

# Blossom

## **A Protocol for Psilocybin Assisted Self-Development**

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# 1. Introduction

## ***Psilocybin for self-development***

Psilocybin is a naturally occurring psychedelic found in mushrooms and truffles. Your body converts psilocybin to psilocin, which has mind-altering effects. Over the past decade, research has intensified on how to use mind-altering substances (psilocybin, LSD, MDMA, and others) for therapeutic purposes. We believe that psilocybin can also be used for self-development, outside a clinical setting.

Research from Griffiths, Richards, and Jesse (2006) at Johns Hopkins University has, in a controlled and scientific setting, shown that the effects of a session of psilocybin can provide persistent positive effects on attitudes, mood, and behavior. At a high dose (40 mg/70 kg), 67% of participants rated the experience as among the top five most personally meaningful and spiritually significant experiences of their lives (Griffiths, et al., 2008). In addition, 64% indicated that the experience increased their well-being and life satisfaction.

Our focus is on the 'betterment of healthy people'. We think that guided psilocybin sessions are able to enrich the lives of many, if not most, people. It is a unique experience that allows you to experience reality in an altered state of consciousness that may provide you with insights you might not otherwise get. With Blossom, we intend to provide a safe and comfortable environment for people who want to have this experience and guide them through the experience where needed. Note that we do not aim to treat mental disorders. This requires specialised help within the established medical framework. We do think it is likely that a shift will occur within this framework and that medical professionals (in 5-15 years) will be using mind-altering substances in therapy (again).

## Goal of the protocol



This protocol is written with an experienced guide in mind. For now, the guide is written for internal use. Later we might distribute a version of the guide for wider use (and as a side benefit promote ourselves).

The protocol takes you through the different parts of a guided session, from the very first preparation to the follow-up survey and contact with the participants. The protocol contains many checklists. This is not a replacement for critical thinking and using your personal judgement. If any extraordinary situation presents itself, it is you as a guide who should be able to resolve it. Yet at the same time, the checklists are there to make sure that you don't forget any crucial (or mundane) details.<sup>1</sup>

After reading this protocol you should have a clear overview of all the steps that are involved in guiding a session. The protocol sometimes doesn't go into detail on methods or techniques, references to source material will be given if further study is desired. At the end you can find more recommended reading.

Next to providing you (the guide) with a good basis and reference work, we hope this work will also make psychedelics more widely available and integrated into our culture. One way we hope to do this is by finding language that is neutral (not spiritual or shamanistic) and uncontroversial.

If you have suggestions, changes, or updates to the protocol, please get in contact with us.

Thank you,

Floris & Josjan

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<sup>1</sup> For more on checklists, read **The Checklist Manifesto** by Atul Gawande

## **Definitions**

**Preparation:** Everything that is done by the guide and participant up to the session. This includes a preparatory meeting.

**Preparatory meeting:** A meeting of up to one hour in which the guide meets with the participant. The goals of the participant are discussed, the session is explained, there is room for questions.

**Session (self-development session):** The full day (up to 8 hours) on which psilocybin is taken, from the entrance of the participant to when he/she leaves.

**Active experience (psychedelic experience):** The time in which the drug is active / the participant is under the influence.

**Integration:** Everything that is done by the guide and participant after the session. This includes an integration meeting.

**Integration meeting:** A meeting of up to one hour in which the debriefing takes place. The participants recount the experience and both go over the rapport that the participant has written.

**Guide:** The person who guides the session. This term is chosen instead of therapist (too active & medical) or sitter (too passive). The guide is there to help steer the participant in his/her journey before, during and after the session where needed.

**Participant:** An individual of sound mind and body who wants to work on his/her self-development.

**Relationship:** The professional relationship between the guide and the participant. The relationship is there to create rapport, safety and trust.

**Set:** The mindset of the participant. The individual's beliefs, hopes, fears, personality, and expectations. This also encompasses the state of mind of the participant during the session and active experience.

**Setting:** The space, which should be professional, private, safe, relaxing, comfortable. Things like plants are good, too much noise is bad. Music system, headphones, playlist, sofa/bed to lay on, eye cover, etc should be provided.

## 2. Guide Foundation

A guide is responsible for the care of the participant, the setting, and is instrumental in determining the mindset of the participant. A guide should have experience with psilocybin and in training should undergo at least one guided session herself. Here we explain in more detail the things a guide should know.

