

Cares & Considerations

If you're new to psychedelics or new to Psychedelics In Recovery™ (PIR®), please read this document in its entirety. This is a living document.

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Preface

The information presented here is offered in the spirit of support and guidance. Psychedelics In Recovery™ claims no authority over how this information is used or interpreted. We share these ideas with humility, respect, and reciprocity in relation to all people seeking and finding recovery from addictions who may also seek guidance from psychedelic medicines, indigenous cultures and practices, 12-step lineage, and other resources. What is offered here is not intended as an endorsement of any person, organization, or institution.

Overview of Care & Considerations

This document is offered as a resource to assist with the productive use of psychedelics in any recovery process, including 12-step-based recovery. It is also meant to raise awareness around how psychedelic medicines are used and the ways such use may impact individuals and communities in the areas of physical, mental, social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual health and healing. In essence, this material is to reduce harm and restore healing when or if one chooses to integrate psychedelics as a tool into the process of recovery from addiction. Psychedelics In Recovery™ does not promote the use of psychedelics.

For Those New to Psychedelics

Psychedelic drugs, sometimes referred to as "entheogens" and "plant medicine," have unique and diverse qualities. First-time users may choose to approach these substances with caution to ensure a safe and productive experience when using these substances. Reading about psychedelic experiences, such as those posted and cataloged by drug at www.erowid.org might be a good place to start. Conversations with trusted friends who have had experiences with this class of drugs may also be useful and complement reading the research literature. Preliminary self-inquiry and preparation may also be important as we consider our intentions for deciding whether or not to consume these substances for our own recovery and personal growth. There is a trusted resource on "preparation" from tripsitters.org specific to psilocybin and generalizable to various psychedelic drugs. If you're new to using psychedelic drugs for therapeutic purposes, we urge you to look into all the elements that go into cultivating an optimal experience. There are ample resources online to help orient the newcomer. Also, see the "Resources" section below.

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Cares & Considerations (continued)

CARES

Set & Setting

The PIR® Literature states that "set and setting matter." The conscious and intentional use of psychedelics in a process of recovery is different from use of psychedelics for the purpose of satisfying a craving, escaping from pain, or avoiding life's many challenges. Set refers to one's state of mind, heart and soul when intending to use psychedelics. Setting refers to geography, environment, objects, music, other beings such as people, plants, animals, that make up the physical space in which a psychedelic experience may occur. Set and Setting can be thought of as the energy, time and space that surround an actual psychedelic experience or ceremony. Set and setting are considered vital components of the preparation and integration phases of psychedelic journeys.

Safety & Substance

Safety: The highest priority when integrating psychedelics into a recovery process. Safety is a primary tenet of harm reduction and a primary principle of recovery from trauma. Safety refers to the need for security so as to allow a psychedelic journey to be optimized. Physical, emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual safety is of utmost importance in both psychedelic journeys and participation in PIR® meetings in general as part of preparation and integration.

Substance: This refers to the need to know the substance one is considering ingesting. This is essential so as to increase the likelihood of a safe experience. We suggest learning about the source and purity of the substance, its strength and suggested dose. Prior experience with smaller doses of the substance may help when one is seeking to determine the amount to take for a deeper journey. We encourage a period of self-defined abstinence and emotional stability before engaging in this work. We recognize that various psychedelic experiences have helped dozens of PIR® members get and remain sober regardless of whether in active addiction or long-term recovery.

Structure & Support

Structure: This refers to the system or framework a person develops for the purposes of the preparation process, the experiential journey itself, and the continuous work of integration. Some activities for engaging in this work may include routine journaling, meditation, diet, exercise, and social connections (such as therapists, guides, friends, family, etc..).

Support: This is a core aspect of 12-step recovery and the intentional use of psychedelics as part of healing, growth, and ongoing recovery. New members are encouraged to work closely with a guide, coach, therapist or shaman (in-person, or over video/phone if necessary) or a trusted fellow in the program. Support systems may include individual therapy, group integration circles, recovery community, family, friends, church, etc... As with other 12-step fellowships, Psychedelics In Recovery™ is not a substitute for medical advice, however, we suggest that there are mental and physical health conditions that may be contraindicated when deciding to use psychedelic drugs. Therefore, in the case of uncertainty, we suggest seeking support from qualified health professionals trained in psychedelic research and therapy may help to minimize risk.

Spirituality & Sustainability

Spirituality: Psychedelic experiences and recovery share a common basis of spiritual awarenesses that result from both, which often leads to healing and growth. However, we also deeply consider our shared vulnerability for what has been called "spiritual bypassing".

Spiritual Bypassing - To spiritually bypass is to use spirituality to avoid, suppress, or escape from uncomfortable issues in life. Spiritual bypassing is similar to other forms of avoidance that rewards us with a false feeling of security and happiness, while undermining the deeper path to growth and transformation. While most of us are sincerely trying to work on ourselves, there is a tendency to use spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues and deep psychological wounds. Spiritual bypassing, if left unchecked, can be our greatest hindrance, preventing us from stepping into our authenticity and power. The reality for most of us is that the path to healing and transformation is not always pretty. It can also be the most shattering, tumultuous and challenging experience we can go through in life. Once we emerge from the embers of our destruction we may be reborn. We must have the courage to face our shadows and visit the places that frighten us.

Sustainability: PIR® is dedicated to the sustainability of the wisdom and health we have discovered and experienced through the combination of 12-step work and past, present, or ongoing psychedelic experience. Sometimes spiritual experiences can lead to self-aggrandizement based on spiritual insights and feelings of a deep connection with the divine. We must always remember that humility at all times is the foundation of any recovery process and healing practice. Grandiosity in the realm of the spirit is the greatest threat to our personal recovery and the greater healing community.

