



## Psychological Support Services: Questions and Facts

Is it legal to provide psychedelic assisted psychotherapy in Australia?

Unless the psychedelic assisted psychotherapy is part of a legal clinical trial or SAS-B application in a hospital setting or clinical setting then the answer is NO.

Is it ethical/legal to disclose my personal legal use of psychedelics to a client?

It is legal to disclose personal legal use of psychedelics to a client and you are not breaking the law by discussing personal experiences of taking psychedelics.

However, a case-by-case assessment of the appropriateness of self-disclosure is necessary, as self-disclosure might be therapeutically beneficial in one case but detrimental in another.

Therapists should be engaged in regular professional supervision to ensure that they are maintaining professional boundaries with clients and are doing no harm in regard to their assessment, diagnosis and therapeutic outcomes with clients.

Is it legal to provide psychedelic integration therapy in Australia?

**Yes. It is not illegal to provide integration therapy to people who have utilised psychedelics.**

Although psychedelics are illegal in Australia clients can discuss their personal experiences of taking psychedelics (in legal and illegal context) with a mental health professional in a confidential and supportive environment.

Professionals should not encourage illegal use of psychedelics and should educate clients about the laws and associated risks of breaking the law. Standard codes of ethics apply, for example patient confidentiality, suicide risk assessment, duty of care to report harm to self and others.

Is it ethical/legal to discuss the positives aspects of psychedelics given they are currently illegal in Australia?

Yes. It is ethical to discuss both the risks and benefits of psychedelics in direct relation to empirical research and observational data.

Psychedelics are legal in many locations around the world. Clients should be educated about their rights to access these services overseas and the associated risks and benefits of accessing these legal services.

Mental health professionals should ensure that they are engaging in regular supervision to ensure that they are working ethically with their clients and staying up to date with psychedelic science.

Is it ethical/ legal to educate clients on how to prepare for a psychedelic journey?

It is not ethical to encourage clients to break the law in Australia.

However, if a client is plans on utilising psychedelics it is ethical to discuss with them their safety in regard to harm minimisation, self-care tools and resources, and access to professionals services to help promote physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Can Psychologists and Mental Health Social Workers use Mental Health Care Plans to support someone to address their mental health issues and process their psychedelic experiences?

**Yes.** If a GP refers a client to you who presents with mental health issues and requires support to process their psychedelic experiences the Psychologist and Mental Health Social Worker can address these clinical issues utilises Focused Psychological Strategies as listed below:

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1. Psychoeducation (including motivational interviewing)
2. Cognitive-behavioural therapy including:
  - Behavioural interventions
  - Behaviour modification
  - Exposure techniques
  - Activity scheduling
  - Cognitive interventions
  - Cognitive therapy
3. Relaxation strategies
  - Progressive muscle relaxation
  - Controlled breathing
4. Skills training
  - Problem solving skills and training
  - Anger management
  - Social skills training
  - Communication training
  - Stress management
  - Parent management training
5. Interpersonal therapy (especially for depression)

There is also flexibility to include narrative therapy for clients of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

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