

Psychedelic Practitioner Code of Conduct

Introduction

This code of conduct has been a collaborative effort by coaches, guides, clinicians, and therapists from all over the world who work in the psychedelic space.

The code mentions three groups of people: Practitioners, Guides, and Participants. Practitioner refers to professionals who work with people before and/or after the psychedelic experience, but not necessarily during the experience itself. Guide refers to someone who facilitates the psychedelic experience for a Participant, and might also offer services for before and after the experience. Practitioners can be Guides and vice versa, however we believe that each role holds distinct requirements in terms of training, experience, skills, and conduct, hence why we make the distinction. Participant refers to the person that has entered into a contract with the Practitioner or Guide.

The intention for this code is to highlight best practices for Practitioners and Guides working in the psychedelic space. It can also be used by Participants and any interested parties associated with them, in order to inform their decision-making around contracting with Practitioners and Guides.

This code is an evolving document and will grow as our field grows. If you have any comments about this code we would love to hear from you (lead author: Liam Farquhar, hello@brighterpathways.co)

Code of Conduct

1. Practitioners and Guides are aware of the legal status of psychedelics in their country. If they choose to recommend other Practitioners, Guides, and/or retreats, such service providers should be safe and vetted by the Practitioners and Guides, and they make it clear that the decision lies solely with the Participant, and that ultimately the Participant is responsible for their own safety.
2. If Practitioners and Guides decide to take it into their own hands to screen Participants with regards to their suitability of working with psychedelic substances, the Practitioners and Guides ensure that the screening is current, and is informed and updated by the latest research available. This screening will assess the mental, physical, and emotional state of the Participant, including any contraindications. Practitioners and Guides will ensure that the Participant is in a suitable position to have a psychedelic experience, and that there is appropriate support available to the Participant before, during, and after the psychedelic experience. If Practitioners and Guides do not have access to the relevant skills and experience needed to offer appropriate screening, or do not have access to a robust screening process that has

been qualified by a specialist, or if they have any doubts about the Participant's suitability, then they will refer the Participant to a specialist.

3. Practitioners and Guides honestly disclose the risks and benefits of intentional psychedelic experiences. They are open and honest about the nature of transformation, and never propose a treatment to a diagnosis. If medical advice is required, then Practitioners and Guides will encourage Participants to seek the support of a medical professional.
4. Practitioners and Guides offer clear terms of agreement (written or verbal) that include at least payment, services offered, and details of individual expectations and responsibilities regarding the psychedelic aspect of the work (e.g. is the Participant responsible for sourcing the psychedelic experience and/or psychedelic substance, or will there be assistance from the Practitioner or Guide). However, Practitioners and Guides understand that the psychedelic process is unpredictable by its nature, and so they remain open and flexible with their contracting in order to meet any specific needs that may evolve as a result of the Participant's experience. If the needs of the Participant changes at any time, Practitioners and Guides are open and willing to make referrals to other specialists.
5. Practitioners and Guides maintain that the Participant is their own expert, and is responsible for realising their own goals, be it learning, growth, healing, or transformation. Practitioners and Guides serve to support this process, not to direct it.
6. Practitioners and Guides disclose the extent of their training, are aware of their limitations, and are prepared to offer a referral to other specialists where appropriate. Practitioners and Guides maintain a relevant and vetted referral network to this end.
7. Practitioners and Guides maintain clear, appropriate, and culturally-sensitive boundaries that include, but are not limited to, avoiding any sexual or romantic engagements with Participants, which applies to both physical and virtual interactions.
8. Practitioners and Guides understand the potential for the heightened suggestibility of Participants, especially during and immediately after the psychedelic experience, and therefore make careful considerations around consent. Practitioners and Guides are mindful that there is an increased chance of intensified transference and countertransference at work in the professional dynamic, and understand the implications of this, especially when working with high dose psychedelic experiences.
9. Practitioners and Guides establish and maintain privacy and confidentiality, and will only share information with their supervisor in a way that protects the Participant's anonymity. Participants will be informed on how their data is treated, and will be informed that professional consultation about their case may occur. Practitioners and Guides will never disclose personal information without the Participant's consent, unless there are valid exceptions for breaking confidentiality (e.g. if the Participant or a third party is deemed at risk of harm).
10. Practitioners and Guides attempt to remain philosophically and spiritually open and neutral, unless they are offering a service that expressly works within a particular cultural or ideological framework. Practitioners and Guides should refrain from imposing their own personal ideological beliefs, and only share their point of view if and when the Participant requests it.
11. Practitioners and Guides ensure that there is space to consider the health and safety of the Participant, making sure that the Participant will be safe and supported throughout the psychedelic process - before, during, and after. This should include an emergency plan with clear steps in the case that there is a medical emergency.

12. Practitioners and Guides offering services involving psychedelics understand the benefits of having had personal experience with expanded states of consciousness (as induced by psychedelics, but also breathwork, meditation, ecstatic dance, etc.). Practitioners and Guides understand that the Participant can have a range of potential experiences, be they mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, relational, and/or environmental. However, Practitioners and Guides don't assume that their own experiences with expanded states of consciousness or specific substances will necessarily be aligned with the Participant's experience.
13. Practitioners and Guides commit to ongoing personal and professional growth, including training, self-care, self-reflection, and work to become aware of their unconscious material and biases. Practitioners and Guides understand the benefits of having ongoing peer group support, and Practitioners and Guides who support Participants with psychedelic experiences are committed to ongoing and regular supervision (at least 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours of practice).
14. Practitioners and Guides commit to the ethical promotion of their services. They don't exaggerate claims about the benefits of psychedelics, nor do they make promises or offer guarantees about results. Practitioners and Guides are mindful that results from scientific studies mostly involve 'psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy' protocols within a clinical context, and therefore may not be representative of the general population or applicable to the context of the Participants. Further, in line with this, Practitioners and Guides don't target vulnerable or desperate groups and individuals and always work within the limits of their skills, training and experience.
15. Practitioners and Guides working with high dose psychedelic experiences understand the inherent psychological nature of such experiences, and understand the benefits of having a solid theoretical and practical awareness of relevant therapeutic models and/or psychological frameworks, such as a working understanding of the psyche, the unconscious, and trauma, as psychedelics have the ability to surface hidden material from the mind and body into conscious awareness.
16. Practitioners and Guides understand that being grounded, present, and having mind, body, and heart in alignment is especially beneficial when working with expanded states of consciousness, and hence commit to ongoing and regular continued personal and professional development.
17. Practitioners and Guides commit to an evidence-informed approach wherever possible, especially with regards to safety. However, Practitioners and Guides also appreciate that the research is still emerging, whereas psychedelics have a long tradition in indigenous and other non-clinical traditions. Practitioners and Guides therefore honour and respect the potential to learn from such communities and that such knowledge may not be reflected in the research.
18. Practitioners and Guides are committed to generously sharing best practices, resources, and learnings with others in the field.
19. Practitioners and Guides take on the responsibility to hold other Practitioners and Guides accountable who have subscribed to this code of conduct.