Companies are developing options that provide skin cleansing and balancing with mists and sprays that are effective and can be used on-the-go.

Face Reality recently launched its Omni Clear Mist. The professional-grade, multi-use hypochlorous acid mist is designed to purify and support balanced skin. This product can give skin a refresh, cleansing and purifying the skin by killing any excess bacteria on the skin.

www.facerealityskincare.com

2 Regenerative Skincare

Companies are using exosomes and science to create regenerative skincare for longevity.

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3 Filtered Showerhead

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Native Serum is formulated with bakuchiol, a plant-derived retinol alternative that delivers visible firmness and radiance without the irritation and sensitivity so many clients associate with traditional retinol use. Many of my own clients over the years have come to me retinol-burned, done tolerating redness in exchange for results. Native Serum was built for that exact handoff, paired with a slow, intentional application ritual rather than a quick step in a routine.

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Work on deeper wrinkles, enlarged pores or scarring with the epiPin Performance; a non-dissolving Tip made of Poly Lactic Acid pyramids. This can also be used as microdermabrasion alternative in combination with a gentle enzyme.

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Kyrsta Morehouse

By Tia Jones



Kyrsta Morehouse

Kyrsta Morehouse started as a makeup artist in Los Angeles. She absolutely loved the 13-plus years she spent doing beauty and special effects makeup. She got tired of the rat race of Los Angeles and wanted to find something more sustainable than the freelance makeup work she was doing previously. A natural transition was esthetics since while she was working as a makeup artist, her passion for skin prep and how the skin reacts grew.

“I love helping other people and I love makeup and people being able to see that transformation when they look in the mirror, but unfortunately, with makeup you

wash it off at the end of the day. It's very temporary. So, I gravitated towards the idea of being able to provide more lasting changes for people,” she said.

Morehouse launched her solo practice Esthetics by Kyrsta in 2025, and she serves as an education specialist for Bioelements. She also launched her own skincare brand, Balanced Barrier Skin Co. Morehouse sees esthetics as health and self-care. She said because the skin is the body's largest organ, it should be treated much better than it is.

“We often don't think about our skin or aren't educated properly and just grab any random products off the shelf at the store. I think I had a real draw to help people,” she said.

Seeing the confidence on someone's face when they look in the mirror after a skincare treatment is a powerful experience for Morehouse. She said she has become addicted to that experience. She said it fills her heart to hear from clients when she gets messages back with them telling her how good their skin looks and feels.

Balanced Barrier Skin Co

Balanced Barrier Skin Co is a botanical-based vegan and cruelty free skincare line. It was born out of Morehouse's desire to find a product that felt good and moisturized her dry skin. She began to research ingredients and formulas that supported skin barrier repair. She was really drawn to a whipped butter consistency that mimicked frosting. She started playing with different formulations that she really loved, then she shared it with clients and friends. The first product in the line is Glow Butter, a general skin barrier moisturizer. There are two other products in the line: Stretch Butter, a pregnancy-safe stretch

mark and scar butter; and Retin-Alt Complex, a botanical retinol alternative. She is taking her time to research, formulate and test her products before launching them, which means more time in between product releases.

Pro-Aging Facial Treatment Protocol

Morehouse's pro-aging facial is her answer to an anti-aging facial. Instead of combating aging with stronger actives, she is looking at the body more holistically. She is looking at why a wrinkle is forming, which could be from collagen and elastin loss as people age. She uses treatments and ingredients that target that loss on a deeper level. Her goal is to work with the body rather than fighting against aging. In the pro-aging protocol she addresses sagging skin, fine lines and wrinkles, muscle toning and firming, and getting that collagen and elastin back, as well as combating general aging including UV damage, free radical damage and transepidermal water loss.

The protocol uses skincare ingredients, meta-cupping, microcurrent, a combination of radio frequency and ultrasonic infusion, and finishes with contrast therapy. The meta cupping is going to stretch the skin and warm everything up. The microcurrent stimulates, tightens and forms the skin. The radio frequency and ultrasonic infusion enable deep product penetration. The contrast therapy helps tighten and firms everything.

Morehouse explained that meta cupping is a massage step. She starts with her hand to warm up the skin and activate the lymph nodes in the chest and face. The meta cupping uses a controlled machine with continuous movement across the skin. That dynamic movement creates a negative pressure



environment to revitalize the skin from the inside out. She describes it as deep tissue massage for the face that releases tension that aids in better elasticity.

The facial is non-invasive and Morehouse described it as a nice, relaxing facial treatment that gives the benefits of a facelift without surgery. Morehouse recommends that clients receive the pro-aging facial in a series of four to six sessions, every two to four weeks. Then, the client can move into a maintenance stage.

"It is going to be a longer lasting protocol that we're doing repeatedly, but you will see that instant benefit after your first treatment," she said. "As soon as the service is over, you look in the mirror and you will start to see that firming you can feel it in the face, you see those fine lines and wrinkles minimized."

Morehouse said that as a client continues the series of treatments, they will see the results get stronger and last longer. For post treatment and aftercare, she recommends the client use a customized cleanser based on what their skin needs. She also



sends the clients home with the Balance Barrier Skin Co Retin-Alt Complex to give them retinol effects without harshness. Then, the client can use a moisturizer, with the goal of continuing the pro-aging process on a cellular level.

