



Decriminalize Maine

Decriminalize Maine is an organization seeking to decriminalize the possession, adult use, and cultivation of plant and fungal medicines (psychedelics, sometimes known as entheogens).

What Are Psychedelics?

Psychedelics are biochemical substances, typically of plant origin, that when ingested for religious, spiritual, medicinal, or recreational purposes can produce expanded, non-ordinary states of consciousness. These substances contain compounds such as tryptamines, phenethylamines, indole amines, or others that act upon the central nervous systems of the human body. These compounds can illicit altered states of consciousness and result in the benefits that they are known for.

Common Psychedelic Plants and Fungi:

- Psilocybin containing mushrooms
- Cannabis
- DMT-containing plants; Ayahuasca
- Tabernanthe Iboga; Ibogaine
- Mescaline-containing cacti, such as San Pedro*

* Due to the vulnerable ecological status of Peyote combined with its religious and cultural significance to Indigenous peoples, Peyote is not included on *Decriminalize Maine's* list.

Decriminalize Maine Commits To:

Equity and Inclusion

We embrace a decolonized framework that acknowledges the historical use of psychedelics by Indigenous communities, that protects Indigenous resources, and that resists policies harmful to those communities (for example, the over-harvesting of Peyote).



Education

A key objective of *Decriminalize Maine* is to provide our communities with accessible information related to the safe use of plant and fungal medicines. We also advocate for harm reduction based policies and practices around all drug use.

Decriminalization

We advocate for a decriminalized approach to all substance use and specifically for an end to the prosecution of persons involved in the use of entheogenic plants, plant-based compounds, and fungi.



Psychedelics, The Landscape:

Plant-based medicines are one of the oldest known healing modalities on the planet that are still used today. Archeological evidence shows that since the Neolithic age, humans have used plant medicines for healing and treatment of illnesses, while also working ceremonially with the plants for spiritual wellbeing.

In the mid-twentieth century, Western medicine began studying Psilocybin, DMT, Ibogaine, and other psychedelic drugs in clinical settings. This research illuminated effective treatments for substance use disorders, as well as such mental health issues as depression and anxiety. President Nixon's War on Drugs put a stop to this research with the introduction of the The Controlled Substances Act in 1970. However, in the last twenty years, there has been significant renewed scientific interest in these substances leading to a renaissance in research within leading medical research centers.

Many prominent institutions are actively engaged in researching
entheogenic medicines, including:

- Johns Hopkins Medicine
- NYU - Langone Health
- Harvard University
- Imperial College London
- Columbia University
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- UC Berkeley
- UC San Francisco
- Stanford University
- University of Wisconsin
- University of Miami
- University Hospital Basel



Reported Benefits & Safety

Therapeutic

- Treatment for:
 - Obsessive compulsive disorder
 - Anxiety
 - Depression (including treatment resistant depression)
 - Eating disorders
 - Suicidal thoughts
 - End of life care
- Addiction relief for:
 - Alcohol
 - Cocaine
 - Tobacco
 - Opioids
 - Other substances and/or non-drug related addictions

Social

- Deeper connection to nature
- Lower recidivism
- Lower partner violence
- Increased creativity
- Increased well-being

Safety and Addiction

Evidence shows that the psychedelics are much safer than the major addictive drugs, having extremely low levels of toxicity, and producing little if any physical dependence. [14] The effects of these substances are heavily dependent on context in which they are used, commonly referred to as set and setting.

What is **Set and Setting**?

Set

The mindset, character, expectations, and intentions of the participating individual.

Setting

The social and physical surrounding in which the experience is taking place.



US Communities Making Change

In recognizing the evidence-based benefits of psychedelics, a growing number of communities in the US have decriminalized their use.

These include:

- Denver, Colorado
- Oakland, California
- Santa Cruz, California
- Arcata, California
- Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Hazel Park, Michigan
- Detroit, Michigan
- Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Northhampton, Massachusetts
- Easthampton, Massachusetts
- Somerville, Massachusetts
- Port Townsend, Washington
- Seattle, Washington
- Washington, DC

- In November 2020, **Oregon** became the first state in the U.S. to **legalize Psilocybin-assisted therapy** and in February 2021, Oregon decriminalized personal possession of small amounts of all drugs.

