

# Report.

# The Emerging Psychedelic Workforce

November 2023



VITAL



PSYCHEDELICS  
TODAY

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# Introduction.

## Introduction

The most culturally significant shift around psychedelics since the 1960s is currently underway. As promising research emerges, societal attitudes shift, and governments around the globe reform drug legislation, psychedelics are poised to radically change healthcare and wellness—forever.

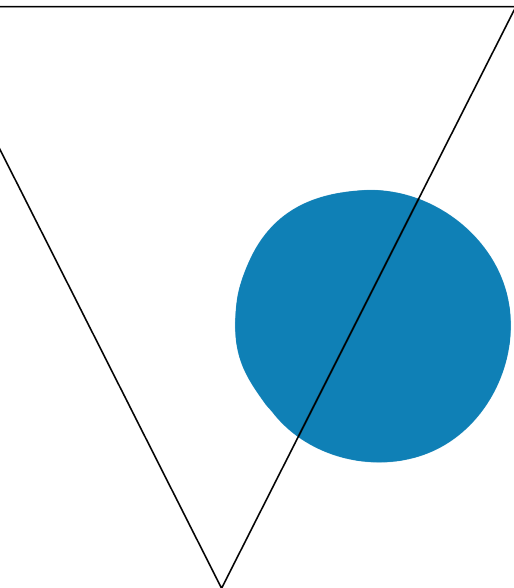
To fully service the needs of the entire population who want to use (and are currently using) psychedelics, the industry will require:

- **A psychedelically knowledgeable workforce of people with special skills—not just doctors and therapists.**
- **A racially, economically, and culturally diverse workforce that can service a broad spectrum of communities.**
- **Accessible and comprehensive training, career opportunities, and a growing community of like-minded professionals empowered to enter and lead the workforce.**

In recent years, many individuals have chosen to pursue a career—or adapt a current career or practice—to include psychedelics in some form. Specialized training programs are preparing professionals to enter or enrich the workforce with psychedelic awareness, and support the healing of the world in a time of an unprecedented global mental health crisis.

Over 2022 and 2023, current psychedelic students and past graduates of the Vital program were surveyed to understand:

- **Who will populate the future psychedelic workforce**
- **How diversity will be present within the field**
- **How workers will be servicing clients, businesses, and communities**



## Methodology & Sample Size

A digital survey was completed by 130 current students and graduates of the Vital program. The insights and assumptions about the future psychedelic workforce presented within the report are based on the findings of the survey, and Vital/Psychedelics Today's observations/anecdotal evidence on trends and trajectory in the areas of psychedelic business, facilitation, general consumption, culture, and beyond.

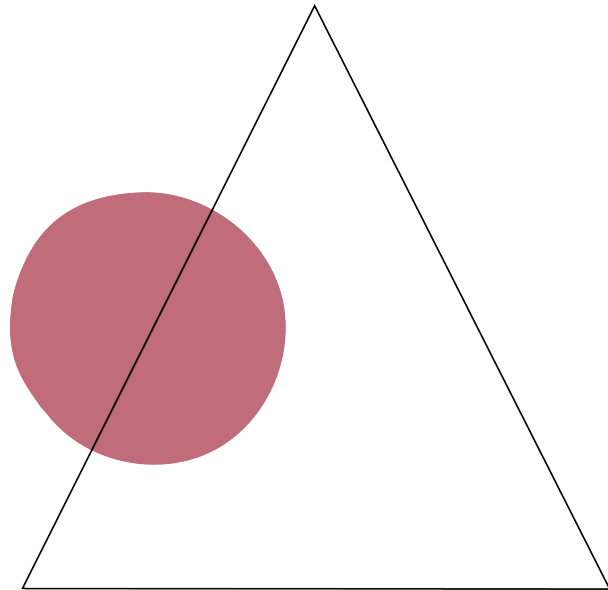
While authors acknowledge the sample size is small relative to the global sum of those engaged in psychedelic work today - and does not fully capture ceremonial or underground contexts of psychedelic work—we propose the findings as a reasonable representation of the **future global psychedelic workforce of trained individuals**. As a fully remote global training program with many scholarship recipients, underground acceptance, and no advanced licensure requirements, Vital's student body is diverse, and populated by professionals who will service a broad spectrum of communities, in a wide variety of capacities—not limited to psychedelic facilitation.

**We offer these findings as a predictive snapshot of the psychedelic workforce, who they are, their motivations, and how they will work in the field.**

## About Vital & Psychedelics Today

**Vital** is a 12-month professional certificate training in the elements of psychedelic-informed practice, harm reduction, and integration, launched by Psychedelics Today in January 2022.

Founded in 2015, **Psychedelics Today** is the planetary leader in psychedelic education, media and advocacy. Through compelling content, thoughtful conversation and industry-leading education for professionals and psychedelic-minded individuals—a community of over 400,000 monthly and 2.2 million annually—Psychedelics Today has the largest global reach of any media and education platform in the modern psychedelic realm.





# Results.

## Demographic Overview

### Gender Identity Distribution in the Psychedelic Workforce:

**Female:** At **67.5%**, females form a significant majority of the workforce. This suggests that women are not only entering the field in substantial numbers but are also actively participating in various roles.

