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Nail Salon Workers Project at Parkdale Queen West CHC: An example of community- driven public health

**Cate Ahrens, BES MEd
Jackie Liang
Neil Magtalas, BA
Victoria Arrandale, PhD ROH**

July 18, 2024 (Virtual)

Learning Objectives

At the end of this presentation, the audience will be able to:

- Recall hazards and health risks that nail salon technicians face at work
- Discuss challenges faced when working to reduce the impacts of hazards and health risks among nail salon owners and technicians
- Describe the range and scope of work supported by the Nail Salon Workers Project at the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
- Identify examples where Community Health Centers support public and occupational health through their programs

Employment and Disclosures

- CA is a Health Promoter at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
- JL is a Community Health Worker at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre who has worked as nail technician
- NM a recent graduate at York University and currently a volunteer Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
- VA is an Assistant Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (University of Toronto). VA is a member of the WSIB Scientific Advisory Table on Occupational Disease. VA holds grants/research support from Canadian Institutes of Health Research; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; Canadian Cancer Society; Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Ontario; WorkSafeBC

The New York Times

UNVARNISHED

Articles in this series are examining the working conditions and potential health risks endured by nail salon workers.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

RELATED COVERAGE



[Cuomo Orders Emergency Measures to Protect Workers at Nail Salons](#) MAY 11, 2015

CITY ROOM

Unvarnished Series on Nail Salon Workers: Readers Respond in English MAY 8, 2015



Something Rotten in New York City Nail Salons MAY 7, 2015

Be a Socially Conscious Nail tomer MAY 7, 2015

HEALTH

Your manicure looks beautiful. But the health effects are ugly

THE STAR

TORONTO STAR

Life · Health & Wellness

How to avoid nail salon health hazards

By **LAUREN PELLEY** Staff Reporter
Mon., Aug. 22, 2016

GTA

Alarming levels of hazardous chemicals found in some nail salons could impact workers, U of T study finds

The study is the first assessment of chemical exposures within these salons ever done in Canada.



By **Olivia Bowden** Staff Reporter
Mon., Feb. 14, 2022 | timer 6 min. read

Discount Nail Salons

Manicures, pedicures

- Cuticle cutting, nail cutting and filing
- Massage, moisturizing
- Polish application - traditional and shellac
- Artificial nail application - acrylic, gel and many new formulations
- Cleaning, disinfecting of equipment

Nail Salon Technicians

- Largely female, new to Canada, often racialized
- No licensing
- Often precariously employed (misclassification)
- Intersection of public (consumer) health and worker health

*Chemicals, Infectious diseases,
Vibrating tools, artificial UV lamps,
Repetitive tasks, awkward
postures, Rushing, client
expectations*

*Skin disease; Respiratory
problems; Adverse birth
outcomes;
Inconclusive results for cancer*

Poll

Which of the following provincial acts apply to nail salons in Ontario?

- A. Occupational Health and Safety Act
- B. Employment Standards Act
- C. Health Protection and Promotion Act
- D. None of the above apply to nail salons
- E. All of A, B and C apply to nail salons

Poll Follow-up

Nail salons are subject to rules and regulations at several levels of government

For example, in Toronto:

- Municipal
 - Business licensing requirements
 - Toronto Public Health Body Safe program
- Provincial
 - Occupational Health and Safety Act and associated regulations
 - Health Promotion and Protection Act, including personal services regulation
 - Employment Standards Act
- Also impacted directly by Federal-level chemicals management, WHMIS etc.