The guide should have the following six core competencies<sup>2</sup>:

1. **Empathetic Abiding Presence** - be there for the participant, give assurance if needed
  - a. Minimal encouragement, verbal and non-verbal
  - b. Invitation rather than direction
  - c. Paraphrasing
  - d. Reflecting
  - e. Emotional labeling
  - f. Validating
  - g. Reassurance and waiting
  - h. Allowing participants to come to conclusions themselves
2. **Trust Enhancement** - provide the participant with trust in their own abilities
  - a. The participants view of the guide as a trustworthy guide
  - b. The participant's trust in their own personal creative process
  - c. The ability to reliably normalize for the participant that paradoxical transformations and radically unexpected moments in sessions are to be expected, and thus trusted as part of the process
3. **Distraction Free** - be there for the participant, in the moment, not distracted
  - a. Don't bring your own life into the session, calm your own internal dialogue and relax the body
  - b. Always be there for the participant, let the participant feel that you are there if anything is needed
4. **Knowledge** - familiar with psilocybin and related fields
  - a. Guides should be competent in their knowledge of psilocybin, specifically how it works (pharmacology) and what participants can expect (at varying dosages)
  - b. Guides should be familiar with the research surrounding psilocybin, e.g. via the Blossom Analysis newsletter or self study
5. **Guide Self-Awareness and Ethical Integrity (also see Ethics Guide)**
  - a. Self awareness of personal motives for this work
  - b. Integrity in protecting boundaries with participants
  - c. Well-developed capacities for building a working relationship with participants
  - d. Personal self care
6. **Know-your-boundaries** - familiar with your competencies and boundaries
  - a. Aware of limitations and scope of our work (i.e. non-medical)
  - b. Know when to refer to health professional
  - c. Know when to ask colleagues for help

See more information about being a good guide in the document [Blossom Guide to Guiding](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from **Psychedelic Guide Manual** by Mark Haden

## 3. Preparation



Here are the steps for the preparation, from the first contact with a possible participant to the eventual preparatory meeting.

### ***First contact (providing information)***

When first speaking with someone about the session we wish to highlight the following aspects. Over the course of a conversation you will most probably touch on each point. If you fail to mention any points, you will add these in the email body that follows the first contact.

The first contact could be spread over multiple meetings and touchpoints. If a (future) participant is already very knowledgeable on a specific topic (e.g. the expected experience during the session) you don't need to go into depth. Do always make use of the precautionary principle, don't assume they know something and always check if you really can skip a part of the explanation. The same applies the other way around, if someone is very interested and curious about a specific topic, feel free to expand beyond what is mentioned below.

### **Checklist A**<sup>3</sup>

*What you need to record in a [Google Sheet](#)*

- Full name of (future) participant
- Email
- Phone number
- Date of contact
- Additional notes (e.g. how we know participant, mood of conversation, etc)
- Checkmark if introduction email (see [Blossom Standard Emails](#)) is sent (within 24 (work)hours)

*What you need to discuss*

- What is psilocybin
- How is it being used in therapy and self-development
- What to expect during the experience (physical, mental)
- What outcomes to expect
- The importance of the preparation, set & setting, and integration
- How do you take it
- The costs of the session
- The duration of the session
- The preparation and integration work required of the participant
- The ways in which we protect someone's privacy

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<sup>3</sup> If linked, a checklist goes directly to a Google Sheet where you can record the data, please always use this!

- Optional: how it's different from a group session
- Optional: how it's different from a coaching session without psilocybin
- Optional: how it's different from mdma, lsd, etc

You can find a longer explanation (that will be sent to the participant) of each point in

[1. Psilocybin Intro](#)

After the first contact, you will send the participant the first email. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (1. Introduction Email)

### **Checklist B1**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Are you sending it from the company address (not your personal email - *not repeated again*)
- Have you edited the first paragraph
- Have you added the additional information that wasn't discussed (4th paragraph)
- Is there an attachment in .pdf form (see [folder](#) - 1. Psilocybin Intro)
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (F - Intro email sent)

If someone emails back questions, try and answer within 24 hours. Don't be afraid to ask colleagues for help. If you need more time to answer a question, let the participant know in a short email (i.e. always email back within 24 hours).

## ***Intake questionnaire***

After someone emails back with the affirmation that they would like to continue, you can email them the questionnaire. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (2. Questionnaire Email)

### **Checklist B2**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (B - Intro email reply)
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (C - Questionnaire sent)

The participant will be asked the questions as listed on the [Intake Questionnaire \(Dutch version\)](#). As you can see from the links, there is an English and Dutch version available.

The participant will use her unique number so you can see who filled in which questionnaire. You can find the responses in [B Blossom Intake Questionnaire \(Responses\)](#).

You can find the questions of all questionnaires in [Blossom Questionnaires](#).

## ***After-questionnaire call & email***

When the participant has filled in the questionnaire, we will get a notification (via the Google Form, to Floris' email). We will then confirm to the participant that we've received the form. We do this with a call and a follow-up email.



The emails are templates for a rejection (hard *no*), or an invitation to the preparatory meeting (*yes*). Over time we might have some sort of software (SetMore or the like) to plan the dates for the preparatory meeting etc.