**Male:** Constituting **27.5%** of the workforce, males are also a vital component of the industry.

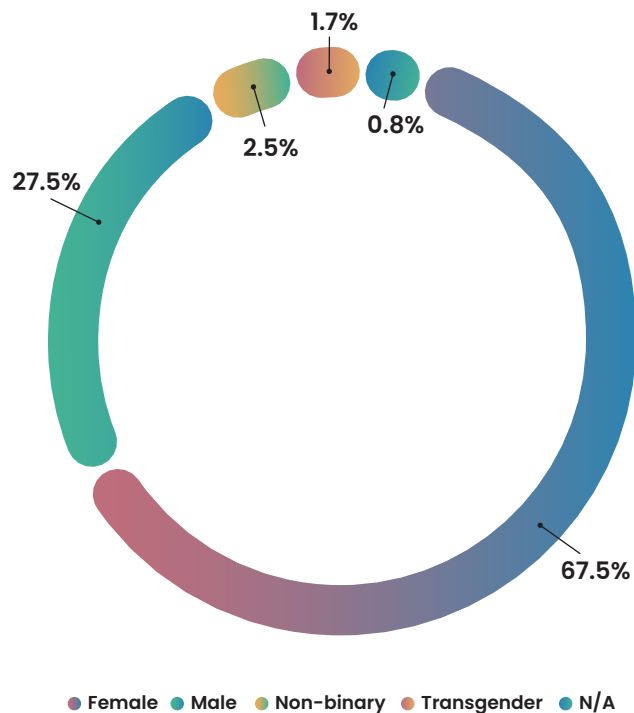
**Non-binary:** With a representation of **2.5%**, non-binary individuals might be a smaller fraction, but their presence is an indicator of the field's progressiveness and inclusivity.

**Transgender:** The **1.7%** representation suggests that transgender individuals are finding opportunities and roles within the psychedelic community.

**Prefer not to answer:** The **0.8%** in this category might represent individuals who value their privacy or believe their gender identity shouldn't influence their professional roles.

Results

**Insights:** The psychedelic field's workforce appears to be breaking some traditional gender norms, with a strong female presence complemented by diverse gender identities. This inclusivity and diversity might shape the field's progression and outcomes in unique ways, and lead to a richer pool of ideas, methods, and approaches to challenges.





### Age Distribution in the Psychedelic Workforce:

**35-44 years old:** At **33%**, this age group is the largest among the workforce. Representing mid-career professionals, they bring a mix of fresh innovations and solid experience to the field.

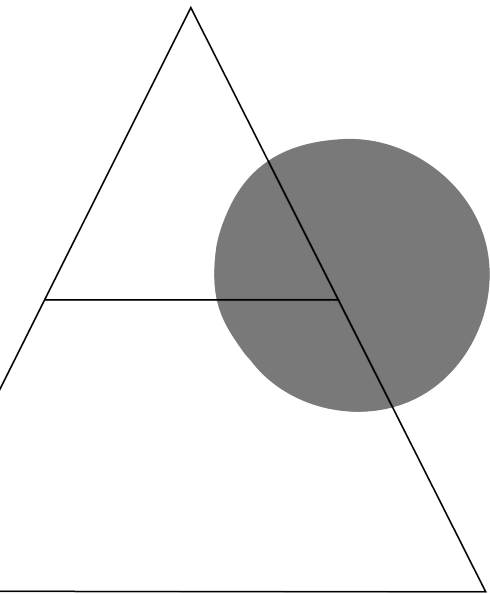
**45-54 years old:** Constituting **27%**, these individuals are seasoned professionals, offering substantial expertise and know-how to the industry.

**26-34 years old:** Representing **19.1%**, this group consists of early-to-mid-career individuals. They might be the ones pioneering newer methodologies, technologies, and perspectives in the field.

**55-64 years old:** At **14.8%**, these individuals bring decades of experience, wisdom, and historical context to their roles - from past psychedelic experience and beyond.

**18-25 years old:** With **3.5%**, this group represents the newest entrants to the field, likely recent graduates. Their fresh perspectives and recent educational experience can provide innovative approaches.

**65+ years old:** Making up **2.6%**, these are the most seasoned individuals, with decades of experience in a wide variety of fields.



**Insights:** The psychedelic field's workforce displays a broad age spectrum, combining the energy of youth with the wisdom of experience. While older professionals can play a crucial role in mentoring, guiding, and providing historical context, younger professionals are poised to take the field forward with fresh insights and modern training. This diverse age distribution ensures a dynamic and evolving field, ready to adapt to future challenges and innovations.

### Sexual Orientation Distribution in the Psychedelic Workforce:



**Heterosexual:** The majority of the workforce identifies as heterosexual, making up **66.4%**. This is consistent with the majority in many populations but also showcases that a substantial portion of the workforce identifies differently.



**Bisexual:** Making up **13.6%**, bisexual individuals represent a significant portion, showcasing diversity in sexual orientation within the industry.