Advice for Other Estheticians

Morehouse advises other estheticians who are interested in creating their own skincare line to ensure they understand formulas and percentages, do stability testing, do rigorous testing for product efficacy, as well as pH testing and balancing. She said while the level of testing and research is more advanced, it is necessary to bring people quality products.

"Taking it a step further and making sure that you are holding yourself and your product to the same standards that you would any other product that you would purchase off the shelf is going to be really important, because it needs to be trusted and it needs to be backed by that testing," she said. ✂

Tia Jones is Associate Managing Editor of *Skin Inc.*



HYPERPIGMENTATION AND CHEMICAL PEELS: THE SLOW AND STEADY APPROACH

By Tay Wagner

When clients hear the term “chemical peel,” many still have a flash of fear come across their face. The negative connotations from outdated, severely strong, aggressive (and usually medically applied only) peels, or severely dramatized scenes in movies and TV shows still exist for a lot of people. They immediately think they will be in pain, their skin will become inflamed, red, irritated, scabbing over and that their skin will be hanging from their faces for all to see for an undetermined amount of time. Entering the fall season, chemical peel treatments and appointments go on the rise due to the lower temperatures and less sun exposure clients will have, which gives chemical peels a chance to shine. This is especially true for people looking for hyperpigmentation treatments as well.

During peel season, estheticians have the opportunity to discuss chemical peel treatments with their clients in a realistic and educational way. Listening to their concerns and fears, and updating their knowledge on those first is key. The first thing estheticians should do when having this conversation for the first time with their clients is to reassure them that technology, science and formulations have come a long way from what they used to be. This is where you get to watch that flash of fear go away. Setting expectations is second. Talking about goals, the number of appointments it will take and how often they will have to come in, as well as the necessary post treatment care, will help set realistic parameters and then the treatment plan can start.

The “slow and steady” approach means you’re going to work slowly, carefully and gradually with your client, starting the least aggressive as possible, and then increasing the strength of the peels and active ingredient products at each service. This method is often under-utilized due to the urge to deliver results as fast as possible. Of course everyone wants results as fast as possible, especially in the fast paced, instant gratification world that we live in today. However, when it comes to hyperpigmentation, fast results do not equal long term results. Sun damage can take years to come to the surface of the skin before clients even know they have it. We find this most often in the generation

that laid outside for hours covered in baby oil and have been starting to look into where all these dark spots “suddenly” came from. When an issue can take that long to be seen on the surface, it makes sense that it should take time to treat it. Instead of doing a couple of really strong chemical peel appointments once a week for a month or two, try one full peel appointment every four to six weeks for an extended period of time. For example, starting at the beginning of peel season in theory puts the first service performed in October, and the last service is performed in March or April, depending if you’re doing every four weeks, five weeks, or six weeks.

Treating hyperpigmentation with chemical peels using a slow and steady approach works well for multiple reasons. First, people who have been dealing with hyperpigmentation have often been dealing with it for a long time, trying anything and everything they can to get rid of it, only for it to come back within a few months, or for more dark spots to appear in a new area. When peels are applied too close together, or are particularly strong in hopes of more instant results, the skin doesn’t have time to fully heal before the next peel is applied. This is also when postinflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) can occur and then clients become incredibly discouraged. Second, every client’s skin is different. Spacing out your appointments gives you (as the provider) time to check in with your client



and see how their skin reacts to the products you use and the treatment performed. If someone ends up being a little more sensitive than originally thought, that's something that should be figured out sooner rather than later. Third, your client won't feel rushed. Chances are they're either exhausted from trying anything they can or they're brand new to seeing an esthetician and they want to know they are heard, cared for and working with a professional who wants to see results just as much as they do, but to still customize their treatment plan, and work with them as the individual they are.

Now imagine implementing a slower, steadier, more spaced out approach. Depending on if you're using self-neutralizing or non-self neutralizing chemical peels obviously determines how your protocol needs to be for each appointment, but the method remains the same. Make sure those expectations are set, and make sure your client's skin is prepped and ready for chemical peel treatments. Once you have done that, you will start the first chemical peel treatment. Choose a light peel, apply a minimal amount of applications, and follow with complimentary products, a good moisturizer for their skin, and of course SPF. In theory, your client will experience minimal flaking, allowing for little to no down time from their day-to-day life. Schedule the next appointment four to six weeks out. At the second appointment you go a little stronger on the chemical peel. That could mean doing the same peel you did last time but with more applications/layers or using a slightly stronger peel than the first one, or depending on the type of peels and your states regulations, doing a small combination of two different chemical peels. You slowly build them up and develop the client's tolerance.

An example would be a series of six peels done once a month for six months. Obviously results will vary depending on a number of things including the type of hyperpigmentation, the home care routine, the skin tolerance level, the type of peels being used, etc. but there are still results. Taking photos at each appointment will show this, allowing you as the professional to determine an estimated amount of series needed. An additional option would be once you've completed six treatments in six months, let their skin relax for three months. Many clients with mature, or sun damaged skin have a slower natural cellular turnover rate and it can take a while for their skin to return to its normal pH level, and to heal from the six months of increased cellular turnover on a deeper level. During those three months, pause the chemical



peels and focus on hydration, barrier protection, and relaxation while your client continues their homecare routine to stay consistent. After the 90-day break period is over, start the peel process again once per month for six months, but a little stronger than the first one of the first series. Remember that every client is different, so a series could be a different amount of treatments than six and a three month break may or may not be necessary. A lot of teamwork is necessary to curate and stay consistent with the correct home care regimen for each and every client differently. It is also important to know and admit if or when something is possibly beyond your knowledge or scope, or if your client should be referred to a dermatologist.