### **After-questionnaire call**

On the call you thank the participant for filling in the questionnaire. If there was something to discuss beforehand (contra-indicators, short answers to the intention questions, etc), this is the time to talk about them.

Then you can find the dates for all three meetings (preparatory, session, integration). The first and last two meetings can be face-to-face, but can also be done via Zoom (video call).

After you've set the dates, you remind them that the payment will have to be done before the preparatory meeting.

### **Checklist C1**

*What you need to discuss on the call*

- Possible discussion points from questionnaire
- Dates for all three meetings
- Payment reminder
- Email sent within 24 hours (see below)
- Checkmarks in [Google Sheet](#) (E to I)

After the call you can send them the email (yes/no). You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (3. After-Questionnaire Email)

### **Checklist C2**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (J)

## ***Day Before Preparatory Meeting Email***

One day before the preparatory meeting, you will send a reminder for the meeting. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (4. Day Before Preparatory Meeting Email)

### **Checklist C3**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (K)

## ***Preparatory meeting***

The goal of the preparation process is to screen, share information, clarify intent, establish an agreement on the process, document informed consent and build a connection (of trust and safety) between the guide and the participant.

The preparatory meeting will take place at the location of the session (preference), at another location where you both can speak freely, or over video chat with Zoom (a Skype alternative). Vital

for the meeting is that there aren't too many distractions (e.g. Starbucks) and that you can see each other.

## Checklist D

*In the preparatory meeting you will discuss the following*

- General introduction (who are you, who is the guide, what does Blossom do)
- Discuss goals and intentions from [intake questionnaire](#): how to approach the topics?
- What the psilocybin does
- Walking through the session
  - Settling
  - Ingestion
  - Recap of goals
  - Session (duration, intensity)
    - Most important: feeling comfortable in the location and with the guide
    - Listening to music
    - Internalizing
    - Talking when you like to
    - Guide is there for comfort and communication
  - Comedown
  - Session end
- How to prepare
  - Breathing exercise
  - Eat a light breakfast
  - Bring comfortable clothing
  - Bring headphones or earplugs
  - We will provide drinks and food
- Location (don't come by car)
- What to do after session
- Describe integration process
  - Writing down the experience the day after
  - Insights are not expected to be immediate, rather during/after afterglow
- Confirmation of date, time, and guide
- Check if there are questions
- Give 24 hours opt-out

## Short explanation of preparatory meeting discussion points

### *General introduction*

Lay out the agenda of the preparatory meeting. Let the participant introduce herself, tell something about yourself, let them know what Blossom does.

Remind the participant that everything will be emailed and that they can ask questions anywhere during the process.

### *Discuss goals and intentions*

Here you will ask clarifying questions about what the participant has put into the questionnaire (goals/intentions). Clarify the participant's intentions – be specific. Part of this process is to assess the degree to which the participant is committed to the experience and will do the necessary work to maximize the chance of a positive outcome.

*Over time we will find out how much clarification/deepening of the goals/intentions we will need to do. Or conversely, how much you will leave over to the session and the participant himself.*

As a guide you can ask for 'the question behind the question', paraphrase, use silence strategically. Based on the first participants, this part should take about 15 minutes.

*What the psilocybin does/why we use it*

Psychedelics attach to serotonin receptors in the brain, causing some parts of the brain to be less active, but many parts to be more connected. This results in the experience of an altered state of consciousness: the psychedelic state.

Psilocybin can help the participant think about set goals and intentions. It is possible the participant will actively think about them during the experience, but she may also find her thoughts hard to focus. If this is the case, that is no problem. We expect the experience to be beneficial in the long-term, after integration, rather than during the sessions itself. The idea is that psychedelics let people see things in a new light and make new and creative associations; think less in old patterns. After the active experience, these new ideas can be rationally assessed and integrated in a person's life.

*Walking through the session (how to take, what to expect, how long it will take)*

Settling: the participants should settle comfortably at the location of the session before ingestion.

Ingestion: describe how the participant will take the psilocybin.

Recap of goals: go over the intentions one more time before the substance takes effect.

Session:

During the session they will start feeling the effects of the psilocybin after a while. Explain that the participant is then free to lay down, sit, walk around. There is a time to talk with the guide and a time to lay down to think about your goals. We will mind this process and will guide you through the experience when needed.

We recommend laying down most of the experience and listening to music. We've selected a few music playlists for you and you will have the ability to add some of your own music too.

You will start feeling the effects of the psilocybin within 30 minutes. Just try and relax and let them come over you. For example, you may feel that your body becomes very light or heavy, this is perfectly normal. If you want, you can talk about your sensations and feelings if needed.

Accept and be open to such changes and enjoy them as novel sensations for they are a part of the session/experience and will offer you a chance to explore new areas of experience.