Community Organizing Common in this Space



C A L I F O R N I A
healthy nail salon
C O L L A B O R A T I V E

Liên Hiệp Ngành Móng Tay Lành Mạnh



MHNSC

Michigan Healthy Nail Salon Cooperative



**HEALTHY
NAIL SALONS
COALITION**
Dignity • Health • Justice



Safe Nail Salons



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

Toronto Healthy Nail Salon Coalition

- Originated at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre in 2013-2014
 - Client concern, health promoter initiative, community connections
- Now a multi-stakeholder group
- Goal: improve health and working conditions for nail technicians
- Support for many projects led by different groups



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QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre



HNSC has supported many projects, led by many different groups

- Building and Evaluating Resources for Peer-Led Workshops for Nail Salon Workers (skin, reproductive, musculoskeletal, respiratory)
- Delivering workplace health and safety education to nail salons
- Assessing occupational exposure in Ontario nail salons
- Nail technician survey in Toronto, Ontario
- Nail customer survey in Toronto, Ontario
- Building the Nail Technicians Network
- Supporting the Nail Technician Community During COVID
- Arts-based worker engagement

Not an exhaustive list!

Identified Opportunities

National

- Federal-provincial harmonization, and alignment with international best practices
- Updates to WHMIS and CMP, including improved enforcement

Provincial

- Increased enforcement of OHS in personal services settings
- Mandatory WSIB registration for PSS
- Improve clinical pathways for early detection and screening

Municipal

- Greater inclusion of workers and workplaces in public health activities

Community

- Develop voluntary certification programs
- Explore covenants and social dialogue approaches

Individuals

- Empower workers and customers to ask for safer products
- Support salon owners in maker safer choices

Nail Salon Worker Project



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- **Program aims:**
 - Increased OHS knowledge and behaviours
 - Increased public awareness
 - Increased regulatory protections
 - Increased structural supports
- **Program areas:**
 - Training and Capacity Building
 - Research
 - Policy Change and Advocacy
 - Partnership Building
 - Program Development
- **Community Engagement Approach:**