This six months on, three months off approach means you will be working with your client on their hyperpigmentation for most likely a minimum of 15 months, which will likely surprise your client during that conversation of setting expectations. That timeline is just a general guideline though. You as the professional know your product lines, how your peels

work, and know your clients' skin, so take the slow and steady approach and make it your own. There are so many variables that affect what would be best for each client and each esthetician like the cause of the hyperpigmentation, the skin type, home care, skin of color and different ethnicities, the peel(s) being used, and the client's history with PIH if any. However, using this approach gives a much higher likelihood of avoiding PIH, continuing to have little downtime for your client between appointments, and most importantly, longer lasting results. You'll be able to show your client what their skin looked like at the beginning of their treatments with you, to what it has become now by using those photos that were taken at every appointment to show the pigmentation fading more and more which will allow them to really see that not only has this slow and steady approach been working to rid them of their current hyperpigmentation, but that that no new spots have appeared, making it both a corrective and preventative service for them.

In an ever-evolving and competitive industry, building trust, having the updated education and consistent results to back you up, and proving which methods work and which don't is imperative to any esthetician's success and client happiness. A happy client means client retention, and client referrals. Clients will continue to see you after their pigmentation has been addressed with other services in order to prevent future pigment from forming as well as to purchase their homecare from you because they now know they are not just another number to you. When the provider communicates, the services prove their worth, and the long-term results speak for themselves, clients will appreciate the entirety of their journey with you.



Tay Wagner is a licensed esthetician and Owner of T.L.C. Skin Esthetics Studio in Brookfield, WI. Focusing on corrective treatments, specializing in hyperpigmentation concerns is what she's known for. She has continued her education with multiple certifications and still holds an up-to-date license as a tattoo artist and body piercer since 2011. Her previous career as a tattoo artist and body piercer has allowed her a different understanding of the skin and how it heals. She uses this knowledge in combination with esthetics training to get her clients long lasting results, while teaching them how to maintain their skin at home.

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PEEL SEASON: **MAXIMIZING RESULTS WHILE PROTECTING THE SKIN BARRIER**

By Alex Hernandez

As temperatures cool and clients spend less time in direct sun, chemical peels become one of the most requested treatments. They can improve acne, pigmentation, texture, dullness and early signs of aging, making them one of the most versatile tools we have in the treatment room. But peels aren't just for fall. With the right superficial peel, consistent sunscreen use and thoughtful planning, many clients can benefit from professional exfoliation year-round.

The idea that every peel has to stop when summer arrives is outdated, but reduced UV exposure may allow us to increase frequency and use more corrective approaches. In reality, fall isn't the beginning of "peel season," it's when we can build on progress created all year.

Start With the Right Candidate, Not the Right Peel

One of the biggest mistakes I see when reviewing cases with skincare professionals is focusing on the peel before fully evaluating the person receiving it. It's easy to jump straight into treatment planning. Before choosing an acid, strength, layer count, or contact time, ask a different question: Is this skin ready for a peel right now?

A client may have hyperpigmentation, congestion, dullness, or uneven tone that would benefit from a peel but that doesn't automatically make them treatment-ready. Don't forget to look beyond the presenting concern. Is the skin barrier healthy enough to receive a mild peel? How reactive is the skin? Is there inflammation or dehydration? Is the client using retinoids, exfoliating acids, prescriptions, or other corrective treatments?

One trend I consistently see is clients normalizing irritation because they assume it means their products are working. Constant redness, burning, stinging, or excessive peeling may indicate a barrier already under stress. If the skin is struggling before a peel, it's unlikely to respond optimally afterward. Some of the best decisions happen when we choose not to treat that day. A few weeks restoring balance and supporting barrier function can create a better foundation. Clients may not love hearing "not yet," but they often appreciate that you have their best interests in mind.

Why Barrier Health Matters More Than Ever

We've all had the client who tells us they have a "simple" routine, only to discover they're rotating between three exfoliating serums, a retinoid, a scrub and whatever product is trending on social media that week. It's no surprise that barrier impairment has become one of the most common challenges skincare professionals are navigating today.

The skin barrier is doing far more than most clients realize. It's helping maintain hydration, regulating

inflammation and protecting the skin from the constant stress of everyday life. When that barrier is compromised, the skin becomes more reactive. Redness, burning, stinging, dryness, flaking and prolonged recovery all become more likely, and those responses affect treatment outcomes.

Chemical peels work because they create a controlled injury within the skin that stimulates renewal. That's exactly what makes them effective. But, that renewal depends on the skin having enough resilience to repair itself afterward. Correction can only move as fast as the barrier can recover because healthier barriers almost always lead to better peel tolerance and more predictable results.

Fall Is the Time to Elevate, Not Start Over

One of the biggest misconceptions about peel season is that fall is when corrective treatments begin. In reality, some of the best transformations start long before the weather changes.

Clients who have spent the year protecting their barrier and following a consistent home-care routine often arrive in fall ready to build on that progress, not start over. Superficial peels performed throughout the year can help maintain clarity, encourage healthy cell turnover, and gradually improve concerns over time. As UV exposure decreases, treatment plans may become more corrective through increased frequency, advanced peel options, strategic layering, or a stronger focus on pigmentation, texture and acne scarring.

Rather than thinking of fall as the beginning of correction, think of it as the season to build momentum. The work you've already done throughout the year allows you to move forward with greater confidence and often achieve even better results.