- In 2021, **New Jersey** passed a bill to decriminalize possession of under one ounce of Psilocybin mushrooms.



Legislative Models

Give

Gather

Grow

The **Give, Gather, Grow** Model of Decriminalization:

- Provides broad access across communities & creates low barriers for public use by allowing individuals (or co-ops) to give, gather, and grow plant medicines in their homes or shared community space
- Acknowledges the use of psychedelics outside of a purely medical context, allowing for psychospiritual growth/development
- Respects cognitive liberty, and maintaining our inherent relationship with nature
- Protects people who are already using these plants/medicine
- Resists exploitative commercialization, encourages equitable access

Decriminalize Maine supports this model.

Currently adopted by the state of Oregon, this model emphasizes a therapeutic context for use of plant medicines typically involving a series of preparatory meetings, medicine-administration days, and on-going aftercare in the form of therapy to integrate the entheogenic experience with the patient's everyday experience while attending to such issues as trauma, addiction, depression, and anxiety. While there is always an importance for a medical model, we recognize that this pathway alone creates unequal access.

Medical +
Therapeutic

Recreational +
Commercial

A modality similar to cannabis dispensaries providing regulated products to consumers while overseen by governmental entities.



Did You Know?

- A 2020 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found **one out of two** patients had remission in major depression after only two psilocybin therapy sessions - **four times** more effective than conventional medication. [1]
- For **patients with a terminal illness**, double-blind trials show a single dose of psilocybin mushrooms can substantially reduce long-term anxiety and depression with a nearly **80%** clinical response rate. [2]
- A 2020 meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials dating back two decades found that psychedelic-assisted therapy is highly effective in treating PTSD, depression, anxiety linked to terminal illness, and anxiety linked to autism. [3]
- On average, **2,400 Mainers** die from smoking-related illnesses each year. [4] A 2017 study by Johns Hopkins faculty found that smoking patients achieved an **80% abstinence rate** over six months after psilocybin therapy - a **45% higher success rate** than the most effective FDA-approved smoking cessation drug. [5]

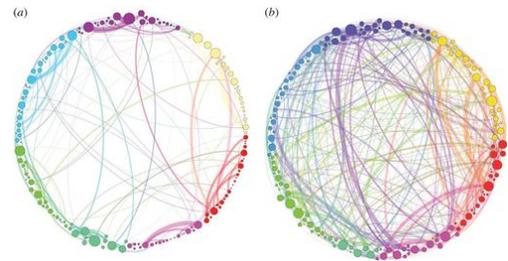


Did You Know? *cont.*

- In 2021, there were **636 opioid related deaths** in Maine. [6] A 2017 Harvard University study found that in 44,000 Americans surveyed, psychedelic use was associated with a **40%** reduced risk of opioid abuse. [7] Ibogaine treatments, an African psychedelic, helped people with opioid addiction dramatically reduce “withdrawal symptoms and drug use in subjects for whom other treatments had been unsuccessful” and achieve “sustained reduced use in dependent individuals” over 12 months. [8,9]

- Entheogen treatments can substantially reduce distress, suicidal planning, and suicidal ideation. [12]

- Interconnections between networks of brain activity during normal waking consciousness (left) and after receiving Psilocybin (right). Different networks are depicted as small colored circles around rim. Upon taking Psilocybin, new neural pathways arise. [15]



- “Cluster Headaches” are severe migraines with no known cures that drive many to suicide or opioids. A study by the American Academy of Neurology interviewed patients who had tried psilocybin as a treatment. **Five in seven** reported psilocybin ended the headaches; **one in two** reported a complete termination of symptoms. [13]

In light of all the evidence presented, and the rapid integration of psychedelics into mainstream society, Decriminalize Maine looks to our state municipalities to join those around the country to decriminalize psychedelics. We believe that by working with our communities now, we may address the future of psychedelics in a way that upholds the community values unique to Maine. The City of Portland has a responsibility to empower its community and put public health above incarceration. Psychedelics are happening; the time for action is now.

For more information and/or to get involved please contact us:

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