Public health
interventions
Public working
conditions

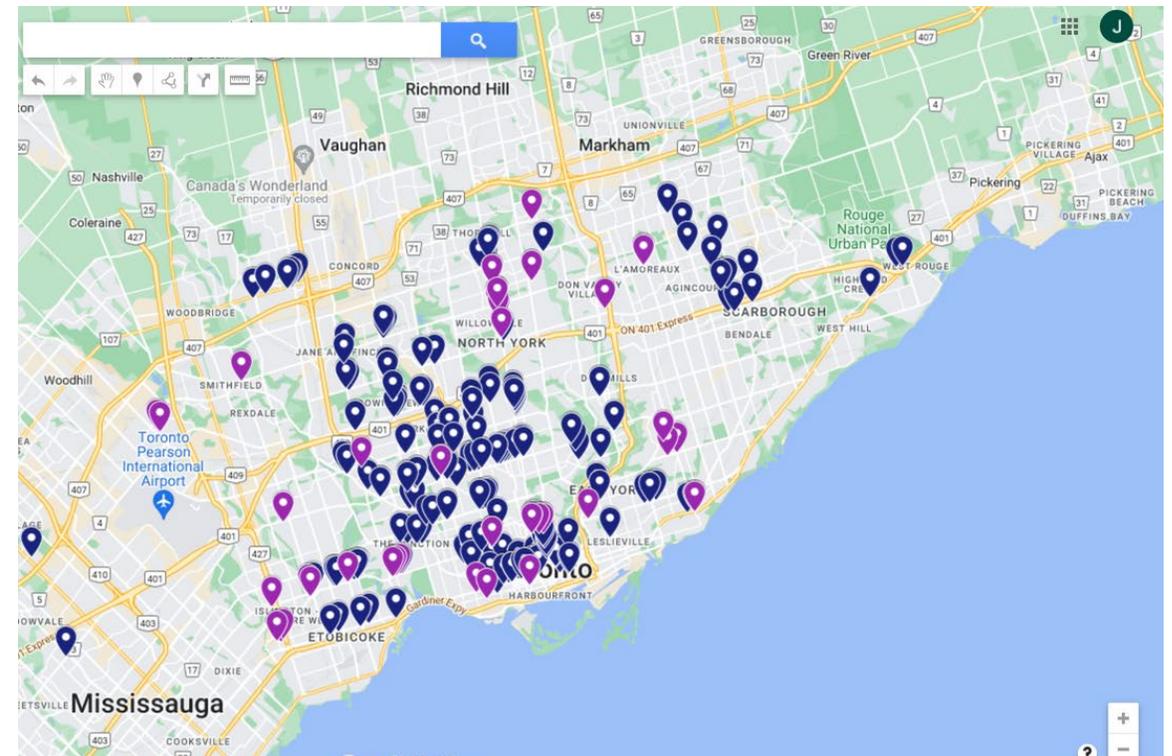


Photo credit:
J Liang

Improving Health and Safety Practices

- Outreach: In-person visits to nail salons
- Workshops: In salons, in-person, and online
- Sector-specific resources
- Arts-based projects
- Social events
- Research
- NEW – social media

PQWCHC Outreach Map 2023-4



258 Distinct Salons

373 Outreach Visits

Resources for Nail Salon Workers

- PQWCHC developed content together with researchers, clinicians and nail technicians

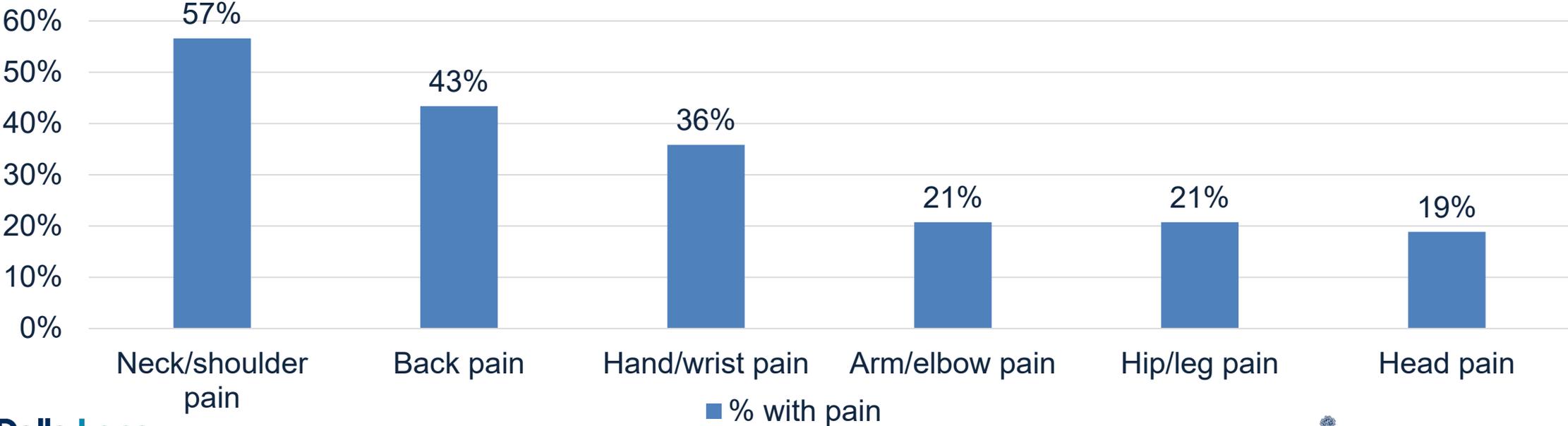
www.pqwchc.org/nails

- Materials accessible in hard copy and online in multiple languages
- First topic: Skin protection (2015-2016)
 - Evaluation at 6-months post workshop showed:
 - Increased awareness of risks; Increased knowledge and use of protective measures; Better understanding of health impacts