Customization Is Everything

Stop asking what the strongest peel is you can perform. Start asking what this skin needs today. That shift in thinking changes everything. Two clients may walk in with the same concern, but that doesn't mean



they need the same treatment. Barrier health, lifestyle, sensitivities, home care, treatment history and even how their skin responded to previous treatments should all influence your approach.

I like to think of peels the same way I think about exercise. Two people can have the exact same goal, but they don't start with the same workout. Their starting point, intensity and recovery all look different, and skin is no different. The goal isn't to perform the most aggressive peel possible, but to deliver the right amount of stimulation while preserving the skin's ability to recover.

For Hyperpigmentation

When treating pigmentation, more isn't always better. Overly aggressive treatments can create additional inflammation, which may worsen discoloration, especially in clients prone to post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

A well-designed series almost always outperforms one aggressive peel. Slow, consistent progress paired with diligent home care typically produces healthier skin and more predictable results.

For Acne

Acne clients require an especially thoughtful approach. Exfoliation absolutely has a place in acne management, but active inflammation should influence every treatment decision, from peel selection and strength to frequency and layering. The goal isn't to create more inflammation in hopes of getting faster results. It's to support healthy cell turnover, reduce congestion and move the skin toward balance.

For Aging and Texture Concerns

Clients looking to improve texture, brightness and fine lines often benefit from a progressive treatment plan rather than a single intensive peel. One of the most valuable conversations you can have is setting expectations early. Rejuvenation isn't one appointment, it's a series of thoughtful decisions over time. When clients understand that, they're much more likely to choose consistency over quick fixes.

For Sensitive Skin

A sensitive client isn't automatically a poor peel candidate. Often success comes down to lower strengths, shorter contact times, fewer layers and longer intervals between treatments to deliver

meaningful results without overwhelming the skin. Sensitive skin doesn't always need to be excluded. It just needs to be understood.

Do Not Skip the Prep Work

One of the biggest predictors of a successful peel isn't what happens during the appointment, it's what happens in the weeks leading up to it. A client's home-care routine should support your treatment plan, not compete with it. Sometimes preparation means reducing exfoliation. Other times it means adjusting active ingredients, prioritizing hydration, strengthening the barrier, or reinforcing the importance of daily sunscreen.

Those changes don't just prepare the skin, they also tell you how the skin behaves. If a client becomes highly reactive after a small adjustment in home care, that's valuable information when deciding whether they're truly ready for a peel. Sometimes the best peel you'll perform is the one you decide to postpone, not because the skin doesn't need correction but because it needs preparation first.

Common Peel Season Mistakes

Even the best peel protocols can fall short when we lose sight of the fundamentals. Over the years, I've noticed the same few patterns come up again and again. They're easy mistakes to make, but they're also some of the easiest to correct once you recognize them.

MISTAKE #1: EQUATING MORE PEELING WITH BETTER RESULTS

One of the biggest misconceptions surrounding chemical peels is that visible peeling equals a successful treatment. Many clients still judge their results by how much skin sheds, and if we're not careful, our industry can unintentionally reinforce that belief.

The reality is that visible peeling isn't a measure of effectiveness, it's merely a side effect. I've seen clients make incredible progress with very little flaking, and I've seen aggressive treatments create a great deal of inflammation without producing better results.

The goal isn't maximum peeling; it's healthy and controlled renewal. When clients understand that they begin focusing on healthier skin instead of dramatic downtime, and that's a much better measure of success.

MISTAKE #2: IGNORING INFLAMMATION

Inflammation has a way of quietly changing the course of a treatment plan.

When you see persistent redness, irritation, sensitivity, or signs of barrier disruption, resist the urge to push forward with more correction. Instead, pause and ask yourself a different question: Does this skin need more correction, or does it need more support?

MISTAKE #3: INCREASING INTENSITY TOO QUICKLY

Every peel should earn the next peel. It can be tempting to assume that each treatment needs to be stronger than the last, but progression isn't about increasing intensity, it's about responding to the skin in front of you. Look at how the client healed. Consider their sensitivity, their home-care compliance, and whether the previous treatment moved them closer to their goal. Those answers should guide your next decision far more than the calendar or the number of treatments they've completed. The skin will tell you what it's ready for.



The Real Work Happens After the Peel

The peel itself may only take 30 to 60 minutes, but that's only one part of the treatment.

What happens over the next several days often has just as much influence on the final outcome. Before your client leaves, make sure they know exactly what to expect. Walk them through what they'll likely experience over the next several days, how to care for their skin at home, which products to avoid, and when they should reach out if something doesn't seem right.

Clear expectations don't just improve compliance, they build trust. When clients understand what's happening and why, they're far more likely to follow your recommendations and feel confident throughout the healing process. A successful peel is measured by how well the skin recovers afterward.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If there's one idea I hope you take away from this article, it's this: Peel season isn't about performing the strongest peel you can. It's about making thoughtful clinical decisions that help your clients reach their goals safely, consistently and sustainably. The best outcomes come from evaluating the whole picture—barrier health, lifestyle, home care, treatment history and the skin's ability to heal.

After years behind the chair and now spending my days educating, troubleshooting and reviewing cases alongside estheticians, one lesson continues to stand out: The best results come from doing what's right for the skin in front of you. Sometimes that means challenging the skin, but sometimes it means supporting it instead.

