



Psychedelics for Serious Illness and End of Life Care

Implications for Therapists

Lisa Yeager, MSW, LICSW, CPTR



Areas of focus



Education



Clinical Skills



Education



- ▶ As the psychedelics are rescheduled by the FDA and become available to clients, one of the important first steps for clinicians will be to gain education about psychedelics:
- ▶ How do psychedelics differ from each other: psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, mescaline, LSD
- ▶ How are psychedelics administered: oral, IV, nasal, intramuscular
- ▶ Length of duration and how this differs for each psychedelic
- ▶ What are the benefits of each psychedelic? Example: psilocybin for depress and end of life distress, MDMA for PTSD
- ▶ What are the contraindications and exclusionary criteria for each psychedelic?



Education - continued

- ▶ There are many different resources available for education about psychedelics, ranging from online seminars, online training, books and in person trainings-some with certifications offered.
- ▶ A short of list of websites and organizations for training include:
 - * California Institute of Integral Studies-CPTR Program (www.ciis.edu)
 - * Naropa University (<https://www.naropa.edu/academics/extended-campus/psychedelic-assisted-therapies-certificate/>)
 - *Fluence (<https://www.fluencetraining.com/>)
 - * MAPS-Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (www.maps.org)
 - *Psychedelic Support Network (www.psychedelic.support)



Clinical Skills



- ▶ Janis Phelps, PhD suggests the following essential skills for psychedelic therapists in her paper titled: Developing Guidelines and Competencies for the Training of Psychedelic Therapists:
 - ▶ 1. Empathetic Abiding presence – deep attention, doing by not doing
 - ▶ 2. Trust Enhancement – trust of therapist and trust in the inherent inner healer within each client, normalizing the unexpected within the experience
 - ▶ 3. Spiritual Intelligence – awareness of something greater than ourselves and the connectivity with all things
 - ▶ 4. Knowledge of the physical and psychological effects of psychedelics
 - ▶ 5. Therapist self-awareness and ethical integrity-awareness of transference, countertransference, and power dynamics that can be amplified during psychedelic experiences, thorough awareness of supportive touch and consent
 - ▶ 6. Proficiency in complimentary therapies such as IFS-Internal Family Systems, Hakomi, somatic therapies, guided visualizations.



Clinical Skills



- ▶ Bill Richards, clinical psychologist and author of Sacred Knowledge offers the following essential skills of psychedelic therapists:
- ▶ 1. Ability to establish rapport
- ▶ 2. Ability to have a focused presence
- ▶ 3. Develop an intuitive sensitivity
- ▶ 4. Communicate and demonstrate non-judgmental acceptance
- ▶ 5. Practice nuanced self-disclosure
- ▶ Additionally bringing a sense of humor, a sense of wonder for the potential of the Inner Healer and respect for different life experiences are also essential.



Clinical Skills



- ▶ James Miller suggests in his book-Art of Being a Healing Presence the skills of:
 - ▶ 1. Doing your own work, being curious about yourself
 - ▶ 2. Being open
 - ▶ 3. Setting an intention of being a guiding presence
 - ▶ 4. Creating a setting that is supportive of the client's unique needs
 - ▶ 5. Honoring the client
 - ▶ 6. Listening deeply
 - ▶ 7. Practicing Boundaries- being aware of transference, counter transference both of which can be amplified when the client is in a non-ordinary state.



Clinical Skills



- **Incorporating the guiding principles of Trauma Informed Care:**
- Safety, Choice, Collaboration, Trustworthiness, Empowerment

- **Incorporating the 8 C qualities within the IFS Model:**
- Curious, Compassionate, Calm, Creative, Confident, Clear, Connected and Courageous within ourselves while supporting clients to connect with these qualities within themselves.