**Pansexual:** Constituting **8.8%** of the workforce, pansexual individuals have a notable presence.

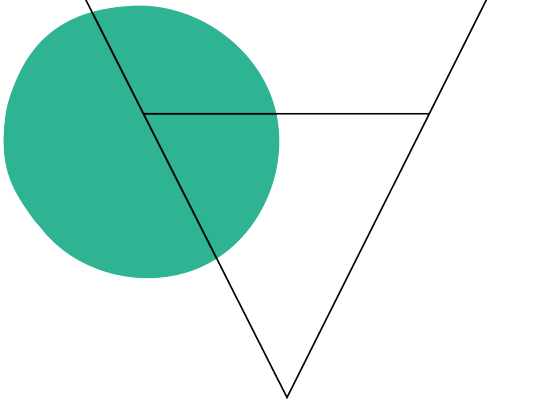
**Prefer not to answer:** At **7.2%**, this category might include individuals who either value their privacy, believe their sexual orientation shouldn't influence their professional roles, or are unsure or exploring their orientation.



**Homosexual:** Homosexual individuals, both gay and lesbian, make up **3.2%** of the workforce.

**Other:** With **0.8%**, this might include individuals who identify with orientations not specifically listed or those who have a unique understanding of their own sexuality.

**Insights:** Over a third of the psychedelic workforce identifies with sexual orientations other than heterosexual. This is an indicator of a diverse and inclusive environment where individuals from various backgrounds may find or create opportunities. The existence of a diverse workforce (in terms of sexual orientation) might suggest that the psychedelic field is a safe space for individuals regardless of their sexuality. It's essential to continue fostering this inclusive environment, nurture opportunities to develop initiatives or programs tailored to specific groups within the community, and ensure that all members feel supported and represented.



### Ethnicity Distribution in the Psychedelic Workforce:

**White:** The majority of the workforce identifies as White, comprising **64%**.

**Hispanic or Latino:** Making up **13.6%**, the Hispanic or Latino demographic represents a significant portion of the workforce.

**Other:** At **9.6%**, this category might include individuals from mixed ethnic backgrounds, Indigenous communities, or other ethnic groups not explicitly listed.

**Black or African American:** This group constitutes **5.6%** of the workforce, suggesting some representation but also potential room for increasing diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Asian:** Asians make up **4.8%** of the workforce. While they are represented, there might be opportunities to further diversify the field by engaging more individuals from this demographic.

**Prefer not to answer:** **2.4%** chose not to disclose their ethnicity. This choice might be driven by privacy concerns, or beliefs that ethnicity shouldn't influence professional roles.

**Insights:** While the majority of the professionally trained workforce identifies as White, nearly 36% belong to other ethnicities. The combined representation of Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian, and Other suggests a diversifying workforce. While there is ethnic diversity, there may be potential areas to focus on in terms of outreach and inclusion to ensure a balanced representation from all ethnic backgrounds. This will only serve to further strengthen and enrich the psychedelic field.

### Combined Household Income Distribution:

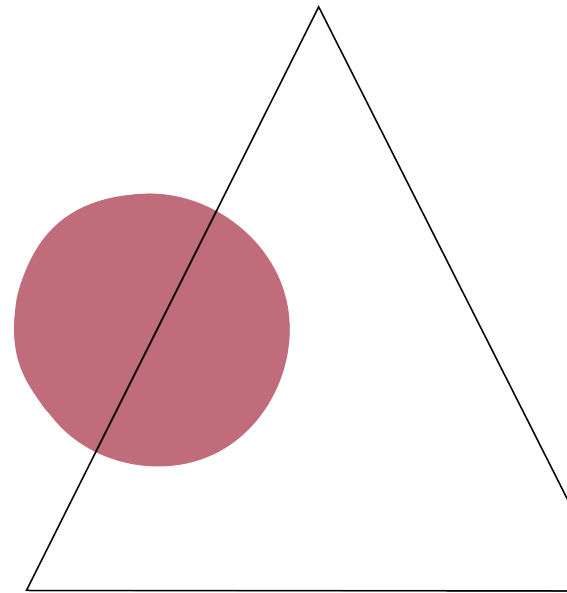
**More than \$100,000:** This category has the highest representation with **32.2%**. These individuals belong to a higher income bracket, potentially reflecting advanced professional roles, dual-income households, or successful entrepreneurial ventures.

**\$25,000-\$50,000 and \$75,000-\$100,000:** Both these categories are equally represented, each capturing **19%**. This demonstrates a middle-income distribution among students who seek professional training.

**Less than \$25,000:** At **15.7%**, these individuals fall into a lower income bracket. This could include those at the beginning of their careers, part-time workers, or those transitioning between jobs.

**\$50,000-\$75,000:** Comprising **14%**, this category signifies a mid-range income level.

Section Title



**Insights:** The income distribution could be indicative of broader societal and economic trends, with a substantial middle class and a significant portion of higher earners. Those in the lower income bracket might represent individuals who are early in their careers or those exploring new opportunities. As the field grows, there could be upward economic mobility for these individuals. Understanding this income distribution can help in tailoring services, products, or programs to different economic demographics.