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CONSIDERATIONS

Endangered Sources of Psychedelic Substances

We strive to educate ourselves on the cultural and historical lineages of many of these medicines and we encourage other members of PIR® to become familiar with and to respect the wisdom and traditions from these historical roots and practices. Through this conscious use of healing medicines we hope to avoid a naive or exploitive appropriation of other cultures and worldviews even as we work to preserve those wisdom traditions and cultures. We also recognize that the source of some of these medicines, such as peyote and the "toad venom" of the Sonoran Desert Toad (Bufo Alvarius) are endangered and we need to do what we can to avoid adding a greater burden on those endangered species. Some of us have found synthetic 5-MEO-DMT a good alternative to the Sonoran Desert toad (Bufo Alvarius) and San Pedro a sustainable alternative to peyote. Considering alternatives to different psychedelic substances may allow these endangered species to once again flourish.

Legal Status

In most parts of the US and the world, these psychedelic substances remain illegal. Those using, possessing and distributing them are sometimes liable to severe prosecution. There could be legal ramifications for sitters or guides who provide psychedelics to others, especially if someone is injured under their care. Even after the approved medical use of psychedelics for various conditions and after some states or municipalities have decriminalized some psychedelic substances, there will continue to be legal risks to those who possess larger quantities of psychedelics, or those who distribute or administer psychedelic drugs to others.

Reminder of Risks and Research

PIR® aspires to minimize glorifying psychedelics and promoting them as a "magic pill" solution. These medicines can be a catalyst for spiritual growth if we do the work. PIR® sees our community and fellowship as a healing container for ongoing recovery with or without using psychedelics for personal or spiritual growth. Examples of "doing the work" may include working the 12-steps with a sponsor, working closely with a recovery coach, a regular meditation practice, healthy eating habits, participating in recovery meetings, goal setting, exercising, journaling, etc.

Risks: Some of us, however, have a history of mis-using these substances. While rare, some may develop an unhealthy relationship with psychedelics. Some of us have found ourselves using more and different types of psychedelic drugs, with increasing frequencies and in ways that may not be considered intentional or for healing purposes. Some may unwittingly be justifying pleasure-seeking solely from psychedelic drug experiences to the exclusion of other sources of joy and pleasure. As such, some may begin using them as a main source of entertainment, or escape routes from problems we wished to avoid. Such misuse can lead to unhealthy habits, or emotional or psychological dependence that, in turn, require treatment and/or abstinence from psychedelic drugs. Some of us have had to learn this lesson the hard way as we worked to transform our addictive tendencies or to improve our growth in recovery with the proper use of psychedelic medicines. In PIR® we encourage the spirit of humility, respect, and caution in the conscious and moderate use of psychedelics.

Research: We urge members to research any possible contraindications with various foods, medications, mental health issues, and medical conditions. We suggest people look into existing and ever expanding scientific research, trip reports, and community wisdom. Once again, for those who are taking psychiatric or other medications, or who have certain mental health or medical conditions, we strongly suggest speaking with a trusted licensed health practitioner before engaging with psychedelics. We suggest people do not wean themselves off psychiatric medications without consulting their prescribing health practitioner.

RESOURCES

PIR® does not endorse organizations, individuals, or specific practices when it comes to the use of psychedelics. Below is a list of publicly available resources related to psychedelics.

Chacruna Institute

https://chacruna.net/

Provides public education and cultural understanding about psychedelics and promotes a bridge between the ceremonial use of sacred plants and psychedelic science.

DanceSafe

https://dancesafe.org/

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Harm reduction and peer-based, popular education.

Erowid

http://www.erowid.org

A member-supported organization providing access to reliable, non-judgmental information about psychoactive plants, chemicals, and related issues.

Fireside Project

https://firesideproject.org

"To help people minimize the risks and fulfill the potential of their psychedelic experiences in ways such as providing compassionate, accessible, and culturally responsive peer support, educating the public, and furthering psychedelic research, while embracing practices that increase equity, power sharing, and belonging within the psychedelic movement."

Healing Maps (Set and Setting)

https://healingmaps.com/set-and-setting-psychedelics-meaning/?fbclid=IwAR2z6aXGNGombceizt6px4eJZH-0QcxxEpO4etkq_l-8NmYttdD_amItohw

Johns Hopkins Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research

https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/psychiatry/research/psychedelics-research.html

MAPS

https://maps.org/

Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research and educational organization that develops medical, legal, and cultural contexts for people to benefit from the careful uses of psychedelics and marijuana.

New York University Center for Psychedelic Medicine

https://med.nyu.edu/departments-institutes/psychiatry/research/center-psychedelic-medicine

Psychedelic.Support

https://psychedelic.support/

Directory of psychedelic providers, groups and accredited education.

Psychedelic Peer Support Line (Fireside Project)

https://firesideproject.org/psychedelic-peer-support-line

(623) 473-7433. People who think they may be having a medical emergency should call 911. "Offers free, confidential peer support by phone and text message to people in the midst of psychedelic experiences, people holding space for others who are in the midst of psychedelic experiences, and people integrating past psychedelic experiences."

PsychSitter

https://psychsitter.com/

Manual of Psychedelic Support. A comprehensive guide to setting up and running compassionate care services for people having difficult drug experiences at music festivals and similar events.

Spiritual Bypassing

https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-spiritual-bypassing-5081640#:~:text=%20Impacts%20%201%20Denying%20Difficult%20Emotions.%20People,feel%20as%20a%20result%20of%20cognitive...%20More%20

Tripsitters

https://www.tripsitters.org/

"Supporting you at every step of your psychedelic journey. Empowering you to make safe and well-informed decisions."

Sexual Abuse and Inappropriate Behavior

https://www.psychedelic-survivors.com/

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