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## OCHI SAFE PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

The following seven actions describe Safe Practice Guidelines and Principles for participation in the OCHI Pilot Program. Entheogenic plants and mushrooms are powerful materials and should be treated with respect. These guidelines should be reviewed by the individual, facilitator, and participating community organization when deciding whether to have an entheogenic experience. Specific considerations and practices of these guidelines will be under regular review and discussion by the participating OCHI community organizations to develop best practices according to local community needs.

### **PHASE 1: Preparing for the Experience**

#### **1. Information:**

Before partaking in entheogenic healing, a review of information on the plant/mushroom that you will be building a relationship with during this practice is essential. Each entheogen has different protocols, unique wisdom, varying durations, and pre/post care practices that should be considered when deciding which entheogen may best support the healing process.

#### **2. Education:**

Entheogens are not for everyone. Before partaking in an entheogenic experience, one should have a complete review of potential physical, psychological, or social risks that may be present. Individuals who are new to the type of medicine they will be experiencing should start with small amounts, using more only after becoming familiar with the material and the terrain. Entheogens can amplify the whole range of human emotions, and having a knowledgeable community of support can be beneficial.

#### **3. Preparation:**

Intentional preparation for entheogens helps to bring focus to the experience. While personal agency in the healing process is essential, some commonly agreed-upon practices may help the preparation process. It is encouraged for each individual, facilitator, and community-based organization to plan preparation practices that are relevant to the participant. The development of individual preparation practices can provide examples to inform the regular review of the guidelines by the participating community-based organizations. Some examples of preparation practices include meditation, yoga, breathing exercises, connecting to nature, eating a healthy diet, and reducing the use of technology. Another example is setting an intention, which can help guide the purpose of the entheogenic experience. The amount of preparation time may vary depending on the individual and should be discussed between the individual, facilitator, and participating community-based organization.

#### **4. Application and Peak Experience:**

While different entheogens require different attention, adhering to basic guidelines can support the experience. Some of these guidelines include attention to a safe set and setting. A safe set means that the individual is prepared for the experience, is informed about what the experience will entail, and is personally ready to have the experience. A safe setting refers to the facilitation and location and aims to provide comfort and security to the participants. It is encouraged that the setting is informed by the needs of the participant as well as the facilitator. For example, setting agreements could include bringing sacred items for an altar, agreeing upon music, preparing the general ambiance, or how to engage during the experience. Research studies indicate these experiences are often reported as healing, profound, sacred, and deserving of respect, and can provide insights and reflections on deep emotions and past trauma

to help heal the individual. These experiences may be difficult and one must be prepared to address any challenging reflections that may emerge.

## **PHASE 2: “The Work”**

### **5. Integration:**

“The Work” begins after the peak experience and refers to the choices one makes every day on how to live a healthy and joyful life. Whileentheogens open up the mind to what is possible, it is “the Work” that makes the difference through integrating the peak experience for better living. Integration is one practice to address the reflections and insights following an entheogenic experience. Integration, in this case, begins the process of meaning-making for an individual as they review their experience. The meaning-making process can be aided by a community of peers to encourage discernment, reflections, discourse, and constructive feedback. Different culturally-relevant community support systems can offer insight into the development of new models for integration. Additionally, peer integration circles are encouraged within and across participating community-based organizations. The integration process provides an opportunity to consider how the insights relate to one’s life before implementation. It is generally recommended to pause and reflect within one’s community support system before finalizing any major life decisions. Note of caution: Entheogenic experiences can expand one’s view of the world and it is important for the participant to be fully aware of the importance of personal grounding and the reduction of external stimulus and information which can overwhelm or sidetrack the intention of the experience. It is advisable to seek peaceful and nurturing activities especially during the first 48-72 hours after the experience, session, or ceremony.

### **6. Implementation and Community Integration:**

Following the integration process is implementation. The Implementation process aims to bring integrated insights into one’s daily life. Often these insights encourage a shift in habitual activities that no longer serve the individual and may require external support to thrive, such as eating a healthier diet, exercising more, meditating, healing personal relationships, and finding a supportive and nourishing community. It is advisable to find a trustworthy community-based organization in which to immerse oneself before, during, and after the experience, session, or ceremonial practice. A healthy community can help with finding job opportunities, volunteering in the community, establishing beneficial practices, finding strong mentors and coaches with whom one feels safe to advise on life choices, and sustainable living, including self-sufficiency.

### **7. Reciprocity and Community:**

The Implementation and Community Integration process may focus more on personal and spiritual growth, restoring one’s roots to nature, and finding a nourishing community in which to practice healthy living. Reciprocity is the act of reaffirming the decision to live healthily through service. To be in service is to show gratitude and humility, two key ingredients for continued personal growth. This includes service to the natural environment with attention toward the sustainability and stewardship of entheogenic plants and mushrooms. Additionally, a growing network of support and reciprocity will help Oakland communities thrive. Studies indicate that personal healing can positively affect the individual, family, community, local organizations, and institutions, creating a feedback loop that can restore the well-being of communities, cities, states, and the planet.