



 EntheoNation

PSYCHEDELIC INTEGRATION CAREER GUIDE



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About the Authors

Leia Friedman

Leia Friedman loves to connect the dots as a coach, teacher, writer, and permaculturist. Born and raised in Lowell, MA, Leia obtained her master's degree in Clinical Psychology and worked as an in-home therapist before psychedelics turned her world inside out. She is now a psychedelic integration facilitator, a trainee in restorative and transformative approaches to conflict, and host of a podcast called [The Psychedologist: consciousness positive radio](#).



Leia has written for Wiley Encyclopedia, Psymposia, Lucid News, and DoubleBlind on topics relating to consciousness through the lens of social and environmental justice. You can find her teetering on a slack line in Costa Rica, up to her elbows in dirt from working in the garden, or nose in her laptop, grading papers for her psychology students.

Lorna Liana

Lorna Liana is the founder of EntheoNation, a psychedelic media company, and the Plant Spirit School, an educational platform offering workshops, courses, and programs for people interested in exploring psychedelics and plant medicines safely and with integrity.

Since 2003, she's attended plant medicine ceremonies with 30+ different shamans and facilitators, 7 indigenous tribes, several Brazilian churches, and a host of neo-shamanic circles, in Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Europe, the US, and Asia.

With over 25+ years of psychedelic experience, Lorna tracks the developments in the Psychedelic Renaissance and global expansion of plant medicines through extensive research and interviews with thought leaders in the field.



Introduction

Are you considering a career in the psychedelic sector? The psychedelic renaissance is upon us, and it's not going anywhere. More people than ever before are embarking on journeys with entheogenic plants, fungi, and substances. While each person's experience is unique, most journeyers will benefit from doing some integration work after.

This guide will take you through the steps to becoming a psychedelic integration specialist, from training through to hosting your own integration circles or sessions.

A Unique Career Opportunity

Over 32 million people in the United States have tried psychedelics. The market for the psychedelic industry is projected to reach over \$10 billion by 2027. Upwards of 2,000 psychedelic clinics are expected to open in the coming years.

As more and more people seek out psychedelic sessions, ceremonies, and retreats, the demand for psychedelic integration providers grows.

When it comes to healing and transformation, one of the most important aspects of psychedelic healing work is the post-session or ceremony integration period. During this phase many people return to their lives, yet discover that their problems haven't gone away; negative behavior patterns re-establish themselves, and self-limiting beliefs continue to haunt them.

The afterglow period following a psychedelic journey is an opportune time for people to integrate new insights, beliefs, and behaviors. But, without accountability and the support of a coach or therapist, many people fall back into old habits.

Furthermore, the global pandemic has ballooned humanity's global mental health crisis, resulting in increased demand for psychotherapy services worldwide, and long waiting lists for qualified therapists of all specialties.

The current demand for psychedelic integration therapists and coaches vastly outpaces the supply of trained, qualified practitioners. This is where YOU come in.

What is Psychedelic Integration?

Integration is the process of weaving the insights and wisdom of altered consciousness experiences into one's daily life.

Integration takes all different shapes and forms. Being an integration facilitator is about holding a container for the person's inner wisdom and healing capacity to emerge, be explored and understood, and implemented in their life. There are two primary professional routes for offering this service: as a therapist, and as a coach.



The Difference Between a Coach and a Therapist

What's the difference between a psychedelic integration coach and a psychedelic integration therapist? Let's start with what they share in common. In some cases, their work might look identical. As there are presently no standardized guidelines for facilitating psychedelic integration, a coach and a therapist may have a lot of the same techniques in their tool belt. There are, however, differences between what responsibilities, training, and scope of practice each one has.

Psychedelic Coaches

A coach helps people reach specific, measurable goals. In the context of integration, the client's goal might be to process the psychedelic experience(s) they had and get support on weaving those insights into their daily life. Some integration coaches help clients prepare for their journey, through intention setting, preparing the body, mind, and the space, and harm reduction such as advising about testing substances, dosage, and emergency interventions to have on hand. The coach can be a source of information, resources, accountability, and support; an objective person to help with the process; and so much more.

Coaches have all different levels and types of education they've attained. A coach may have a college degree, or they may draw their expertise from having been through the school of life.

Many coaches go through a program to teach them how to be a good coach. While therapists have a licensure board and ethical code to comply with, there is no overarching regulatory body that oversees the work of coaches. Several private and nonprofit institutions have attempted to regulate their style of coaching with a standard for the select group of coaches/schools who choose their guidelines and/or pay the required fees associated.

As coaching is an unregulated field, it is critical that coaches be engaged in a community of practice where they can access peer supervision and mentorship from seasoned practitioners.

We recommend all coaches understand and choose the type of education they want to receive and the type of coaching they want to do over any type of certificate.

An integration coach cannot help people by diagnosing and treating mental conditions such as depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, etc. This is the work of a therapist.

Several coaching certification programs exist, including those with specializations in psychedelic integration coaching. These are listed at the end of this eBook.

Psychedelic Therapists

Most therapists must satisfy certain requirements in order to practice therapy. This is defined by the laws that govern where they are practicing therapy.

In the US, therapists are granted licensure by their state. They have completed a doctoral degree such as a Ph.D. or Psy.D., or in some states, a master's degree such as a M.S., M.A., MSW, LCMHC, MFT, and more. The master's degree must be in something related to mental health, and then they pursue whatever their state/country requires for licensure (a specific number of hours of supervised internship, certain courses, passing a test, etc.). A Ph.D. or Psy.D. takes more time (5-7 years) than a Master's degree (2-3 years), but it can allow for more professional mobility and opportunities, and may come with more advanced training. Check what is required of a practicing therapist in the place where you live.