Knowing the difference is what separates a good peel provider from a great one. Great peel providers are remembered for making thoughtful clinical decisions, helping clients build healthier skin, and earning the trust that keeps clients coming back long after peel season is over.



Alex Hernandez is a licensed esthetician and the clinic manager and lead educator at the Face Reality Acne Clinic in San Leandro, CA. She became a Face Reality Certified Acne Expert in 2018 and has worked with hundreds of acne clients in her esthetics career.





THE HEALING POWER OF BEING SAFELY SEEN:

WHY COMPASSION ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH WHEN CARING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH CANCER

By Becky Kuehn

A woman sits in her car outside a spa, hands gripping the steering wheel. She has spent months enduring chemotherapy treatments, endless appointments, and conversations focused on lab results, medications, and side effects.

Today should feel different. Yet she hesitates. Will the esthetician understand why her skin suddenly burns from products she once loved? Will the massage therapist know why lymphatic concerns matter? Will someone ask the wrong question? Will she have to explain her cancer all over again? Or worse, will she be treated as though she is fragile, broken, or defined by her diagnosis?

For millions of people living with cancer, these concerns are real. Cancer changes more than the body. It changes how a person experiences the world. Skin becomes reactive. Nails become brittle. Hair may thin or disappear. Energy fluctuates. Confidence can take a devastating hit. The simple act of scheduling a facial, massage, manicure, or salon service can become an exercise in vulnerability.

I Know Because I Have Been on the Other Side

At 18 years old, I heard words no young woman expects to hear: “You have cancer.” It was 1978. I had uterine cancer, and in what felt like an instant, my life changed. At an age when I should have been thinking about my future, I suddenly found myself facing doctors, medical procedures, uncertainty, and questions I never imagined I would have to ask.

Cancer became part of my story. But I could never have known then that decades later, that experience would also help shape my life’s work. I entered the beauty industry in 1982 and eventually became a Master Esthetician. Years later, my professional world and my personal cancer experience collided when I began working with people undergoing cancer treatment.

I saw something that I couldn’t unsee. People living with cancer needed more than medical care. They needed places where they could simply feel human again. They needed professionals who understood why their skin had changed, why certain treatments or products might no longer be appropriate, and why



Image by Konstantin Yuganov at Adobe Stock



modifications weren't merely preferences, but matters of safety. But they also needed something that couldn't be learned from a textbook. They needed compassion.

I began to understand that there was an important space between the treatment room and everyday life. A space where the beauty and wellness professional could play a meaningful role. Not by treating cancer. Not by promising healing. But by helping a person feel safe, cared for, understood, and perhaps a little more like themselves again. That realization changed the direction of my career and ultimately led me to dedicate my work to oncology esthetics and educating other professionals to safely and compassionately serve people affected by cancer.

Compassion Is Only Half of the Equation

Compassion matters deeply. But compassion, by itself, is not enough. A kind heart without proper knowledge can unintentionally cause harm. Well-meaning professionals may recommend contraindicated treatments, use inappropriate products, overlook medical considerations, or create anxiety simply because they do not understand what their client is experiencing. The opposite is also true. Knowledge without compassion can feel cold and clinical. **True healing-centered care exists where compassion and competency meet.**

When a trained professional understands both the emotional and physiological impact of cancer treatment, something remarkable happens. The experience shifts from a service to a sanctuary. The client no longer has to educate the professional. The professional no longer fears making a mistake. Trust begins to replace uncertainty. And in that space, a different kind of healing can occur. Not healing in the sense of curing cancer. Healing in the sense of restoring dignity. Healing in the sense of helping someone recognize themselves in the mirror again. Healing in the sense of feeling normal, even for an hour.

Every Touch Communicates Something

Compassionate human connection can have a profound impact on emotional well-being and quality of life. While these moments may never appear on a medical chart, they matter deeply to someone living through cancer.

Every touch communicates something. A rushed touch says, “*I have another appointment.*” An uncertain touch says, “*I’m not sure what to do.*” An educated, compassionate touch says: “***You are safe here.***” That message can be life-changing.

As healthcare increasingly recognizes the importance of caring for the whole person, the beauty, wellness, and spa industries have an extraordinary opportunity. We can become part of a larger culture of compassion. But caring for people affected by cancer requires more than good intentions. It requires education. It requires awareness. It requires skill. And it requires a commitment to seeing the **person before the diagnosis.**



What If Awareness Is No Longer Enough?

Every October, we talk about cancer awareness. We wear ribbons. We share stories. We honor survivors. We remember those we have lost. And all of those things matter. But perhaps it is time to ask another question: **What comes after awareness?** What if our next responsibility is preparedness? What if every esthetician, cosmetologist, massage therapist, nail professional, spa, salon, and wellness center understood how to safely welcome someone affected by cancer?

Imagine a person undergoing cancer treatment being able to walk into a spa or salon without wondering: *Will they know what to do with me?* Imagine instead seeing a trained professional and knowing: *I'm safe here.* That is the future I want to help create.

Cancer treatment may save a life, but compassionate, informed care can help someone live that life with dignity, confidence, connection, and hope. I know because more than four decades ago, **I was the person with cancer.** Today, I have the privilege of helping educate the professionals who may one day care for her.

So this October, let's do more than raise awareness. **Let's raise our level of care.** Let's replace uncertainty with education. Let's replace fear with confidence. Let's pair skilled hands with compassionate hearts. And let's create a world where no person affected by cancer has to wonder whether there is a safe place for them.