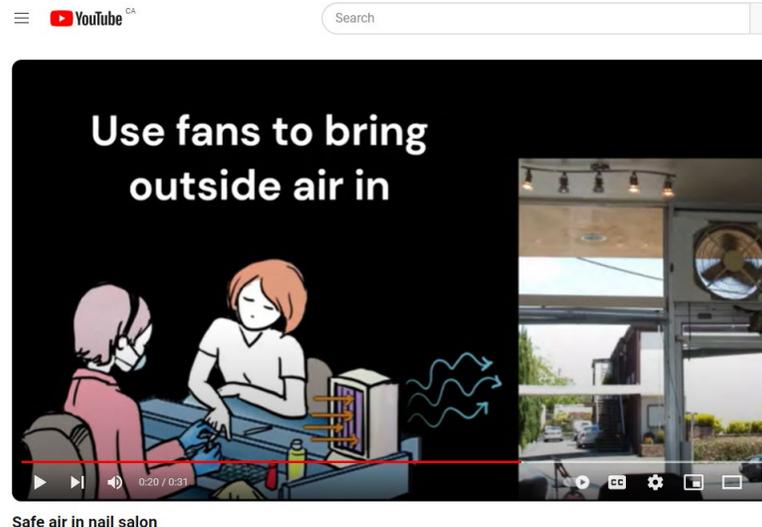
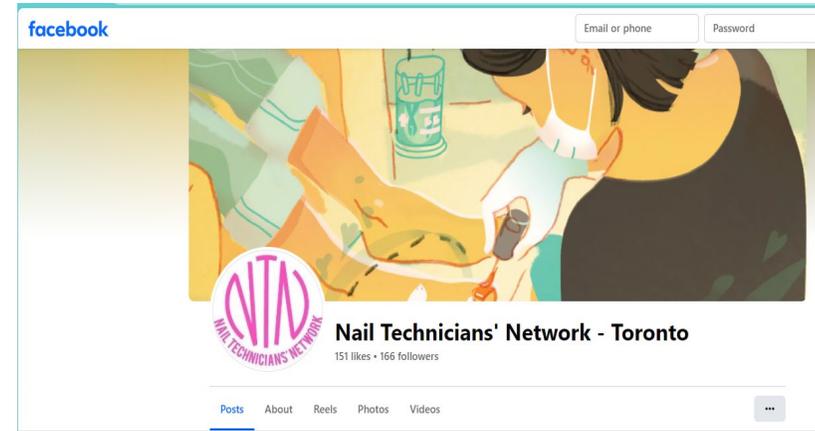
Workplace Exposure Study (2016-2018)

- 21 salons and 55 workers participated
- Chemicals (e.g., volatile organic compounds, including formaldehyde and acrylates)
- Ergonomic hazards using a checklist
- Job stress (job demands and job control)



Engagement Using Social Media (2023-4)

- Transforming health and safety resources into social media platforms
- Many challenges
- But some successes
- What we've heard so far



Arts-based Engagement (2023-4)



2024

Nail Technician's Network
Creating Space Project:
The Flavour of Life

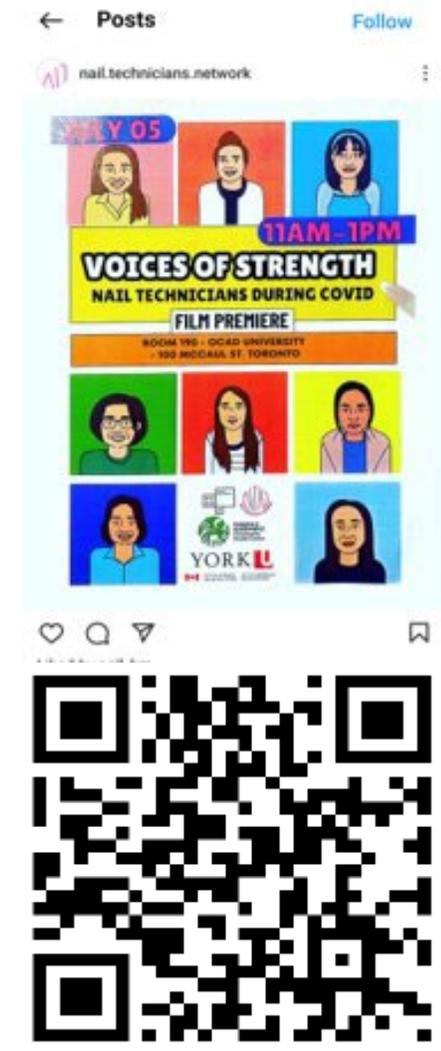
- The flavour of Life is the second phase of the Creating Space Project after the animation.
- Life is full of flavours, like sweet, sour, bitter, and spicy. The nail technicians will use the flavours of their life stories and working experiences to create an art piece - sharing successes, challenges, hopes, and dreams.
- The project will create opportunities for nail technicians to connect with the public about their work.

