



A bit more grace, a little less judgement...

How psychotherapists think their psychedelic use influences their practice

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- Before psychedelic substances were classified as illicit, **mental health professionals' use of psychedelic substances** for the purpose of generating hypotheses about change mechanisms and for understanding the phenomenology of the altered states **was an acknowledged practice in mental health institutions** (Winkler and Csemy, 2014; Winkler et al., 2016).
- **Only a handful of studies have systematically investigated the way in which psychedelic experiences** undergone in a context that facilitates introspection **impact the day-to-day practice** of mental health professionals.
- Given the fact that psychedelic substances used in clinical settings have been shown to increase **acceptance** (Watts et al., 2017; Swift et al., 2017; Belser et al., 2017); **emotional empathy** (Griffiths et al., 2011); **trust, concern for the well being of others** and **prosocial behavior** (Dolder et al., 2016) we decided to explore the potential benefits that purposeful psychedelic consumption may have for mental health professionals.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online with 10 mental health professionals living in Romania (n=3), the United States of America (n=5), Sweden and Portugal. Seven of the participants have used psychedelics exclusively for introspection and/or self-development and the remaining six switched to this kind of use after reading about the clinical trails with psychedelic substances. **Thematic analysis** was used to identify central themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

All of the participants reported that their psychedelic use has positively impacted their practice.

Theme	Number of endorsing participants
Enhanced empathy for clients	10
Increased ability to be mindful in session	7
Increased self-efficacy	7
Increased self-compassion	6
Increased trust in the efficiency of techniques applied in psychotherapy	6
Enhanced trust in clients' ability to thrive in spite of psychosocial stress	5



Call for participation

This is an ongoing project. Our long term objective is to test the efficiency of adding a psychedelic therapy component to psychotherapy training programs. **If you are a mental health professional who has had psychedelic experiences** and you want to share your insights, **please contact me** at: ivan.v.loana@gmail.com

For more information about the study and how you can get involved, please visit: <https://psytherapist.blogspot.com/>