This is true of all aspects of the experience which you are to have. Accept what happens and how you feel and be open to what experiences you have. Later, after the experience, you will have ample time to think about it and you will be able to recall what you felt and thought but during the session itself remember to relax and enjoy the feelings, thoughts, images and sensations for themselves. If during the experience you try to make everything fit into your everyday experience you will cheat yourself both of the good effects of the drug and the pleasure you can find.

At times during the experience you may feel much like laughing or crying and you should not try to hold back these expressions of feeling. Nearly everyone who takes the drug finds himself moved to laughter and possibly to tears several times during the experience. Actually these feelings will bother you less if you accept them as a normal part of the experience and do not try to fight against them.

One thing that we can offer you, to ground the session is to offer a guided breathing exercise. This will divert your attention back to your breath and the here and now. You can ask your guide for this at any time.

It is unlikely that you will feel much like eating during the day but we will have plenty of fruit, chocolate and fruit juice on hand.

If and when you like, we can provide you with a hand to hold if you feel that the experience is intense and you desire to connect. Or touch your arm or shoulder if appropriate. If you need a hug, this is possible.

You will stay in the space where we're holding the session. The guide will give the ok when he/she is certain that you're out of the active session and you've both done the recap.

Discuss the rule of "no harm is done". The participant must agree to refrain from self-harm, harm to others, and harm to property.

Discuss that it's very much ok to show emotions. You can even scream out loud if you want to. But again, no harm to anyone and property.

#### *Food before session*

Eat a light meal in the morning (e.g. yoghurt with fruit). The goal of the small meal is to provide you with a normal energy level, and with a relaxed stomach. Also, if you've eaten a heavy meal, it will take considerably longer for the psilocybin to take effect.

#### *What to take with (e.g. comfortable clothing)*

The participant is advised to bring relaxed and comfortable clothing like sweatpants. Please don't use (much) make-up (which will not survive possible sweat or emotions) or deodorant (which may block your sense of smell). Dress like Sunday morning.

You can also bring your own headphones. We will have a pair available, but you might find your own more comfortable. Make sure they are fully charged!

#### *How to arrive (public transport)*

Explain how to get there (if not already there now).

#### *What to do after session*

You can go home with public transport or have someone you trust pick you up. You can discuss the experience with a loved one. Eat a full meal. Go to bed early if you're tired. You might want to have the next day off.

#### *Describe integration process*

Discuss the importance of integration work after the experience. You've had many ideas go through your head, that is guaranteed. But not all ideas are great, some are more practical and creative than others. So the integration process is there to make more sense of them.

Describe that the participant will write down the experience, preferably the next day, and that this may take anywhere between 1-3 hours on average. We will follow-up with some emails and reminders. That we will give more information on how to discuss the experience with loved ones. And that more information and tips will be provided in the integration meeting and the information following that meeting.

Describe that you don't want to or will make huge life changes right after the session. You always wait with this until after the integration meeting (a week later).

#### *Confirmation of date and time and guide*

End the conversation with a confirmation of date, time, guide (and date and time for the integration session).

#### *Check if there are questions*

Give space for the participant to have questions answered.

#### *Give 24 hour opt-out*

If they decide not to do it, that is possible, but only a partial refund if done within 24 hours.

### **Checklist E**

*What you need to write down in a rapport after the preparatory meeting*

- Make a rapport file based on [the template](#)
- Write down;
  - Intentions and goals
  - Things of note related to participant (e.g. specific worries, lifestyle)
  - Date, time and guide for session
- Send the follow-up email within 24 hours
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (L)

After the preparatory meeting you will send the information in a follow-up email. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (5. Follow-up email)

### **Checklist F**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Have you entered the information (date, time, guide)
- Is there an attachment in .pdf form (see [folder](#) - 2. Session Intro)
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (M)

## **Session Reminder Email**

Two days before the session, you will send a reminder for the meeting. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (6. Session Reminder Email)

### **Checklist G**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (N)

## 4. Session



The self-development session is the full day on which the well-prepared participant uses the psilocybin to deepen and broaden his or her experience. During the day you will serve as a guide to this experience. The participant will think about his or her intentions and goals.

Here we describe the guide preparation, steps in the session, what is there in the room, what to do in different situations (how to be a good guide), the preparation of the psilocybin, and more.

### **Guide preparation**

The guide should be very well prepared. This doesn't mean that it should take a long time, but be sure that you check all the boxes. You are responsible for the participant and it's your preparation and guidance that will make it a life changing experience.