Why join ?

- **Honorarium will be provided for participating 5 in-person workshops from February to May.**
- **Participants will get 2 art training sessions by professional artists and students at OCAD University.**
- **Your art will be displayed at launch event.**

If you are interested, please register with Jackie: jliang@pqwchc.ca or 647-779-7666
Seon: 437-855-1023 (Korean)

Spaces are limited!



← Posts Follow

nail.technicians.network

MAY 05 11AM-1PM

VOICES OF STRENGTH
NAIL TECHNICIANS DURING COVID
FILM PREMIERE

ROOM 196 - OCAD UNIVERSITY
150 MCCOULL ST. TORONTO

YORK U
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



PQWCHC & COVID Supports for Nail Technicians

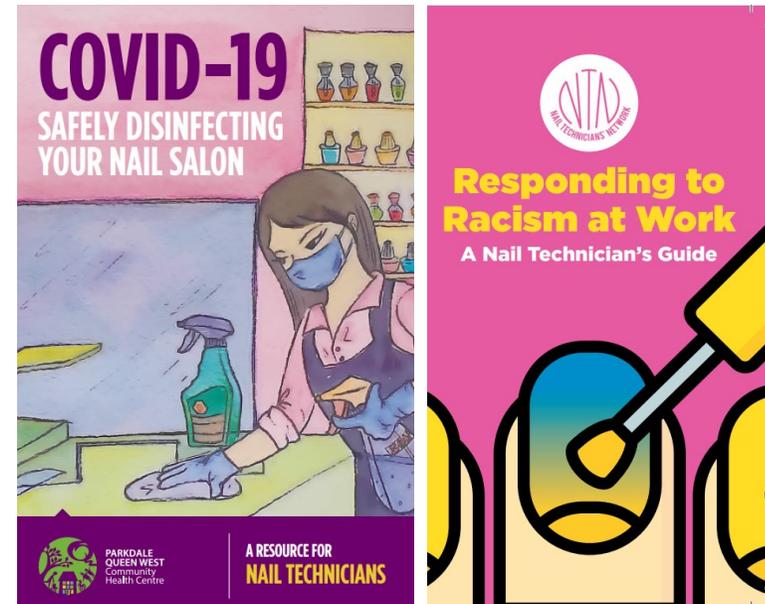
Strong community connection allowed for immediate actions