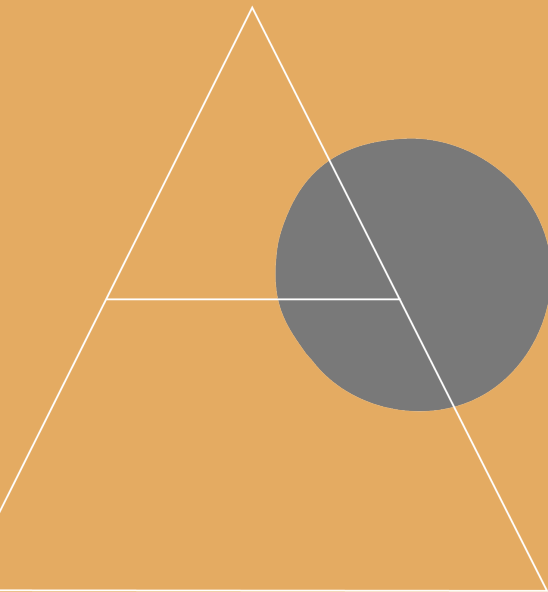


### Area of Residence Distribution:

**Urban (high population density): 44.1%** reside in urban areas. These individuals live in areas with high population densities, typically characterized by cities with many amenities, job opportunities, and diverse populations.

**Suburban (medium population density): 35.4%** live in suburban areas. These areas often represent a balance between the hustle and bustle of city life and the tranquility of rural settings, usually characterized by residential neighborhoods close to urban centers.

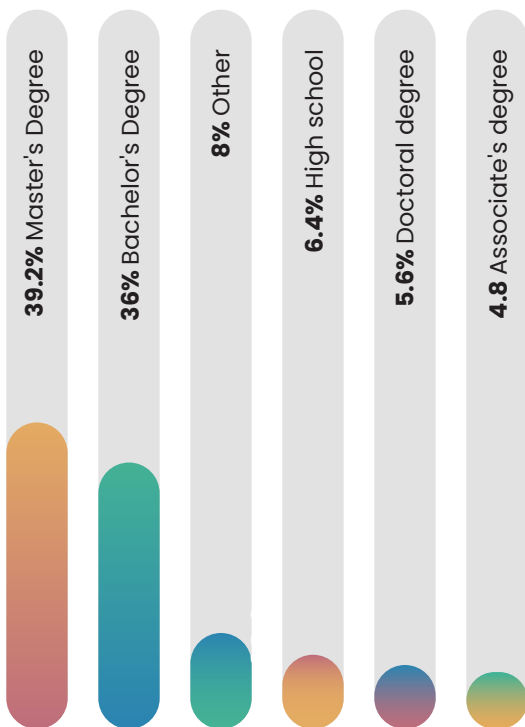
**Rural (low population density): 20.5%** reside in rural areas. These areas are generally characterized by lower population densities, open spaces, and a closer connection to nature.



**Insights:** The distribution might be indicative of broader societal living preferences, with many gravitating towards urban and suburban areas for work, education, and lifestyle opportunities, while still maintaining a significant representation from rural areas.

## Education and Employment Background

### Educational Background Distribution (Pre-Psychedelic Training):



**Master's degree:** With **39.2%** having a Master's degree, it's clear that many individuals in this field have sought higher education beyond an undergraduate degree.

**Bachelor's degree:** At **36%**, those with a Bachelor's degree form a significant chunk. These individuals bring a diverse set of undergraduate experiences to the field.

**Other:** Comprising **8%**, this category might include those with postgraduate diplomas, professional degrees, certifications, or other non-traditional educational paths.

**High school:** **6.4%** have their highest education as high school. This could represent individuals who have taken non-traditional routes into the field or might have rich underground experiences that don't necessarily come from formal higher education.

**Doctoral degree:** **5.6%** have achieved the pinnacle of academic study with a doctoral degree. Their deep specialization could be invaluable, potentially contributing advanced research or expertise.

**Associate's degree:** With **4.8%**, these individuals have education beyond high school, which might be more vocationally oriented or specialized in certain areas.

Results

**Insights:** A striking observation is that over **80%** of respondents have at least a Bachelor's degree, with nearly **40%** holding a Master's degree. This suggests a highly educated workforce, which could be a testament to the complexity and depth of the field. The overall educational distribution paints a picture of a workforce that's not only highly educated but also diverse in its educational journeys. The psychedelic field will provide opportunities for individuals regardless of their educational background. This diversity can lead to a richer pool of ideas, methods, and approaches to challenges.

### Employment Status Distribution:



**Self-employed:** At **50%**, this is the predominant category. This indicates a significant entrepreneurial spirit within the field, with many individuals potentially starting their own ventures, consultancies, or private practices.



**Full-time:** **23.4%** are employed on a full-time basis. This could signify those working for organizations, institutions, or companies within or related to the psychedelic field.



**Part-time:** Comprising **12.5%** of these individuals might be balancing multiple commitments, or they might be exploring the psychedelic field alongside other endeavors.



**Unemployed:** **7.8%** are currently not employed. This pool includes those in transition, seeking opportunities within the psychedelic sector, or using the time to enhance their skills and knowledge.