A therapist is trained in one or more specific modalities for helping people with psychological problems. Specialization in transpersonal psychology, nondual psychotherapy, psychodynamic therapy, and/or trauma healing modalities (such as EMDR) will form a strong framework for a therapist to support clients in psychedelic integration.

Some therapists have a specific population that they specialize in, such as survivors of trauma, folks who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, neurodivergent individuals, couples, etc. Therapy can be ongoing, or short term.

The Showdown: Coaching vs Therapy

While you may be weighing out which route is best for you, consider the fact that coaches, therapists and other types of practitioners are ALL needed in this burgeoning psychedelic renaissance.

Kile Ortigo, PhD, clinical psychologist, certified psychedelic psychotherapist, and author shares that:

"Making generalizations about coaches versus therapists is rife with problems since there's such diversity within each of these larger buckets of professional identities and approaches. When you work with a licensed therapist, you have some guarantee about their minimal qualifications, training, continuing education requirements, and supervised experiences. But a license doesn't guarantee the quality of the work or match with your specific needs. Because it's an unregulated title and market, 'coaches' come from an even wider range of training backgrounds and perspectives, so you'd need to do more leg work to clarify their level of expertise in any given area..."

"Other disciplines are important to consider too with psychedelic care – chaplains, spiritual caregivers, indigenous healers (such as curanderas/curanderos, ayahuasqueras/ayahuasqueros), psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, public educators, community peer support programs, etc. There's enough need out there for everyone to find a role to play if they're passionate about healing and supporting others. Access to quality care is a real problem, even with traditional mental health care, but if we all work together, we can offer more people more options for addressing their particular needs."

As we collectively create this new paradigm, you might be curious to learn what existing psychedelic integration coaches and psychedelic integration therapists have to say about their work, and the pros and cons of being one or the other:


Some aspiring psychonauts may need therapy, others coaching and still others may need both. A coach offers peer-level support to the client in finding their own path, with an experiential understanding of the psychedelic process, without the legal constrictions. Furthermore, therapy is traditionally cognitive while coaches tend to address restoring embodiment prior to and post- experience utilizing other methods. Many times therapists do not have the experience a coach has, the coach might not have the formal education a therapist has. As a coach, I listen and reflect in terms of the clients negotiating the possible options toward their roadmap toward reclaiming presence and the joy of every day living.

Like · Reply · 1d



I'm a coach, and a lot of people I see end up going on to get a therapist, which is a great handoff! To address your first point I think the advantage is that I feel a lot more free than most therapists to bring in somatic/trauma/spiritual/outside resources and what I do is inherently a bit more fluid than standard talk therapy. I generally don't work with changing long-term behavioral patterns as I see that to be something that therapists are more qualified to do, but I can much more easily bring in a tripart mind/body/spirit approach. And I definitely think that coaches (and therapists, and, well, literally everybody) should be trauma-informed.

I used to feel a lot more insecure about being a guide and a coach while not being a therapist, but it's become so clear to me that even though there might be some occasional overlap these are fundamentally different jobs that require different skill sets. It's pretty clear for me now to see where the line is between what I am capable of doing and what a therapist should handle, and vice versa.



The short version of my perspective is this: coaching integration is aimed at providing practical tools for inviting a peak experience into daily life, service, self-love, relationships, communication. Coaching tools are very powerful in this regard. Psychoanalysis and other types of therapy are great for diving deep and understanding unconscious or even historical patterns that might exist within us. However, not all therapy can provide tools or is aimed at providing tools as much as it is designed to provide insights and understanding. I will caveat that a really good therapist is equipped with practical tools for application of insights as well as the power to evoke these insights from a client. On the same token, a really good coach will be able to help someone achieve some insights as well as design a plan that's proactive and supported to invite these insights into daily awareness and life practices. In my coaching, I support people to design lives that bring their insights into bloom. For those of my clients who are struggling with insights or historic trauma patterns I invite them to seek other therapeutic services that might help them understand themselves more deeply. I also assist my clients with some self discovery. Ultimately I'm transparent about the goals I have for my client which is to learn the skills to cooperate with other humans and cooperate with our true selves. As a coach, I'm transparent about the fact that I have an agenda which is global and collective healing. For those clients that are interested in these goals are interested in applying their insights toward that end, I'm a great fit. However, I may not be a great fit for everyone.

What can equip a coach to work ethically? Peter Gulka, psychedelic preparation and integration peer coach, says that ideally *everyone* would be trauma informed. “We have 8 billion people sharing a collective trauma and we are all woefully uneducated on what trauma is and how to recognize its effects. Coaches can be leaders in stepping into that space and saying ‘this is something I need to do my work better.’ That being said, I am mindful of the overwhelming volume of people who could benefit from some sort of connection with a coach or therapist, and lack of that specific training should not preclude one human connecting with another human.”

Gulka recommends that coaches look into an ICF-certified coaching credential, psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy training, and sitting with indigenous elders local to one's community to learn from their wisdom and gain experience in how they work with people in expanded states of consciousness:

“Any coach who says ‘I know all I need to know. I don’t need anymore training’ is behaving unethically and performing their work from a place of ego. If I ever get to that point, it’s time for me to go back into my own work much more deeply and explore why I feel I need that external scaffolding to feel safe. ‘Why am I afraid to feel that I have more to learn?’”