Shift in focus

- Online workshops
- Bridging between salons and TPH
- Safe re-opening workshops

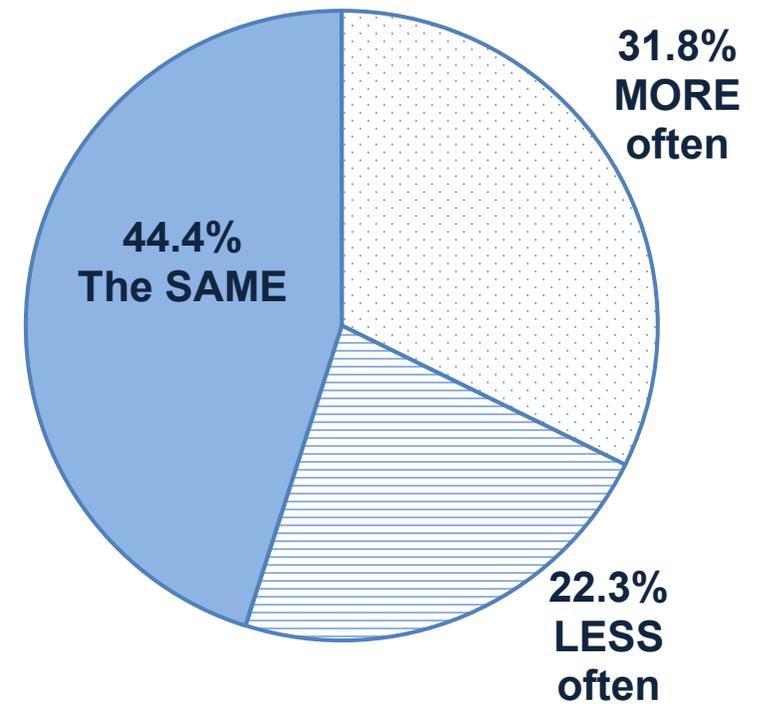
New Resources:

- Selection of disinfectants
- Anti-Asian racism
- Ventilation



Beyond Workers

- Focus to date has been largely on nail technicians
- But owners and customers also occupy these spaces
- 2023 survey of nail salon customers
 - Varied patterns in nail salon attendance but >75% were going the same or more often than before COVID
 - High satisfaction with air quality and cleanliness (>85%)
 - Low awareness of products marketed as "safer" (~20%)



What's Next?

- SSHRC funded Race, Gender and Diversity project
- Private foundation grants
- Institutionalized funding for filling the gaps

- Working to include nail technician, customer and owner perspectives
 - Design a campaign to increase knowledge and awareness, stimulate action

- Continuing to expand the ways we can support the community
- Identifying opportunities to improve policies impacting workers
- Expand the network of workers and supports



Photo credit: PQWCHC

Community Health Centres & Public Health

- CHCs have strong community relationships
 - Experienced in developing and maintaining these relationships
 - Experience in meeting people where they are
 - Ability to respond to gaps (e.g., harm reduction and dental)
- Difficult to reach new groups (not unique!)
- Willingness and desire to improve exists in the nail salon community



Photo credit: PQWCHC

Main Messages

- Together we are working to improve health and working conditions for nail technicians
- Work is an important determinant of health
- CHCs can support public and occupational health through their programs

Ways to Contribute as a Public Health Practitioner:

- Including community-based orgs in your practice;
- Advocate for leveraging existing community-based organizations and relationships to enhance public health outcomes
- Consider public health core competencies:
 - "Partnerships, Collaboration and Advocacy"

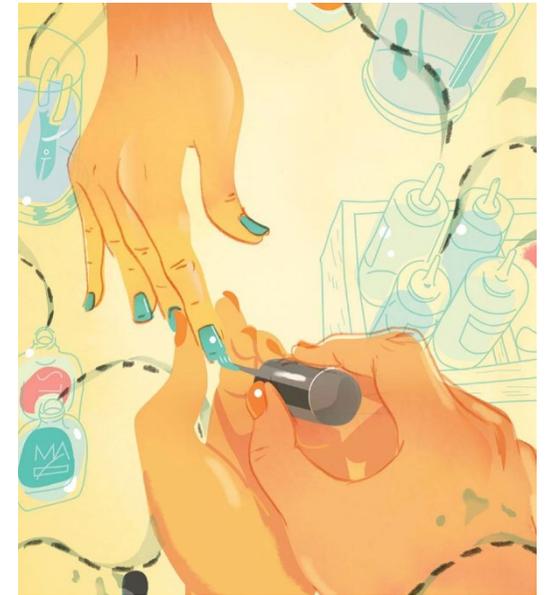


Photo credit: PQWCHC

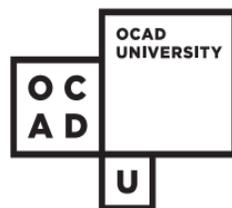
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For social and economic justice

YORK U



**METCALF
FOUNDATION**



Thank you