#### **Checklist H**

##### *Guide preparation*

- Well-rested and present
- Eaten a medium to large meal
- Re-read the [preparation document](#) of the participant

##### *Room preparation (see for more information [Blossom Room Attributes](#))*

- Food and drinks present for participant
  - Selection of fruit
  - Chocolate
  - Fruit juice
  - Syrup
  - Coffee
  - Tea (wide selection including: black, green, fruit)
- Warm blankets
- Weighted blanket
- Air Conditioning or fan (if summer/hot)
- Pillows
- Wet wipes, towels
- Gloves and cleaning supplies (in drawer/not in sight)
- Extra set of male and female comfortable clothing
- Solid garbage bag (or bucket)
- Eyeshades (Tempur)
- Headphones (connected to phone/laptop with Spotify playlist open and downloaded)
- Fresh flowers (optional, but look nice)
- Pen and paper for both participant and guide

## **Session breakdown**

*Welcome participant, thank them for all the effort already done*

Give the participant a warm welcome. If they aren't yet familiar with the space, let them acclimatise for a moment. Offer some water or tea to drink.

*Check if the participant is ready*

Give the participant space to express any doubts, worries, expectations. Check if they have everything they need.

Also ask the participant if they will put their phone on airplane mode and give them time if they need to message a friend or loved one before they start.

Ask if the participant has headphones/earbuds or will use ours. If the former, connect them to our system.

Confirm with the participant that he or she will be able to ask the guide for a hand or touch on the shoulder. There will be no sexual touching. Confirm with the participant that they will only leave the room for a toilet break. And only will leave when the guide gives the ok (after the come-down). Check if the participant is of sound mind (not hungover, on other substances).

### **Checklist I**

As a guide you should also (directly or indirectly) check the following:

- Does the participant look ready
- Do you need to check anything from the screening part of the questionnaire
- Is the participant of sound mind (i.e. not intoxicated or on other substances)
- Has the participant eaten a light meal (not required, but recommended)
- Are both phones on flight mode (guide and participant)

*Lay out the session steps, namely;*

Lay out the agenda of the session. Say that you will be going over the goals and intentions one more time. You will then go over the estimated time-table of the day. Explain again that there is always enough time and no need to rush any step.

Time table:

- T0: now, explanation, introduction
- T15: psilocybin, toilet
- T25: Goals, analogy
- T45: come-on
- T60: music and introspection
- T240: come-down
- T300: small recap
- T330: we give ok to go again

*Explain what is available in the room*

Go over the different attributes in the room. See [Blossom Room Attributes](#) for a more exhaustive list. Things that are there: couch, chair, headphones, bathroom nearby, food and drinks, blanket, etc.

### *Take the psilocybin*

You will present the participant with the psilocybin (tea/truffles/other). Explain that you will go over the intentions after eating it. Explain that the participant will start feeling effects after about 30 minutes or more.

At this moment the participant will eat the truffles (with bastogne cookies), this may change over time.

### *Using the bathroom*

The participant is motivated to use the bathroom right after taking the psilocybin, this is a good moment to empty yourself, so that you can have all the time to sit/lie down and enjoy the experience.

Remind the participant that if needed, the guide will be able to assist the journey towards the bathroom during the active session.

### *Shaping expectation of how to approach them*

Explain (just like in the preparation meeting) to the participant that the session is an exploration of his/her own mind. The goals you have talked about (and will in the next step) are something you can work on for a very long time and that the session will be the kickstart to making progress. You, the guide, don't have the answers for them, but will be able to guide them to those answers. You will be there when the participant needs you.

Inform the participant that the goal is to "stay internal" as much as possible. This means they are encouraged to spend the session lying down, with eyeshades on, listening to music through headphones. While they will be encouraged to "stay internal", the participant may elect to take the eyeshades and/or headphones off at any time. The participant also has the option to request periods of silence, and the guides have the option to make adjustments in the musical program to fit the unfolding experience. Guides should aim to use music to support the experience without being intrusive.

Everything you will experience is ok. There is no need to doubt what you're saying, or that it makes sense. Participants often express this feeling, but in most cases what you're saying is perfectly valid.

### *The canoe analogy story you can use*

The skill of working with psychedelics is in some ways similar to the skill of paddling a canoe down a river flowing through a canyon. On the river, you set out with companions. In your canoe there are people paddling with you who can help you to get where you want to go.

The analogy with the psychedelic journey is that you are also not alone. Your guide will be with you at all times so you can relax knowing that your environment is safe and you will get the support you need from someone who you can trust.

On the river, when you push off your canoe from the shore, the banks gently rise beside you, guiding the direction of the journey. The banks are lush with trees, shrubs and grass. It's quite exciting to embark on this voyage, and the many people who have gone before you often felt a little nervous at the start. This is okay. It means it matters. You have committed to the journey and the river will now take you on your way to your destination where you can safely carry your canoe away from the flowing river.



The analogy with psychedelics is that once you take the psilocybin, you are also committed to the journey and there is only one direction to go - which is down the river of time.