Since all coaching work is unregulated and anyone can legally call themselves a coach, is it ethical for these people to do integration work with folks who may have past trauma, psychological disorders, who are in a vulnerable state following a psychedelic experience?

Rafael Lancelotta, M.S. says the short answer is no:

“When I think of coaching, I think that it’s appropriate for clients who are already reasonably high functioning, and who specifically need someone who is going to challenge them in certain ways, be able to bounce ideas off of, someone who can be in more of a mentor role. A counselor works with vulnerable populations, often times people who are in a delicate realm of functioning. Counselors and social workers require thousands of hours of work under supervision to acquire their license to learn how to think critically as to how to best serve these particular populations...”

"In some cases, it might be ethical for a coach to support people in their integration process: is the coach someone who has had trauma training, and served clients who've experienced trauma under supervision? Are they capable of ruling out certain mental health conditions that are outside their scope of practice? Are they aware of the various levels of care that a client might require, and how to connect their clients to those different levels of care appropriately? These are skills, among many others, I don't believe most coaches or most people who have not gotten formal training as counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, or psychologists. If you haven't worked in that process before and you haven't been trained in seeing that through, I think that you are operating outside of your scope."

The support of a coach can be beneficial to anyone, however clients with specific diagnoses should probably seek more tailored forms of care as well, such as working with a licensed mental health professional who is familiar with psychedelics and how they work as part of personal growth processes. It's important to know your scope as an integration provider, and it is difficult to know what you don't know. When in doubt, consult or refer out.

Martha Hammel, M.S., CNS, integration coach and educator offers a parallel from the healthcare field:

"Most people would benefit from the support of a health coach: for example, to help them eat more vegetables, drink more water, improve sleep quality, and/or reduce alcohol consumption. Some people have more complicated conditions, and so they need more advanced care, such as from a nutritionist, nurse, or doctor. The more training a professional has, the more expensive they are, and the less time you'll get with them. A health coach is able to give clients the most time, for the least amount of money."

Hammel believes that the ideal way to structure the psychedelic integration industry is for practitioners to have access to mentorship. "In healthcare, as a nutritionist, I know my scope, and I know what I can and can't treat. Becoming an integration coach, I recognized the same need to be able to recognize my scope and set up stronger referral networks and partnerships for when an integration client feels outside of my depth."

The coaching field offers people the option of becoming a professional without having a degree; this may be a step in the direction of class justice and increased career accessibility. "There are a lot of profoundly excellent healers who are taught from their own experience and from the medicines directly," adds Hammel.

Challenges Faced by Integration Coaches

Coaching people through their integration process can be extremely fulfilling (and demanding) work. What do integration coaches and practitioners have to say about some of the struggles they have run into?

- dealing with trauma that occurred during ceremony held by people with inadequate training and experience
- dealing with people who are avoiding facing and feeling challenging and uncomfortable material from within their own unconscious, who are instead projecting onto the practitioners, accusing them of not having adequate training and experience.
- managing the fact that it's hard to tell the difference between the above two points is the biggest challenge, though not insurmountable.

Like · Reply · 1w



My biggest challenge is doing my own work and being empty myself so I can remove as much of my ego as possible when working with clients and just see them directly and see all the possibilities but also work according to their timeline, not to hurry the work, and not to attach myself to anything triggered inside myself by our conversations. My integration work with clients is always my own personal work, and I always thank clients for the opportunity to share these experiences together.

Like · Reply · 1w · Edited



One of my biggest challenges is working through client's attachments to an experience. Helping them realize the integration is working through all aspects that arise from the experience, including any attachment to it. To guide them on their own learning journey so that they discover themselves, in their own way.. Also, working with people who are more focused on the "scene" and "becoming" someone in that scene, rather than the deep internal work. It's slow, steady work, to point them back to the lessons internally, rather than the external appearances that are present in the ever-increasing popular psychedelic/plant medicine world.

Love · Reply · 1w



I haven't really begun advertising much yet. I tend to mostly get crisis-oriented client referrals from my community. Often they are very symptom-focused and resistant to leaning into the core emotional content that's been stirred up.

Like · Reply · 1w



My biggest challenge is when they receive messages from the medicine, and during ceremony they are excited and willing to follow the learning - and then life sinks in and they battle between the old way and the new way - so guiding them to trust and let go of old, so they can fully step into the new. Here is my site if there are any questions! <https://www.spiritualalliance.ca>

Letting go of my desire to "help" to make space for deeper listening.

Like · Reply · 1w · Edited





I'm a mental health therapist and incorporate plant medicine integration in therapy. I would say the hardest thing is getting clients to slow down. They want to jump from journey to journey without taking the time to integrate. Helping them slow down and do the work is vital but they don't always want to.

Like · Reply · 1w



I am a medicine woman first, but i have a real passion as an integration specialist as well. To me its as important as the plant medicine experience itself. Biggest challenges would be getting people to do their integration with me post ceremony. Until the shit hit the fan, then they reach out. But also some are timid and don't realize i am here to help connect the dots in afterwards. Its always divine. I trust their unique process.

Like · Reply · 1w



As a business coach who helps my clients start and grow Psychedelic Integration Coaching businesses (and other Psychedelic businesses), there are many issues that people come to me with...here are some: how to start this business and get systems and processes set up the right way, how an integration coaching businesses actually support them, lots of people don't think they need "integration" so how do I get clients, how do I grow and market myself, belief in themselves because they don't feel ___ enough to do this, and sooooo much more.

Like · Reply · 1w





[Redacted Name]

Biggest challenges as an integration coach?