**Other:** At **2.3%**, this category could include various unique employment situations not explicitly listed in the other categories.

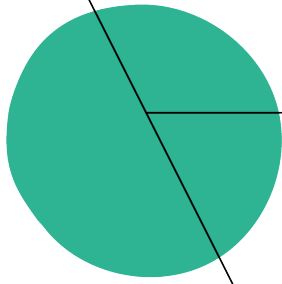


**Student:** Matching the 'Other' category at **2.3%**, these are individuals who are currently pursuing education, suggesting that they're either just entering the field or focusing on enhancing their existing knowledge.



**Retired:** With **1.6%**, these individuals might be bringing years of experience to the field, possibly in advisory roles or even seeking new ventures post-retirement.

**Insights:** The prominence of self-employed individuals suggests a strong entrepreneurial drive in the psychedelic field. This could be a result of the evolving nature of the sector, offering ample opportunities for new ventures. The combined representation of part-time, students, and other categories suggests that many are exploring the psychedelic field while juggling other commitments. The psychedelic field showcases a mix of employment statuses, from budding entrepreneurs to students to retired professionals. This variety indicates a dynamic, evolving industry with opportunities for people at different stages of their career and life.



### Experience in Emergency Services or as First Responder:

**Yes: 13.8%** have served in emergency services or as a first responder. This represents individuals who have worked in high-pressure, critical situations, often putting the welfare of others above their own.

**No:** A significant majority, **86.2%**, have not had such experience.

**Insights:** Those who have served in emergency services or as first responders bring a unique perspective to the psychedelic field. Their experience with trauma, high-pressure situations, and providing immediate care can offer insights into the therapeutic potentials of psychedelics, especially in crisis intervention or trauma-related therapies. Recognizing the challenges faced by emergency service workers and first responders, there could be opportunities for outreach and programs tailored to this demographic, both in terms of therapeutic applications and as potential professionals or advocates in the field.



### Military Service Distribution:

**Yes: 6.2%** have served in the military. This indicates that there are individuals with military backgrounds who have transitioned to or shown interest in the psychedelic field.

**No:** A vast majority, **93.8%**, have not served in the military.

**Insights:** The presence of individuals with military backgrounds, although a small percentage, underscores the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in the psychedelic field. Military service often brings unique experiences, a deep understanding around trauma, and skills that could be invaluable to the sector.



## Psychedelic Experience, Attitudes, and Career Motivations

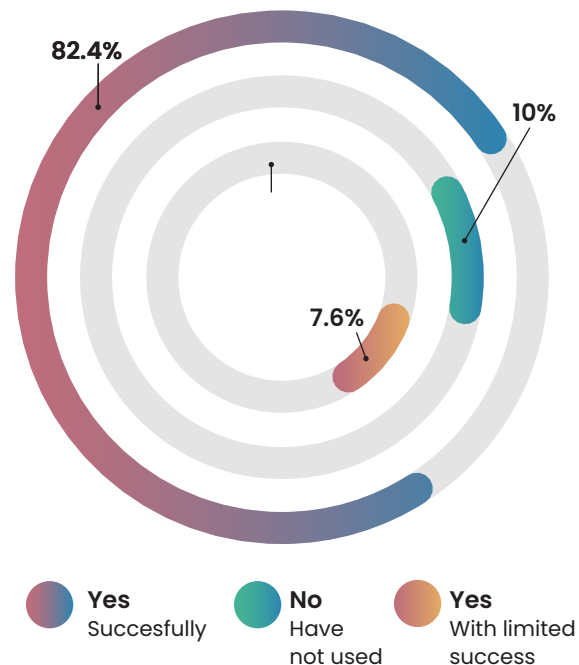
### Use of Psychedelics/Holotropic States Distribution:

**Yes, successfully: 82.4%** have successfully used psychedelics or holotropic states of consciousness to help combat a condition, disability, illness, or trauma. This represents a significant majority and suggests positive outcomes from such interventions for many.

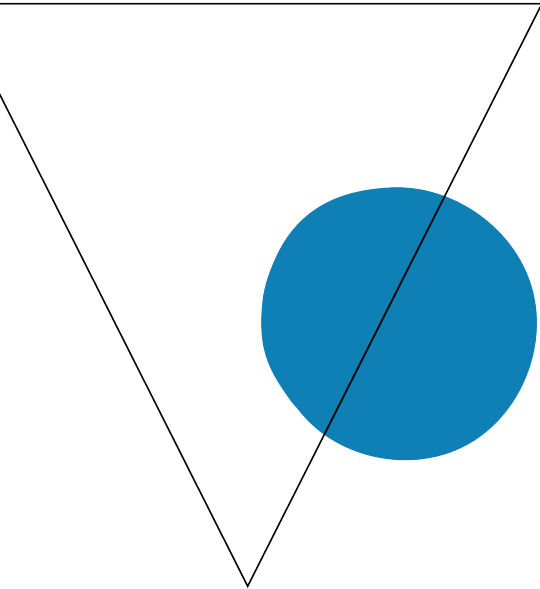
**No, have not used: 10.1%** have not used these modalities for such purposes. This indicates either a lack of personal need, apprehension, or a preference for other therapeutic approaches.