There are many factors that influence the experience of the canoe travelling down the river. One of them is the breeze, which can gently nudge you along or can come upstream. Within the psychedelic journey the environment of the experience is analogous to the breeze. The music, eyeshades and the setting of the room are all powerful and important parts of creating safety and a positive environment.

Another factor that influences the experience of canoeing in a canyon river is the fact that you have a paddle, as it is not just the breeze which influences where you go. You can paddle the canoe to the left or right of the river and you can move around obstacles on your journey.

Within the psychedelic journey the paddle is analogous to the fact that you can make choices about where in your mind you focus your attention. You can pick and choose the parts of yourself you would like to explore. You can choose to stay in particular areas and to avoid others.

On a river, there are times when the water flows faster and becomes turbulent. You can be comforted by knowing that the guide is familiar with this river. There are life jackets to ensure everyone is safe and always above the water.

Within the psychedelic journey the lifejacket is analogous to meditation and staying focused on breathing. A skillful person who uses psychedelic medicine will practice taking long slow deep breaths and focusing on the sensations of breathing to relax and induce a sense of calm, which allows the focus to remain where you want it.

### *Come-on*

During the come-on phase of the active session, you can talk with the participant about their goals and intentions, their personal life, and more. The main goal is to deepen the relationship between the guide and the participant. Secondary is to maintain the calm and trustworthy grounding the guide offers.

The conversation should focus on the participant, not the guide. You are free to divulge details of your own life, but steer the conversation back to the participant. Remind them that it's about their journey, not yours.

At the middle of the come-on you can optionally offer to guide a breathing exercise. Remind the participant that they can always return to the breathing exercise, also during the active session.

At the late stage of the come-on, offer the headphones and ask the participant to lie down. Start the playlist.

### *Active session*

During this phase you will guide the participant when needed. You will be the one that offers a hand when needed, asks questions as to what the participant is experiencing, and help with music, toilet, etc.

In the 'how to be a good guide' session, there is more in-depth information on what to do in specific situations. Important to know is that you don't interfere too early (e.g. when having a challenging experience).

As a guide you will make notes on how the session is going and write down specific things if the participant describes anything in particular and/or asks you to make notes on something.

But mostly, you will be there to offer a grounding presence that gives the participant room to explore.

Over time we will learn how much interaction is the average/optimal amount. For now we recommend that several prompts about the current state of the participant and his or her goals and intentions are enough. Examples of prompts are:

- How are you currently feeling?
- Can you describe what you're thinking about?
- Do I need to remind you about the topics you wanted to think about?

A final note on the active session. As a guide you will have large swaths of time in which you don't need to do anything. This is ok. You can read a book or write something down. It's not ok to be on your phone (you will not be present).

#### *Come-down*

During the come-down you can check in with the participant to recap what he or she has experienced. This may happen fairly early, or after a period of silent contemplation and continued listening to music.

If not already happened, you can guide the participant to the toilet.

In the conversation with the participant, you can prompt the following:

- What did you experience?
- Can you describe what you went through?
- How does your body feel?
- What insights did you gather?

#### *Integration instructions*

Tomorrow you will write down what you've experienced. We will provide a template and we recommend spending at least an hour writing down and contemplating what you've experienced. You can of course already make some notes today but we recommend writing it all out when you're fresh again tomorrow.

We recommend that you speak with a friend or loved one about the experience so that by speaking out loud about it, you can again gain new creative insights.

#### *Ending the session*

After the come-down and integration instructions the participant is able to go home. Let them know you will send them an email in the next hour with some notes and the integration document.

Check if the participant really is ready to go out again, and say goodbye with a hug.

### Checklist J

A chronological checklist that the guide has present during the session. You are to check this before the active session and the checklist below at the end of the day.

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checklist H done                   | T0-20       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out steps of the day           | T20-35      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explain all attributes of the room | T35-45      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psilocybin taken                   | T45         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time noted                         | T50-T55     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaping expectations               | T55-T1.10   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Come-on discussion                 | T1.10-T1.30 |

### Checklist K

The second part of the chronological checklist, to be done checked before the participant leaves.

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active session                            | T1.30-T5.30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Come-down discussion                      | T5.30-T6.10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integration instructions                  | T6.10-T6.40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date and time set for integration meeting | T6.40-T6.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check if participant is ready to go home  | T6.50-T7.00 |

## After Session Email

After the session, you will send an email with your notes and the integration template. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (7. After Session Email)

### Checklist L

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Have you entered the information (date, time)
- Have you added the notes you made
- Is there an attachment in .pdf form (see [folder](#) - 4. Integration Info)
- And one in .docx (the template for the participant)
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (O-P)

## Integration Reminder email

If the participants emails back their document, thank them for it. Then one day before the integration meeting, you can email them a reminder - with possibly a reminder if they didn't email their document. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (8. Integration Reminder Email)

### Checklist M

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Have you entered the information (date, time)
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (Q)

## 5. Integration



The integration process consists of work done by the participant, an integration meeting (one week after the session), and continued exploration, community support, and voluntary homework. During the integration meeting, you will look back at what the experience has brought the participant and how to continue to explore this.