I train and certify amazing coaches in NLP and non-ordinary states of consciousness, including psychedelics and integration. The biggest challenges I see in my training participants are the limiting beliefs that block them, most rooted in areas they are not yet loving themselves. The heart of all challenges is US, our beliefs in ourself (or lack thereof) and the amount of love and compassion we give ourselves (or don't).

The amazing thing is we always attract clients who are mirrors for us. And with awareness and attunement, we can achieve incredible growth THRU our clients.

And the challenges I see in my training participants are the same things in coaching clients...and the same things people learn in their journeys.

When people choose NOT to do the integration/coaching work, it is a sign they are not aligned or committed to themselves. Then there are deeper beliefs running underneath all of that, and we unearth those so people can truly show up and live their lives.

All layers of the onion!

Like · Reply · 1w



[Redacted Name]

One of my biggest challenges is people relating to the value of integration support. Whether it's plant medicine work or other forms of transformational journeys. While awareness for sure has picked up more the challenge of relatability to its value still remains for some, possibly those initially venturing into this work.

Like · Reply · 1w · Edited



Working Within the Confines of the Law

In most countries, psychedelics are still controlled substances whose use is prohibited and criminalized. From a harm-reduction perspective, giving people access to information about the risks and realities of their choices is often safer than an abstinence-only or prohibition approach.

Both therapists and coaches can work to help people stay safer and reduce risk in their choices.

Due to the present illegality of psychedelics in most places, coaches who have been certified by a nationally or internationally recognized coaching organization may jeopardize their certification status by openly working in the psychedelic sector.

Licensed therapists who are found to be endorsing or supplying illegal substances run the risk of losing their psychotherapy license. If a client were to experience harm, the therapist could be implicated for advocating the psychedelic use.

In general, coaches may have more leeway to advise their clients on matters directly related to psychedelics, because they are not beholden to the requirements of a licensure board.



Is Experience with Psychedelics Essential?

A medical doctor doesn't have to try a medication before they prescribe it to someone (although, maybe in some cases they should?). While going to therapy is not a requisite for being a therapist, many therapists are also clients. Could someone be a great psychedelic integration provider if they have not experienced psychedelics themselves? The general response is no, with a few caveats...

The question here is really about the value of experiential education. Some folx are strictly comfortable with didactic theoretical knowledge while others will only trust experience. Hopefully we all find a balance. For me that balance is heavily weighted on the side of experience.

Like · Reply · 1d



Is athletic experience necessary to be an athletic coach? To be fair coaching counseling, and teaching by themselves are critical skills in order to hold the space, recognize the process of others, and impart the customized advice guidance and direction tailored to that learner.

Psychedelic experiences, by their nature, are so outside of our typical experiences and perceptions, that it would be very difficult to help someone understand their experiences and actually guide someone through it without significant experience in exploring psychedelics themselves. The best one could do would be to hold the traveler in sacred space and let them know they are supported.

Like · Reply · 5d



I wouldn't say it's not necessary for psychedelic therapy but I would *lean* yes for integration work... in many ways the work is mostly about how you make meaning of a powerful experience, whether it's a difficult or joyous one... trauma therapists do that all day, help clients make meaning of often very Big life changing experiences 🧘

Like · Reply · 5d · Edited



Absolutely ! Some things need to be experienced, in order to be truly understood.

Offering psychedelic integration without having extensively journeyed yourself would be like being a psychotherapist without ever having explored your own psyche in psychotherapy.

You cannot guide people anywhere you haven't been yourself... at least not without many harmful limitations.

Like · Reply · 5d · Edited



Yes. The psychedelic experience cannot be taught. It has to be experienced to be understood. It's a phenomenological journey.

Like · Reply · 5d



My biggest question would be if they haven't taken them but want to guide clients using them in their practice is why not? What benefit, protection, or ethics do they believe they're maintaining by not experiencing them directly? Going back to the mountain guide analogy, I could hire someone that studied summiting Everest exhaustively for decades, crawling over and documenting every single account, studying maps, looking at aerial footage and videos, but it is a radically different thing if you have felt your crampons slipping on ice, and know what it feels like to be breathing so hard in dangerously thin air you think you're going to vomit your stomach out on the slope right there before you collapse. Being able to have the confidence of having traversed that, returning in a healthy, even better state than before, and being able to convey that assurance and advice for how to navigate it is what makes a guide valuable, in great measure, I believe. There is a measure and nuance to convey that is almost exhaustively irreproducible in written accounts.

Like · Reply · 5d · Edited




Absolutely! ... the altered and expanded states of consciousness elicited by Psychedelics can be very strange and terrifying for some people and ideally anyone providing integration services should be well versed with different Psychedelics and their respective effects.

Although Psychedelics can help to heal unresolved trauma and other issues their real power is making psychologically healthy and whole people more self-aware and ultimately better versions of themselves which will help to inhibit and deter the trauma we unknowingly inflict upon ourselves, each other and this planet.

Like · Reply · 5d · Edited






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████████████████████

I know a few people who have never touched psychedelics, but have been around them enough, and have the counseling skills to do an excellent job, but they're really really really rare




Like · Reply · 5d

  4
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████████████████████

Not just the experience. Successful integration as well. If I can't change my own behavior, I have no business advising others.

Like · Reply · 4d


  5
- 

████████████████████

It should certainly be allowed! - the issue I keep seeing is that providers are physically restricted from having experiences, and those who do are breaking rules to do so.

I agree that having experience is deeply important and helpful, but more than being a requirement, it can not be a reason for disqualification.