**Yes, with limited success: 7.6%** tried using psychedelics or holotropic states of consciousness, but with limited success. This denotes varied experiences and underscores that while many find success, it may not be universally effective for everyone.

**Insights:** The overwhelmingly positive outcomes reported by 82.4% of the respondents speak to the potential therapeutic efficacy of psychedelics and holotropic states. The significant percentage of respondents who have found success might drive interest and advocacy in the psychedelic field, pushing for broader acceptance, research, and policy changes. While many have found success, it's essential to approach the use of psychedelics with a holistic view, understanding that it is one of many therapeutic tools and may work best in conjunction with other therapies or interventions.



Results



## Motivations for Working with Psychedelics:

**Personal experience and success with psychedelics:** **87.6%** have been influenced by their own positive experiences with psychedelics. This suggests that personal transformative or healing experiences play a significant role in guiding career or practice choices.

**Interest in healing of the world:** **85%** are driven by a desire to contribute to global healing. This showcases a collective consciousness and altruistic motivation among many in the field.

**Compelling stories or emerging research:** **77.9%** are influenced by narratives from others or new scientific findings. This reflects the power of anecdotal stories and the increasing body of scientific evidence supporting psychedelic therapies.

**To become part of a cutting-edge new field:** **69%** are excited by the prospect of pioneering or participating in a burgeoning and innovative field. To enable me to better serve my clients: **65.5%** see psychedelics as a tool or method to enhance their professional services and provide better outcomes for their clients.

**Interest in participating in political/societal evolution:** **61.1%** view their involvement in the psychedelic field as a way to drive or influence societal change and policy evolution.

**Friends or family members with success with psychedelics:** **50.4%** have been inspired by positive outcomes seen in close acquaintances, reinforcing the potential of psychedelics from a personal perspective.

**Interest in participating in civil disobedience:** **8.8%** are motivated by a desire to challenge or oppose certain societal norms or laws, potentially advocating for policy changes surrounding psychedelics.

**Insights:** The motivations for working with psychedelics in practice span from deeply personal experiences to broader societal aspirations - most individuals have combined motivations to participate. Recognizing these diverse motivations can provide insights into the passion, dedication, and vision of individuals in the psychedelic field.

### Perceived Risks and Concerns (arrest, social/family/license issues):



**Aware of Risks, Unconcerned: 63.6%** acknowledge potential personal and professional risks but are undeterred and willing to work in the field regardless. This group represents a majority and suggests a strong conviction in the value and potential of the field, overshadowing potential risks.



**Aware and Somewhat Nervous: 22.9%** recognize the risks and are somewhat nervous about engaging in the field. This indicates that while they see value in the field, they also possess reservations or concerns about potential repercussions.



**No Perceived Risk: 10.2%** do not perceive any risk associated with working in the psychedelic field. This group is confident in the legitimacy, legality, or societal acceptance of their work.



**Risks Not Applicable: 3.3%** believe that while risks may exist for others, they do not apply to them personally. This could be due to their specific role, location, legal protections, or other factors that might insulate them from potential risks.

**Insights:** While a significant number of professionals in the psychedelic field acknowledge potential risks, many are either undeterred or believe that the benefits and potential of the field outweigh the challenges. This information underscores the dedication and belief many hold in the power of psychedelics, even in the face of potential personal and professional challenges.

**Insights:** The professionals in the psychedelic field exhibit a widespread commitment to serving diverse, marginalized, and underserved communities. This indicates a holistic and inclusive approach that goes beyond traditional mental health paradigms, aiming to provide healing and support to those who might benefit the most.

### Communities of Professional Engagement:

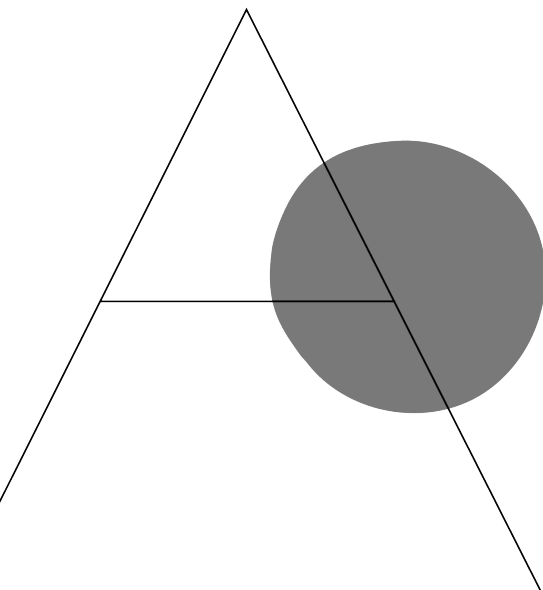
**Undefined Marginalized Groups: 81.4%** plan to work or are working with other unspecified marginalized groups. This points towards a broad understanding and intention to cater to diverse and often underserved communities.

**Low-Income Individuals: 79.4%** target or are working with those in lower income brackets, showcasing a focus on making psychedelic treatments or practices accessible to those who might traditionally face economic barriers.

**BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color): 66%** aim to serve or are serving the BIPOC community, indicating a dedication to addressing racial and ethnic disparities in mental health and wellness care.

**LGBTQIA+: 66%** are committed to working with the LGBTQIA+ community, which is significant given the unique mental health challenges and stigmatization faced by this group.

**Veterans/First Responders: 61.9%** focus on veterans and first responders, a group known to encounter high levels of trauma and stress, and who can significantly benefit from therapeutic interventions.





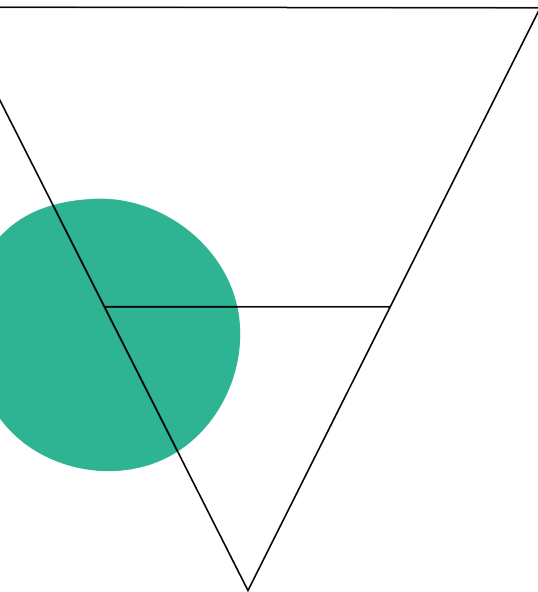
## Career Paths in Psychedelics and Altered States:

**Incorporating into Existing Career: 47%** of students are not switching careers. Instead, they are incorporating psychedelics and altered states into their current career for the first time. This might include therapists or holistic practitioners seeking to integrate these new tools and modalities into their practice.

**Switching Careers Entirely: 31.6%** are making a complete career change to delve into the field of psychedelics and altered states. This is indicative of the field's growing appeal and perceived potential.

**Previous Experience: 13.7%** have already worked with psychedelics or altered states in the past. They likely represent early adopters or pioneers in the field.

**Uncertainty: 7.7%** are still uncertain about whether they will work with psychedelics or altered states. This group might be exploring the field, gathering information, or assessing the risks and benefits before making a decision.



**Insights:** The field of psychedelics and altered states is attracting a diverse range of professionals. Whether they are integrating these practices into existing careers, making a complete switch, or even returning after previous experiences, it's clear that this area is seen as a significant and promising avenue for mental health and therapeutic interventions.

**Insights:** Psilocybin and MDMA, leading the list, reflect the current research trends and increasing mainstream acceptance of these substances for therapeutic use. The prominence of holotropic breathwork indicates professionals' interest in non-substance-induced altered states, emphasizing a holistic approach to the field. The interest in LSD, cannabis, and ayahuasca shows a blend of classic psychedelics and traditional plant medicines, signifying respect for both modern and ancient healing practices. The mention of novel compounds and a significant percentage of "unsure" responses highlight the field's evolving nature. Professionals are keen to explore and perhaps even pioneer new areas.

**Substances/Mechanisms of Engagement:**



**Psilocybin: 92.1%** plan to work or are working with psilocybin. As the active compound in 'magic mushrooms', its potential for mental health treatment, especially depression, has gained significant attention in recent research.



**MDMA: 67.5%** focus on MDMA, commonly known for its use in treating PTSD in clinical settings.



**Holotropic Breathwork: 52.6%** employ or plan to employ holotropic breathwork, a technique inducing altered states of consciousness primarily for therapeutic purposes.



**Ketamine: 50.9%** are working with or plan to work with ketamine, which is increasingly being used for depression treatments.



**Cannabis: 49.1%** indicate a professional engagement with cannabis, highlighting its broader acceptance for various medical conditions.



**LSD: 42.1%** have a professional interest in LSD, another classic psychedelic with therapeutic potential.



**Ayahuasca: 32.5%** intend to work with or are working with ayahuasca, a traditional Amazonian brew known for profound psycho-spiritual experiences.



**DMT: 28.1%** show interest in DMT, a potent psychedelic compound.



**Unsure: 24.6%** are still exploring and haven't finalized their choice of substance or mechanism.



**5-MeO-DMT, Mescaline, Novel Compounds, Ibogaine, Other:** These received lower percentages but indicate a diverse interest in various psychedelic and altered state modalities.

### Work Environments in the Psychedelic Field:

**Private Practice:** **80.2%** are involved or plan to be involved in private practice. This is indicative of the growing number of therapists and practitioners who see the value in offering psychedelic-assisted therapy or related services in a more personalized setting.