Here we describe the integration session and some of the tools that you will inform the participant of. The participant will also be given these as a .pdf to further study at a later date.

Also explained is a set-up for further reminders that we might send the participants.

### ***Guide preparation***

The guide should reserve time before the integration meeting to (again) read the notes of the day and the integration document as provided by the participant.

#### **Checklist N**

##### *Guide preparation*

- Well-rested and present
- Read the [integration document](#) of the participant

### ***Integration meeting***

During the integration meeting you will look back at the session, talk about lessons learnt, and look forward to how to keep learning.

#### *Recap & Lessons learnt*

Check in with the participant, see how she is doing.

Go through the participants' document (and/or other files the participant sent back). Ask about the positive and challenging aspects of the session. And take your time to discuss the intentions/goals the participant had.

#### *Continued learning*

Ask about the plan for integration and acting on the insights. What actionables can the participant undertake? What (if anything) needs to be changed? And is that up to the participant to do, or is help/participation of others needed?

Ask about the home environment or significant social contacts after the experience. Interactions with others (e.g. partner, family or friends) who are supportive can greatly help the participant. If

they are not supportive, encourage the participant to find others who are willing to discuss the session and support him/her in changes to be made.

If the participant reports increased anxiety or distressing disorientation, explain that this is common and a natural part of the process. You can make an analogy to a muscle that has done a workout. It might hurt at first, but after a while the muscle will grow back bigger.

Also talk about the brain as a pattern recognition machine. You can remind the participant of the analogy and discuss how it takes effort to make new patterns. The session is just the start of making those. Don't expect the old patterns to be gone immediately, but that they will subside if you focus on the new ones. Just like the bicep from the last example, the more you work on it, the stronger it becomes.

#### *Ask for feedback*

- Ask for feedback to help improve the guiding process in the future:
- How was the session guide?
- How was the room / music / space?
- Did you feel safe?
- Was the preparation adequate?
- Can you offer any feedback to help improve the experience in the future?

#### **Checklist O**

##### *Integration session checklist*

- Session recapped
- Discussed how to integrate lessons learnt
- Feedback asked
- Referral asked

### ***After Integration Email***

After the integration meeting, you can send the participant the final information for now. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (9. After Integration Email)

#### **Checklist P**

##### *What you need to check when sending the email*

- Is there an attachment in .pdf form (see [folder](#) - 5. Integration Info (long) )
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (R)

### ***One Month Follow Up***

One month after the integration meeting, you can send the participant a follow up email to check how she is doing. You can find it in [Blossom Standard Emails](#) (10. One Month Follow Up)

*Note: we might automate this part and/or use an email service provider for everything. I will update the protocol accordingly.*

#### **Checklist Q**

*What you need to check when sending the email*

- Is there an attachment - their own experience document (see [folder](#) - 2 Participant Files)
- Is there an attachment in .pdf form (see [folder](#) - 5. Integration Info (long) )
- Checkmark in [Google Sheet](#) (S)

Some things that we can add later (as separate blocks possibly on a website):

- Referral program ideas (how to ask people to refer / how to make that as easy as can be)
- Questionnaires (to do research and/or to get feedback)
  - Have the research ones validated and standardized (to make it possible to synthesize those from different centers)
- Tips and tricks about automation (of email and other non-human/non-core tasks)
- More follow up work! (calls / emails / meetings / when to do it again)

## 6. Questionnaires

### **PANAS (start, after 1 month, after 1 year)**

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-SF) (Watson and Clark 1994, 1997)

Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.

Very slightly or not at all A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely

PANAS 1 Interested 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 2 Distressed 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 3 Excited 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 4 Upset 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 5 Strong 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 6 Guilty 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 7 Scared 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 8 Hostile 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 9 Enthusiastic 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 10 Proud 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 11 Irritable 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 12 Alert 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 13 Ashamed 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 14 Inspired 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 15 Nervous 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 16 Determined 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 17 Attentive 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 18 Jittery 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 19 Active 1 2 3 4 5

PANAS 20 Afraid

Scoring:

Positive Affect Score: Add the scores on items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19. Scores can range from 10 – 50, with higher scores representing higher levels of positive affect. Mean Scores: 33.3 (SD±7.2)

Negative Affect Score: Add the scores on items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 20.

Scores can range from 10 – 50, with lower scores representing lower levels of negative affect.