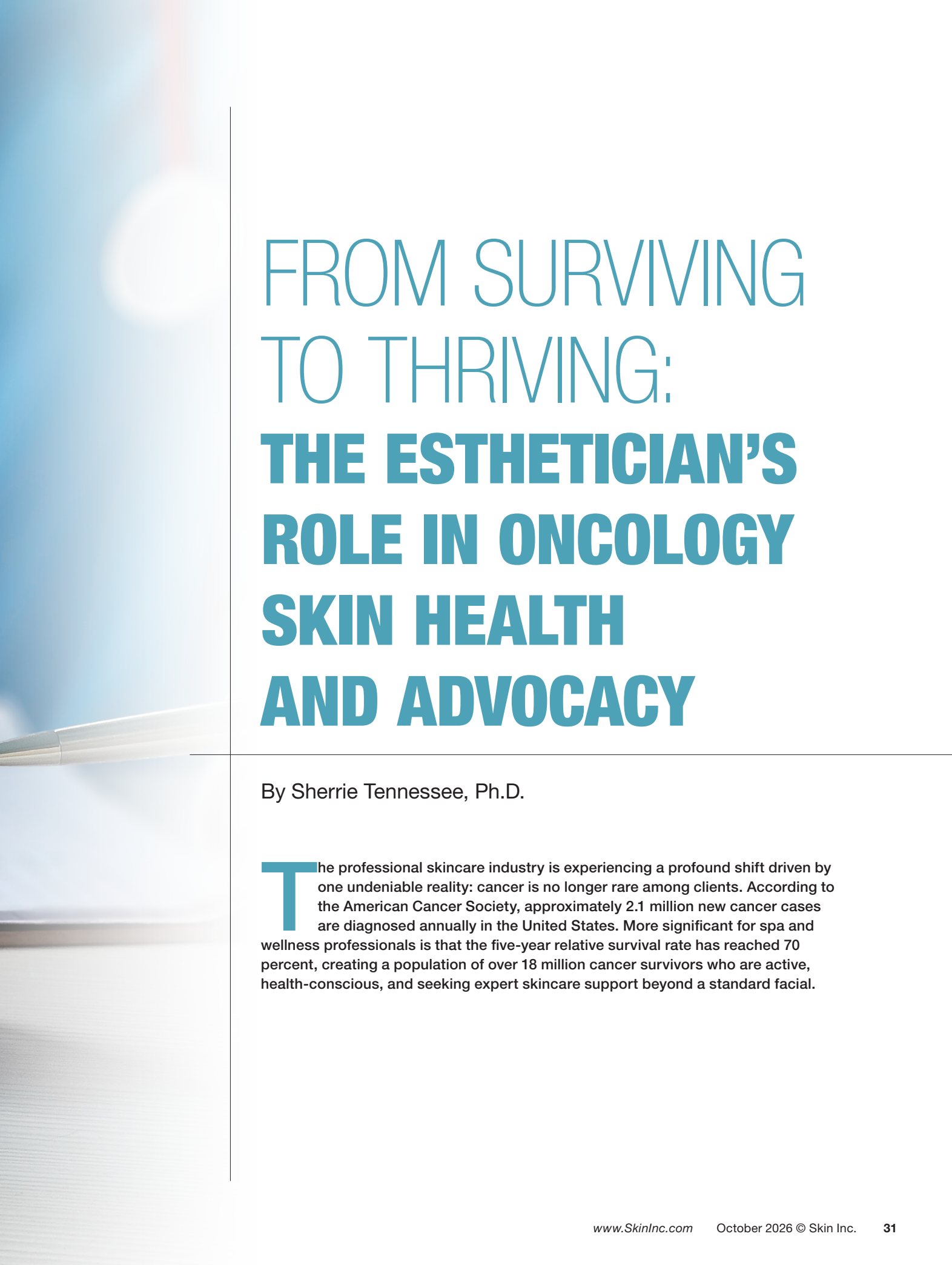
Because perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give someone living with cancer isn't another treatment, protocol, or product. It is the assurance:

I see you. I understand you. I am prepared to care for you. And you are safe here. That is the healing power of being safely seen. ✂



Becky Kuehn is the founder of Oncology Spa Solutions and the author of the "Life-Changing Esthetics" course. Her mission is to find ways to help with the devastating side effects of cancer treatments and deliver help to those in need.





FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING: **THE ESTHETICIAN'S ROLE IN ONCOLOGY SKIN HEALTH AND ADVOCACY**

By Sherrie Tennessee, Ph.D.

The professional skincare industry is experiencing a profound shift driven by one undeniable reality: cancer is no longer rare among clients. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 2.1 million new cancer cases are diagnosed annually in the United States. More significant for spa and wellness professionals is that the five-year relative survival rate has reached 70 percent, creating a population of over 18 million cancer survivors who are active, health-conscious, and seeking expert skincare support beyond a standard facial.



A Clientele Redefining the Consultation Chair

Toshianna Baker, a licensed esthetician and executive leader, has built a career at the intersection of artistry, education, and consumer strategy. Baker explained that being prepared for oncology clientele is now an operational necessity rather than a niche choice. A documented rise in early-onset breast and colorectal cancers among adults under 50 has introduced a demographic already deeply embedded in preventive wellness culture. These clients expect skin health professionals to be equipped to handle nuanced needs throughout a medical journey. For this population, Baker stated, the spa is not simply a retreat; it is a source of expert guidance that respects a complex medical history and the cellular changes occurring in the skin.