Like · Reply · 5d

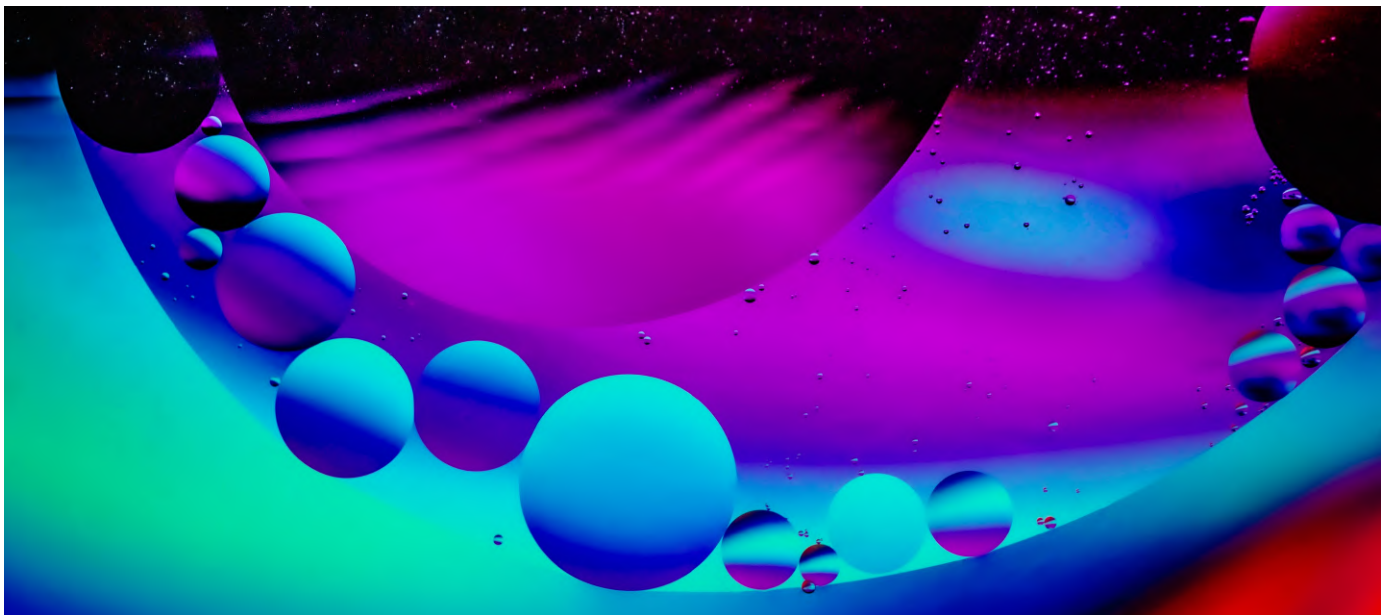
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Requiring practitioners to have psychedelic experience in order to facilitate psychedelic integration presents an accessibility issue. Psychedelics are not necessarily safe and/or healthy for everyone, not to mention legally available. Indeed, some medical and psychological conditions preclude people from being able to take psychedelics without substantial risk.

Experiences in altered states of consciousness can expose people to the parts of themselves that are important to recognize in order to provide the best care possible to clients. If a practitioner cannot journey with psychedelics, it's advised that they have their own experience successfully integrating altered states before they begin trying to help clients process their own psychedelic experiences.

Becoming an Integration Specialist

Still feeling interested in doing this work? Here is a possible road map of steps to take toward becoming a professional. Like psychedelic work, this process can be nonlinear so there is no absolute chronological order. However, I would suggest giving ample time and importance to each of the following points on your journey.



1) Assess your preexisting skills and abilities

All integration facilitators bring their own perspective and training to the work. They may also be or have been meditation teachers, yogis, religious/spiritual leaders, herbalists, ceremonialists, and more. There is no one right way to integrate, and so it will serve you well as a budding psychedelic integration specialist to recognize the skills, knowledge, and experience that you already have.

Kyle Buller of Psychedelics Today says, “if you want to be a psychedelic therapist/coach, start with the foundation of what you’re trying to offer, and then think of adding the psychedelic education as an adjunct to amplify what you’re doing. Become a good coach/therapist and then start adding on that additional education so you can serve that niche population.”

2) Find out what is required

If becoming a therapist is the route for you, find out how you can fulfill all the necessary licensure requirements to become a therapist in the place where you intend to practice. Several schools that offer training in therapeutic modalities which complement the psychedelic integration experience are listed at the end of this eBook.

If coaching is more your thing, look into coaching certifications that specialize in preparing coaches to help people integrate psychedelic experiences. See end of eBook.

3) Become trauma-informed

Laura Mae Northrup, LMFT, advises that integration therapists learn some form of somatic therapy, as psychedelics work in a holistic fashion that includes the body and the mind. Coaches should become trauma-informed, as many people who are healing with psychedelics may have trauma in their history. Consider signing up for a trauma certificate, or attend a coaching program that is trauma-informed.

4) Engage in anti-racist work

It is becoming more apparent that psychedelic coaches and therapists who are not educated about racial trauma can do great harm to BIPOC clients. Professionals who understand racial trauma, and their own role in it, have a much greater chance of being able to help BIPOC clients encounter healing.

We recommend resources such as “Me and White Supremacy” by Layla Saad, and “My Grandmother’s Hands” by Resmaa Menakem, to begin your anti-racist training. However, any good anti-racist work will involve workshops, in-person mentorship, and community accountability. We recommend joining local (or online) reading groups, anti-racist workshops, or sharing circles.