Mean Score: 17.4 (SD ± 6.2)

Your scores on the PANAS: Positive: \_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: the PANAS scales. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 54(6), 1063.

### **Meaningfulness (1 week, 1 month, 1 year after)**

How personally meaningful was the experience?

(rated from 1-8, with 1=no more than routine, everyday experiences; 7=among the 5 most meaningful experiences of my life; and 8=the single most meaningful experience of my life).

Indicate the degree to which the experience was spiritually significant to you? (rated from 1 to 6, with 1=not at all; 5=among the 5 most spiritually significant experiences of my life; 6=the single most spiritually significant experience of my life).

Do you believe that the experience and your contemplation of that experience have led to change in your current sense of personal well-being or life satisfaction?

(rated from +3=Increased very much; 0=No change; -3=Decreased very much).

Integration Questionnaire

- 
- MORE QUESTIONS?

Ook nog questionnaire na 14 maanden (ala Griffiths 2008, mystical scale verhoogde daar)

- Forty-three items in this questionnaire comprised the previously described Pahnke-Richards Mystical Experience Questionnaire



## 7. Recommended Materials

Books

*Later stukje op de site*

Guides

Websites

## 8. Ethics Guide (draft - make separate later)

Aa

Code of Ethics for Spiritual Guides -

[https://entheoguide.fandom.com/wiki/Code\\_of\\_Ethics\\_for\\_Spiritual\\_Guides](https://entheoguide.fandom.com/wiki/Code_of_Ethics_for_Spiritual_Guides)

This code of ethics, written by R. Jesse, Convener (originally at [csp.org/code](http://csp.org/code)), is a wise outline of some of the ethical and moral responsibilities of those who choose to guide an individual through a psychedelic experience.

=== People have long sought to enrich their lives and to awaken to their full natures through spiritual practices including prayer, meditation, mind-body disciplines, service, ritual, community liturgy, holy-day and seasonal observances, and rites of passage. "Primary religious practices" are those intended, or especially likely, to bring about exceptional states of consciousness such as the direct experience of the divine, of cosmic unity, or of boundless awareness. ===

In any community, there are some who feel called to assist others along spiritual paths, and who are known as ministers, rabbis, pastors, curanderas, shamans, priests, or other titles. We call such people 'guides': those experienced in some practice, familiar with the terrain, and who act to facilitate the spiritual practices of others. A guide need not claim exclusive or definitive knowledge of the terrain. Spiritual practices, and especially primary religious practices, carry risks. Therefore, when an individual chooses to practice with the assistance of a guide, both take on special responsibilities. The Council on Spiritual Practices proposes the following Code of Ethics for those who serve as spiritual guides.

1. [Intention] Spiritual guides are to practice and serve in ways that cultivate awareness, empathy, and wisdom.

2. [Serving Society] Spiritual

practices are to be designed and conducted in ways that respect the common good, with due regard for public safety, health, and order. Because the increased awareness gained from spiritual practices can catalyze desire for personal and social change, guides shall use special care to help direct the energies of those they serve, as well as their own, in responsible ways that reflect a loving regard for all life.

1. [Serving Individuals] Spiritual

guides shall respect and seek to preserve the autonomy and dignity of each person. Participation in any primary religious practice must be voluntary and based on prior disclosure and consent given individually by each participant while in an ordinary state of consciousness. Disclosure shall include, at a minimum, discussion of any elements of the practice that could reasonably be seen as presenting physical or psychological risks. In particular, participants must be warned that primary religious experience can be difficult and dramatically transformative. Guides shall make reasonable preparations to protect each participant's health and safety during spiritual practices and in the periods of vulnerability that may follow. Limits on the behaviors of participants and facilitators are to be made clear and agreed upon in advance of any session. Appropriate customs of confidentiality are to be established and honored.

1. [Competence] Spiritual guides

shall assist with only those practices for which they are qualified by personal experience and by training or education.

1. [Integrity] Spiritual guides

shall strive to be aware of how their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations affect their work. During primary religious practices, participants may be especially open to suggestion, manipulation, and exploitation; therefore, guides pledge to protect participants and not to allow anyone to use that vulnerability in ways that harm participants or others.

1. [Quiet Presence] To help

safeguard against the harmful consequences of personal and organizational ambition, spiritual communities are usually better allowed to grow through attraction rather than active promotion.

1. [Not for Profit] Spiritual

practices are to be conducted in the spirit of service. Spiritual guides shall strive to accommodate participants without regard to their ability to pay or make donations.

1. [Tolerance] Spiritual guides shall practice openness and respect towards people whose beliefs are in apparent contradiction to their own.

2. [Peer Review] Each guide shall

seek the counsel of other guides to help ensure the wholesomeness of his or her practices and shall offer counsel when there is need.