The Spa as Integrative Sanctuary

Medical interventions such as chemotherapy, radiation, and targeted therapies cause severe skin toxicities that standard cosmetic products are ill-equipped to address. Profound xerosis, radiation dermatitis, acneiform eruptions, and compromised barrier function are common reactions that require specialized protocols. Standard spa treatments involving friction, aggressive chemical exfoliants, steam, or deep lymphatic stimulation can be dangerous

for oncology clients. Baker noted that advanced postgraduate oncology esthetics training has moved from an optional specialty to an expected baseline, with the focus on safe, barrier-repairing care that mitigates risk while providing essential relief the medical system often overlooks.

Longevity Science and the Role of the Esthetician

The connection between oncology care and longevity science is reshaping what estheticians are called to do. Cancer therapies, while life-saving, accelerate biological aging at a cellular level, inducing senescence and systemic oxidative stress. Baker described oncology estheticians as cellular longevity coaches: professionals who use non-inflammatory, biocompatible ingredients, adaptogens, and gentle energy modalities to down-regulate chronic inflammation, known as inflammaging, triggered by medical treatment. In this role, Baker explained that skin is treated not merely for aesthetic results but to address the accelerated aging that medical interventions can cause actively.

Solutions-Oriented Care for Survivors Who Want to Thrive

Ella Cressman, a resurfacing and problem-skin specialist with nearly two decades of corrective



skincare experience, brought a forward-facing perspective to this conversation. Cressman noted that the profession has evolved from simply avoiding harm to actively optimizing skin health. Survivors reject a passive patient identity. A personalized facial or treatment protocol is a way to restore bodily autonomy and reclaim a sense of self that the medical journey can obscure. Cressman stated that clients now seek sophisticated, customized routines that rebuild the skin microbiome, safely address hyperpigmentation, and restore a healthy glow. Oncology esthetics, Cressman explained, proves that skin health is intrinsically tied to systemic wellness, and guiding a client to thrive after a diagnosis is among the most profound transformations a professional can offer.

Advocacy and Early Detection

Because estheticians see clients more consistently than nearly any other professionals, the treatment room is a powerful space for early-detection advocacy. Cressman and Baker both stressed that observation-based conversations should stem from education and trust, never fear. Subtle changes in the size, color, or border of a lesion may go unnoticed by clients who see themselves daily; a trained professional reviewing the skin repeatedly over time is positioned to notice what others miss. Cressman noted that skin cancer does not always present as expected: melanoma is not always dark, squamous cell carcinoma may resemble a non-healing blemish, and basal cell carcinoma can appear translucent or pearly. The recommended approach is objective communication within the scope of practice, using language such as “This is something worth having evaluated by a dermatologist.” Sun protection conversations, Cressman added, should shift from SPF reminders to discussions of cumulative daily exposure and the importance of consistent reapplication.

Managing Treatment Side Effects: What Professionals Must Know

Christine Clinton, founder of Clinton Cancer Care and chair of the Wellness for Children Initiative, is a recognized leader in mental wellness advocacy. Clinton pointed out that one in two Americans will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, and while survivorship rates are increasing, side effects involving hair, skin, and nails remain a major quality-of-life challenge. More than 32 documented skin changes result from various

treatments, including the estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) rash and maculopapular reactions, as well as xerosis, pruritus, persistent erythema, extreme photosensitivity, radiation dermatitis, hypo- and hyperpigmentation, and hand-foot syndrome. Clinton explained that while many of these concerns resolve after treatment concludes, numerous individuals continue to manage skin issues long-term, requiring specialized care to repair the skin barrier, improve hydration, and restore balance. The industry, Clinton stated, has a responsibility to meet that need with both clinical competence and compassionate support.

Integrative, Inclusive and Collaborative Care

Lashelle Ullie, a licensed skin health professional with 20 years of experience in oncology care and men's skin health, brings an integrated perspective shaped by work with organizations including the Tower Cancer Research Foundation and Lipstick Angels. Ullie explained that oncology-trained estheticians who collaborate with oncologists and nurses become trusted referral partners, helping clients understand how to care for skin before, during, and after treatment. Beyond addressing physical effects, Ullie noted that many survivors experience a loss of confidence and connection to personal identity; a trained professional

can guide restorative self-care that prioritizes comfort and dignity. As longevity and integrative wellness clinics expand, Ullie identified growing opportunities for medically supported therapies, including LED light therapy, lymphatic support, and hydration-focused IV therapy, to become part of the survivorship conversation. Ullie also identified a significant gap in reaching male survivors and marginalized communities, where stigma and limited education on supportive care remain barriers. Oncology esthetics, in this context, is the ultimate expression of modern, responsible skin-health advocacy: bridging the gap between medical necessity and the human need for touch, beauty, and autonomy.

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Sherrie Tennessee, Ph.D., began her career in the scientific world, where she served as a researcher at prestigious organizations, including Johns Hopkins University and MedImmune. With over 20 years of experience in beauty, spa, and wellness, she has expertly fulfilled roles as a massage therapist, nail tech, spa owner, speaker, professor, and educator. Her expertise in wellness technology and innovation has shaped her contributions to highly respected industry publications and speaking engagements at numerous public forums. Dr. Tennessee is a published author who has collaborated with distinguished organizations, including Johnson and Wales University, Sandals Resorts International—Red Lane Spa, and Mandarin Oriental. She holds a B.S. in Biology and is a Certified Integrative Health and Wellness Coach, along with a Master of Business Administration. Dr. Tennessee earned her Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration from William F. Harrah College of Hospitality, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she specialized in wellness tourism, wellness technology, and innovation. She continues to bridge the gap between traditional hospitality and modern wellness approaches.