5) Integrate your stuff

Doing your work is an essential part of holding space for the work others are doing. Dee Adams, Integration Practitioner and founder of the Queer Psychedelic Collective, says: “I knew for a while that I wanted to do this kind of work for people. I also knew that I had to do much of the work for myself before I could support anyone else. Of course there are always more wounds to heal, layers to peel back, and harmful stories to unravel. However, I waited until I had the appropriate tools and experience before facilitating integration for other people.”

A great way to steward your own integration is to regularly attend an integration circle, especially one with continuous attendance. Participating as a peer can help keep us humble in the work and connected to the wisdom that there is something to learn from everyone. Working one on one with a skilled integration facilitator is another great route for attending to our own processes on this journey. Having a therapist or coach who you know and trust could also be useful when you become an integration practitioner and all of the material that can arise for working in that role.

6) Do your research

Learn the history and current concerns regarding psychedelic use. Accessibility issues, racism, cultural appropriation, sustainability, consent violations, sexual misconduct, and trends toward human optimization that take us further from collective healing are all examples of very real issues that are coming up in this burgeoning movement. Your clients look to you as an example, so be informed about these issues in order to do no harm and uphold the integrity of this work. Check out The Ancestor Project for comprehensive information on some of these topics.

7) Learn about psychedelic harm reduction

Borrowing an analogy from the world of sex education, there is no “safe” drug use, only “safer” drug use. Especially where most governments still prohibit the use of psychedelics (which is like an “abstinence only” approach, but worse), having a solid grasp of risk reduction is another essential for the psychedelic integration facilitator. It’s useful to have at least a basic understanding of the more commonly used psychedelics today (psilocybin mushrooms, LSD, MDMA, ayahuasca, ketamine), and to have personal experience with the substance(s) you plan on helping people integrate journeys from.

8) Learn the basics of integration facilitation

You can undergo training in integration facilitation from educational organizations such as Psychedelics Today, The Center for Optimal Living, SEI, IFS, Hakomi, Compassionate Inquiry, and more. See the back page of this eBook to learn more about our own upcoming training - the **Plant Spirit School Integration Coach Certification Program!**

Some programs are tailored to already licensed therapists; most are open to the general public. There are a number of great books out there on the topic of Integration as well, such as the Psychedelics Integration Handbook by Westrum and Desfrechou.

9) Practice as a peer

The operative word here is peer. According to Niki Sylva, who wrote the Understory’s Guide for Community-Led Peer Integration: “The original and continuing intention of peer integration circles is for peers to come together to share stories of extraordinary experiences. This model of peer integration is based on the council method, long used by indigenous communities and likely a practice of many of our ancestors. A stalwart against professional monopolization of ‘services’ humans once offered to each other, peers can offer support through listening and bearing witness to each other’s personal transformations and insights.”

If you don't know of a peer-led circle to join, experiment with creating your own! Sometimes all it takes is attending an integration circle or psychedelic event and sharing that you'd like to gain more experience at facilitating integration circles, so you are starting a peer-led integration circle and you invite others to join and cocreate.

Integrating psychedelics with friends, family, and community members can be incredibly healing and generative. Keep in mind, the integration circle can be an opportunity to integrate any experience into our daily lives. If you're the only person you know who takes drugs, you could try inviting some friends to a circle for sharing about what we've all been going through lately in a supportive environment. You can easily adapt the Understory framework to suit the theme of the circle.

Another option, once you have done some training in integration, is to tell trusted friends that you're interested in doing this work, and ask them if you could practice with them. Make it clear that you are not a trained provider and that they are not under any obligation to do this. If they consent, be sure to ask for feedback so you can improve your skills.

10) Seek out mentorship / supervision

While it can be hard to link up with the right person at first, finding mentorship from elders and seasoned practitioners is one of the best things you can do for yourself along your journey. A mentor is someone who has significant experience in the work and is willing to meet with you and discuss some of the situations that may arise as you work toward becoming a great psychedelic integration coach or therapist. You may want to talk about compensation and reciprocity, in order to value the person's time and the wisdom they are imparting to you. A mentor or elder should not take advantage of you by charging exorbitant rates for their supervision, however.

Another great way to engage in supervision is in a community of peers. According to Kylea Taylor, peer mentorship can be preventative against a number of pitfalls:

“Ongoing supervision, peer consultation, and support groups can be non-judgmental spaces for providers to talk about the most challenging aspects of their work, which is so important for the ongoing safety, integrity, quality, and sustainability of their practice and their own well-being. As with many health care professions, isolation and burnout are common for psychotherapists.”

11) Organize a circle

Your circle can be sliding scale or by donation to begin. Many providers promote on social media, email, and through word of mouth. If you live near a cafe or organic grocery or any sort of “crunchy” business establishment, ask them if you can put up a flier. Remember, you can ask attendees for feedback afterward to learn about what people liked and what you might improve.

12) Know your scope

If a client presents with symptoms or a history that you aren’t experienced at working with, the most appropriate course of action is probably to refer them out.

Kat Courtney, the AfterLife Coach, says that “whatever tools are in our toolkit that we’re passionate about are relevant to helping people to integrate in the aftermath of psychedelics. We have to have the integrity of sticking to that, saying ‘these are the people I can help,’ being able to recognize when someone is outside of the realm of your expertise and to have the ability to pass them to someone who can better assist them. The majority of people coming for help are in really difficult positions. Have some awareness of how to work with that, if you’re going to name yourself as a psychedelics integration coach.”

Some coaches advise that their clients have a therapist if they’re going to work with psychedelics, especially if they have a history of trauma. A client who has a present DSM diagnosis or who shows signs of a diagnosable condition would probably do the best with a team of providers rather than just a coach. Coaches and therapists can work together to support clients in their healing journey.

