

'People are feeling lost:' Kawarthas residents discuss losing routines

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Getting dressed up for an outing to the grocery store may not have been something you did in early March, but it's certainly something to consider in April.

With the rise of the pandemic, some people are feeling cooped up as non-essential businesses remain closed and health officials ask residents to stay home.

That means routines such as going to the gym, getting your hair cut or heading to an esthetician a time or two a month aren't on the agenda.

Not having those routines or opportunities to go out and break up the monotony of 24-hour home life can have an impact — especially for those who practice self-care like clockwork.

Kawartha Lakes area resident Kim McFadden is always booked three weeks ahead with her esthetician Terri Hanna at Lotus Spa and Esthetics.

"It's different looking in the mirror right now," McFadden says, noting she had regular appointments for her nails, eyebrows and eyelash extensions.

"Being at home I don't need to look done up all day," she says. "[But] I got really excited when I went to the grocery store last week."

As a fitness instructor and BMW employee — where she's expected to look professional — McFadden prides herself on putting her best foot forward and looking her best.

[The Canadian Mental Health Association warns "self-care is critically important at this time as worries can be made worse if we aren't taking care of ourselves."](#)

Engaging in activities that make you feel good are up there with leaning on social support, getting enough sleep, eating healthy and exercising.

For McFadden; looking good and feeling good go hand in hand, but her appointments are more than that. She says she couldn't afford to "splurge" on herself when she was a young mother, but it's always been something she's thought she would make routine one day.

"One of the things I like about going to Terri... it's my me-time. We love to just chat and gossip, we have a lot of mutual friends," she says. "It's a mental health break."

Hanna describes many of her clients as friends, if not close friends. She says often when they come in it can be like therapy for them. She says she wouldn't be surprised if there are things her clients have shared with her that they haven't shared with anyone else.

“I worry for my clients' sanity,” she says. “Routine can be such a big part of people’s lives and when that’s taken away it can be very hard emotionally on them.”

[Lotus Spa](#) has been closed since March 14. Hanna says it’s the longest she’s ever gone without working. She’s just now starting to come to the end of her calendar book when clients had booked her in advance. Some have offered to pay her double to come in for a service.

“People are feeling lost, and ugly. That little pick-me-up that they were able to do they can’t do now,” she says. “Self-care is such a powerful thing and not everyone knows how to do that for themselves.”

Hanna notes the less esthetic benefits of spa treatments such as pedicures. Someone with diabetes might come in regularly to have a pedicure to protect against ingrown toenails and infection.

“When I do things for myself, it doesn't matter what it is... I just feel good about myself and I am such a big believer in treating myself,” says Peterborough hairstylist Amanda Scouller.

Scouller has lifelong clients from when she started cutting hair at 16. She says they’ve been reaching out to tell her they miss her and it’s been hard not seeing them. Sentiments echoed by Hanna and McFadden.

“I have clients who come to me because they love getting their hair done but because we have the greatest conversations,” she says. “It’s not about vanity, it’s about being your best. When you look your best, you put out your best.”

Scouller and some friends were planning on getting dressed up and having a video call when This Week spoke with her.

“For me, and a lot of people I know, that’s a huge thing to just feel good in the skin that you’re in,” she says. “Still get dressed, still paint your nails, still turn on music, dance around. Do whatever it is you have to do to let loose and feel good.”

McFadden says she doesn’t have to be done up all day now that she’s staying home, but she does need to participate in things that make her feel good. She’s set up a space in her basement where she can workout and she’s keeping up with her fitness clients.

“[Staying home] might have been fun that first week, but after a few weeks in you start to feel that your missing and I think sometimes that motivation flips... I’m trying to be disciplined,” she says.

“To me physicality and mental health, it does go hand in hand because you can’t just sit and wallow you need to keep moving.”

CMHA recommends if you are feeling symptoms of anxiety in association with COVID-19 or otherwise are causing you significant distress or are interfering with your ability to function normally, [you should reach out to formal mental health supports.](#)