HOW SENSORIAL SPA EXPERIENCES **ELEVATE WELLNESS**

By Nancy Trent, found and president of Trent & Company

Today's spa clients are seeking more than healthy-looking skin, they're looking for experiences that leave them feeling calmer, more connected and genuinely cared for. Increasingly, skincare professionals recognize that every detail of a treatment from lighting and sound to touch, texture and scent can shape how a client feels long after leaving the treatment room.

As October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month reminds us, many clients visit spas while navigating life transitions, including recovery from illness or medical treatment. Creating thoughtful, personalized sensory experiences can offer comfort during those times, while enhancing the experience for every client, regardless of where they are on their wellness journey.

A sensorial spa experience begins before the first product touches the skin. Soft lighting, carefully curated music, luxurious linens and a welcoming atmosphere all help clients leave the outside world behind and prepare both body and mind for treatment. Many spas also personalize aromatherapy, selecting scents based on a client's preferences and sensitivities rather than using a one-size-fits-all fragrance.

For Lisa Wilson, founder of Lisa Wilson Skin Care Los Angeles, a boutique skincare studio in Brentwood specializing in customized results, those details become especially meaningful when working with clients whose skin may be more delicate or reactive.

"When working with clients who are either finished with their chemotherapy treatment or still having it, it is important that they feel safe on entering my treatment room," says Wilson. She lowers the lights, softens the music and ensures clients are comfortably covered before entering the room so they never feel unnecessarily exposed or vulnerable. When appropriate, gentle inhalation aromatherapy can further encourage relaxation.

Wilson also believes treatments should be adapted to each client's individual needs and comfort level. She favors gentle products free of mineral oil, alcohol, heavy fragrances, artificial colors and unnecessary additives. Double cleansing, mild exfoliation when appropriate, barrier-supporting products and gentle effleurage techniques on the hands and feet help nurture the skin without overstimulation.

Just as important, she says, is maintaining communication throughout the service by asking clients how they are feeling and adjusting treatments accordingly. Her care extends beyond the facial itself, often following up afterward to check on a client's comfort and answer any questions.

While skincare addresses the skin, sensory experiences often influence how clients experience the treatment itself.

Aleece Fosnight, MSPAS, PA-C, CSC-S, CSE, IF, MSCP, HAES, Founder and Director, Fosnight Center for Sexual Health, says experiences that encourage relaxation can help individuals reconnect with themselves in meaningful ways. "Sensorial spa experiences should never be viewed as a luxury," she says. Gentle therapeutic touch, mindful massage when clinically appropriate, warm hydrotherapy, guided breathwork, meditation, sound therapy and restorative facials can all create opportunities for clients to slow down and experience moments of calm.

She also emphasizes that simple rituals including mindful skincare, warm baths, soft fabrics and gentle stretching or yoga can be equally powerful because they encourage people to reconnect with their bodies through compassion and self-care.

For clients whose skin or senses have changed following medical treatments, personalization becomes especially important. Fosnight notes that some individuals may find carefully selected scents deeply calming, while others may experience heightened sensitivity to fragrance. Rather than assuming what feels relaxing, practitioners should allow each client's preferences to guide the sensory experience.

A truly holistic approach to wellness recognizes that confidence extends beyond healthy skin. Fosnight notes that life events, including breast cancer treatment, can affect how people feel about their bodies. Supportive self-care rituals from nourishing skincare to restorative touch, can help individuals rebuild comfort and confidence over time.

She also believes conversations around intimate wellness deserve greater normalization as part of overall well-being. For individuals experiencing vaginal dryness or discomfort, body-safe personal lubricants, such as Uberlube, may become one component of a broader self-care routine that supports comfort and intimacy when appropriate.



“Healing extends beyond scans and blood tests,” Fosnight says. “Supporting the nervous system, restoring confidence, and creating positive sensory experiences are all part of helping women move from surviving cancer to truly living well afterwards.”

Candice Nicole, founder of HUmineral, says growing interest in naturally derived ingredients reflects consumers’ desire for wellness-focused skincare. She points to humic and fulvic minerals for their antioxidant properties and believes formulations that support healthy-looking skin while complementing the skin’s natural balance continue to resonate with wellness-minded clients.

For estheticians, ingredient selection is only one piece of the overall experience. Texture, application, aroma and how products make clients feel during treatment all contribute to creating memorable services.

As client expectations continue to evolve, the most successful spas are creating experiences that engage all the senses, not simply delivering visible skincare results.

Whether welcoming a first-time facial client, someone managing everyday stress or an individual rebuilding confidence following a significant life event, sensory details matter. A quieter room. Softer lighting. Thoughtful communication. Gentle touch. Carefully selected products.

October’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month reminds the industry that compassionate care can take many forms. Fortunately, the same principles that help create a comforting environment for someone navigating life’s challenges also elevate every spa experience.

Because ultimately, exceptional skincare isn’t just about how clients look when they leave, it’s about how they feel while they’re there. ✂



Nancy Trent is a writer, speaker, lifelong wellness activist, trend watcher, and founder and president of wellness PR firm Trent & Company. A former journalist for New York Magazine, Trent has written

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