13) Make connections with other professionals

Another aspect of safety is being clear with your clients that you aren't an MD (unless you are one!) and that if they'd like to consult with a psychedelic-aware doctor or psychopharmacist, you can make that referral. Sometimes clients have questions which are best answered by someone with professional medical or pharmaceutical training, especially questions about drug interactions, tapering off antidepressants, etc. Seek out working relationships with doctors and pharmacists who you can trust to advise your clients if you need to refer them out for any of the more complicated medical/pharmaceutical questions that can arise.

14) Figure out payment (and take accessibility into account)

A licensed therapist can treat a client and bill their insurance, while coaches are always private pay. Some licensed therapists do not accept insurance and opt to go the private pay route instead.

One benefit of being able to accept insurance is that a therapist can work with a greater range of people, including those who could not or would not pay out of pocket for therapy. Typically, payment for therapy is collected session by session, as opposed to coaches who often have their clients purchase a "package" with a specific plan for a certain number of sessions over a period of time.

Both coaches and therapists may use a sliding scale to make their services more accessible, or offer a certain number of pro bono sessions to those without the means to pay. Some practitioners offer "pay what you can" to BIPOC and folks from other historically marginalized identities, especially those who have been negatively impacted by the Drug War.

15) Support a psychedelic retreat or ceremony

Many psychedelic retreat organizers, facilitators and ceremony leaders need integration support staff, to assist not only during the session but to work with clients after the ceremony or retreat is over. Many facilitators offer integration coaching packages as part of their service, but for larger centers, circles and organizations, especially those who work with indigenous shamans, having a reliable team of Western integration support staff to support clients from the Global North is essential.

16) Do ongoing shadow work

Similar to the section on integrating your stuff, practitioners should be well versed in their own shadow so that it does not interfere with the client's integration process.

A good practitioner doesn't try to take away their client's pain or remove their obstacles. They hold space for the client while they traverse this difficult situation, and offer support that empowers the individual to find their way through. Look out for what some have called "great therapist syndrome:" an overconfidence in one's own healing abilities which can overshadow and even suppress the client's agency in their therapeutic process.

When asked what makes a great integration facilitator, Diana Quinn ND, naturopathic doctor and integration coach, replied "for me the foundation is coming from a place of non-judgmental positive regard for each participant, holding space with love, acceptance, and curiosity, with the intention of creating a brave space where participants can be vulnerable and open. My passion is holding spaces for BIPOC and queer folks, who often don't experience inclusion and safety in other spaces. Facilitation of anti-oppressive spaces in general requires attention to dynamics of power and privilege, watching for barriers to inclusion and access, and being aware of impact. Trying to be a good facilitator, for me, is holding all of this while also showing up with transparency and honesty."

17) Fill your practice

While there are in depth business approaches to how to find new clients, integration facilitators will do well to make strong connections with other practitioners in the field.

Knowing our passions and skillset, as well as our limitations, will help us understand our place in the space and where we stand in relation to other integration providers. They will also help us know who our ideal clients are and how we can best serve their individual needs.

Investing in Your Practice

How much does it cost to become an integration practitioner? For a therapist, it can cost anywhere from \$30,000 or more to go through all of the necessary schooling and licensure. Some coaching certificates range from \$100-\$5,000 dollars.

Angie Leek, LMFT/LPC-S, says that getting a degree and/or getting licensed can be a very long process, but it's really only a very small part of the overall journey. "The process of healing and evolving is never ending, and the same goes for ourselves and our own process. It is imperative that we do our own work in parallel to working with others. Each and every client that we meet touches us in some way – so the process of sitting with people and learning how to be with their pain, joy, symptoms, grief, anger, etc. means that we have to be able to be with our own. This is a lifelong process, as is investing in our ongoing support/supervision/consultation/continuing education."

Attracting Clients

While some healers are blessed with entrepreneurial know-how, others have to learn about the most effective and personally aligned ways to attract clients. What are some ways that current integration practitioners find folks to support?



Psychedelic.Support site, and referrals from a ceremony circle! Been working out great, though I find many times I have to remind inquiries from psychedelic support site that I do not provide psychedelic assisted therapy.

Like · Reply · 1w



I agree. I use word of mouth. There is a level of risk with diving into this work. Building client load depends on self risk assessment and personal capacity.

Like · Reply · Award · 5d



I feel that there is no ONE WAY - my human design will dictate the right way for me - Magic is the universe bringing me all I need. Whether its word of mouth, referrals, meeting people on the street..... my approach is natural, authentic and easy. No marketing, forcing or pushing myself out there.

Like · Reply · 4d



Psychedelic Education Resources

Each integration specialist has their own journey to walk. With the rapidly growing psychedelic industry, these jobs are already in demand, and that demand will only grow. These resources may help you as you explore what your path as a psychedelic integration provider will be.

Our partners and affiliates, as well as our own educational resources are underlined, and clicking on their names should take you directly to the homepages or courses.

Plant Spirit Summit – interviews from a range of psychedelic experts on topics at the intersection of ancestral shamanism and contemporary plant medicine healing, with a wide range of valuable bonus resources and materials.

The Keys to Decolonizing Plant Medicine – course on bringing anti-racist and anti-colonial practices into your plant medicine ceremonies or coaching.

How to Microdose Nature – an in-depth workshop on microdosing designed for those who wish to integrate this practice into their personal lives or coaching methods.

Psychedelic.Support – curated directory of providers, groups, and a variety of courses including an introductory series on ketamine, psilocybin, and MDMA, as well as more advanced programs for facilitators and integration providers.

Psychedelics Today - Navigating Psychedelics: Lessons on Self-Care & Integration – an introductory program dedicated to understanding and integrating the psychedelic experience.

Psychedelic Integration Coaching & Relevant Trainings:

Being True to You - Recovery & Integration Coach Training Program offering a certification in Addiction Recovery and Psychedelic Integration Coaching. It features 100+ hours of instruction and includes live training and group calls.

Psychedelics Today - Navigating Psychedelics: for Clinicians and Therapists - a program dedicated to educating therapists and clinicians on how to incorporate psychedelic knowledge and education into their practice.

Compassionate Inquiry - a 1-year long online training in the psychotherapeutic approach created by Dr. Gabor Maté, designed to gently uncover and release layers of childhood trauma, constriction and suppressed emotion embedded in the body, that are at the root of illness and addiction.

Kiyumí - Psychedelics and Compassionate Inquiry - an in-depth online and in-person 16-week educational and experiential program combining contemplative and embodiment practices with a 6-day psilocybin-assisted retreat in the Netherlands and live integration classes with Dr Gabor Maté.

Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychotherapy - a 40-year old therapeutic modality which integrates the psychodynamic use of mindfulness with a comprehensive and experiential body-centered methodology.

Alef Trust - Psychedelics, Altered States and Transpersonal Psychology Certificate Programme - a 1-year long course that explores the transpersonal nature of the psychedelic experience and other altered states, drawing upon transpersonal psychology, parapsychology, cross-cultural psychiatry, neurobiology, cognitive neuroscience, anthropology, ethnobotany, the study of religions, etc.

Internal Family Systems Institute - offers trainings in a globally popular, powerfully transformative, evidence-based model of psychotherapy for healing trauma and restoring wholeness.

Somatic Experiencing - offers a Professional Training providing a rich theoretical framework for understanding, addressing, and resolving trauma and chronic stress.

Center for Optimal Living – trainings and workshops on Integrative Harm Reduction Psychotherapy (IHRP) and other complementary techniques.

Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Training Programs:

MAPS - MDMA Therapy Training Program - an in-person 100-hr long clinical training program that facilitates learning in the theory, skills, and practice of MDMA-assisted therapy.

CIIS - Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies and Research - an in-person or online-only 150-hr long program graduating skilled therapist researchers who will ideally seek advanced training for future FDA-approved psychedelic-assisted and entactogen-assisted psychotherapy research.

PRATI - Ketamine-assisted Psychotherapy Training Program - a 4-day in-person immersive KAP training approach, which incorporates practical skills, clinical research, and supported ketamine experiences in a retreat-style setting.

SoundMind Psychedelic Facilitator Training - a 6-month online graduate-level training program for clinicians and other professionals that provides a foundational understanding of the literature and practice of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, including the use of ketamine, MDMA, and psilocybin in the therapeutic setting.

Synthesis Institute Psychedelic Practitioner Training – an 18-month long Professional Certification Program with a mandatory psilocybin immersion retreat in the Netherlands. Accepting medical professionals/therapists & alternative healers/transformational guides with 5 years of experience, and dedicated to honoring, exploring, and experiencing many ways of knowing and working in the psychedelic field.

Psychedelic Medicine - Psychedelic Therapy Training - a hybrid residential-online three-year (1.400-hr) program (plus a dissertation for those in the MA or PhD pathways) with a curriculum providing an ample array of tools and experience to accompany psychedelic therapy processes. Half of the program is online learning led by leaders and pioneers in the psychedelic field; the other half is spent in therapy retreats, dietas, initiations, and pilgrimages in indigenous territories.

BeckleyMed Training in Grofian Psychedelic Therapy - a 3-year remote and in person (in Catalonia, Spain) program for psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, health professionals, or certified therapists, that includes theoretical classes as well as experiential Holotropic Psychedelic Psychotherapy sessions.

Integrative Psychiatry Institute - Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy Training - a 1-year (200-hr) online training program for aspiring psychedelic-assisted therapists. Admits psychotherapists, psychologists, pre-licensed master's level therapists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, chaplains, and physicians.

Psychedelic Sitters School - Cannabis-Assisted Psychedelic Guide & Therapist Courses - 4-month to 1-year training programs for those who wish to facilitate individual and small group sessions in non-clinical/spiritual or creative problem-solving settings, or therapy sessions in clinical settings.

Psychedelic Somatic Institute - Psychedelic Therapy Training - in-person (Denver, CO) and remote learning programs with Group / Apprentice models of different lengths and with different levels of immersion. Admits mental and medical health professionals and those with a significant background in the healing arts, with at least two years of clinical practice in mental health.

SCPTR Psychedelic Therapy Training Program - an 8-week (40-hr) live online training providing an introduction to general psychedelic topics (Harm Reduction, Ethics, etc) as well as psychedelic-assisted therapies (MDMA-, Ketamine-, and Psilocybin-assisted Psychotherapy) and non-psychedelic modalities (IFS, CI, Holotropic Breathwork, flow-states, microdosing, etc).

Relevant degree programs for aspiring psychedelic integration specialists & psychedelic-assisted therapists:

Naropa University – MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Sofia University – MA in Transpersonal Psychology

California Institute of Integral Studies – MA, PsyD and PhD programs

Psychedelic Medicine – MA in Psychedelic Therapy / PhD in Psychedelic Studies through Ubiquity University

Alef Trust - MSc in Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology / PhD in Applied Transpersonal Psychology

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