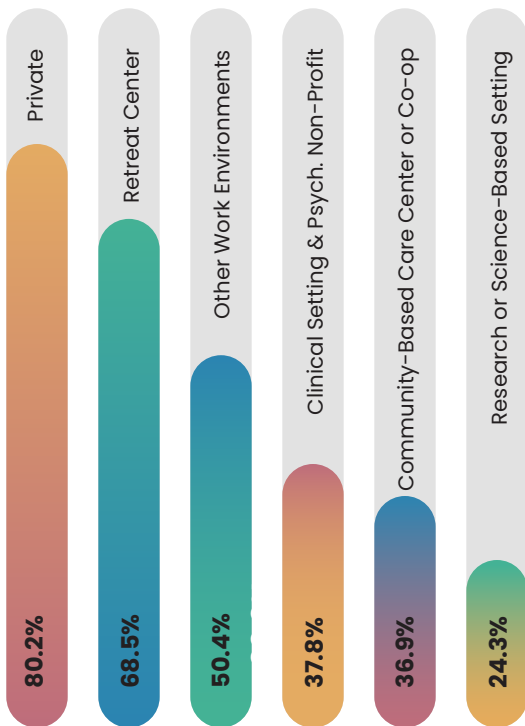
**Retreat Center:** **68.5%** have shown interest in working at retreat centers, which are often places where individuals go for intensive psychedelic or holistic experiences, often in natural settings.

**Other Work Environments:** **50.4%** are interested in other areas, including psychedelic-focused media, academic settings, psychedelic biotech companies, and other unspecified areas, from cultivation to finance, indicating the breadth and diversity of interest in the field.

**Clinical Setting & Psychedelic Non-Profit:** Both these options are tied at **37.8%**. Clinical settings might involve hospitals, clinics, or other healthcare facilities, while psychedelic non-profits could focus on advocacy, education, or community support.

**Community-Based Care Center or Cooperative:** **36.9%** are interested in or are working in community-oriented settings, which emphasize group support and often have a local focus.

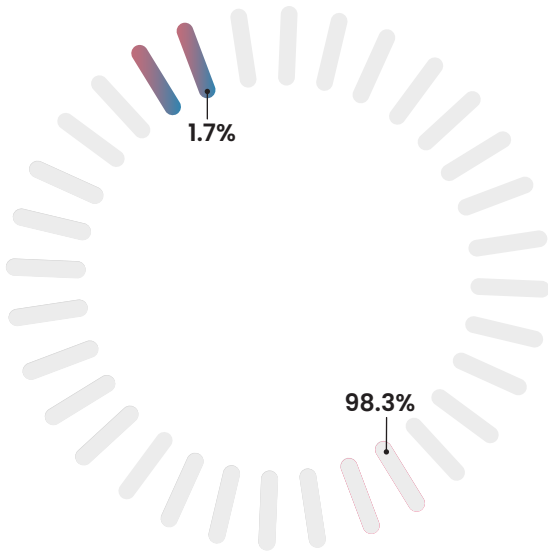
**Research or Science-Based Setting:** **24.3%** are invested in settings that are primarily research-oriented, reflecting a segment of professionals dedicated to pushing the boundaries of what we know about psychedelics and their therapeutic potential.



**Insights:** The field of psychedelics is not just limited to therapy rooms or retreat centers. It spans a wide range of environments from clinical to community to research, offering professionals myriad ways to contribute and make an impact. Curiously, over 50% of respondents indicated an interest in, intention to, or that they are already working in areas beyond facilitation or therapy, suggesting broad appeal for professionals with a variety of skills, and confidence that the field will require a vast array of expertise to effectively deliver psychedelics safely and efficiently to those interested in consuming them.

### Making Money as a Motivator in the Psychedelic Field:

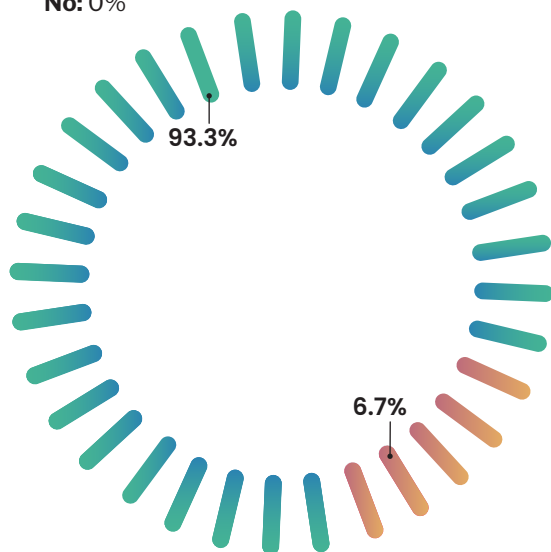
● **Yes:** 1.7%  
● **No:** 98.3%



**Insights:** A staggering 98.3% of respondents indicate that making a lot of money is not their primary motivation to enter the field. This speaks volumes about the intrinsic motivation that most individuals have when deciding to work in the psychedelic domain. Such an overwhelming skew towards non-monetary motivation is crucial for maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the psychedelic renaissance. It ensures that the primary focus remains on patient care, research, and societal impact rather than commercialization.

### Contribution to Global Acceptance of Psychedelics:

● **Yes:** 93.3%  
● **Unsure:** 6.7%  
● **No:** 0%



**Insights:** A significant 93.3% of respondents believe that their participation in the field will contribute to a global shift in the acceptance of psychedelics. This reflects a community that is not just hopeful but also confident in the impact of their collective efforts. While a small fraction (6.7%) is unsure about their impact, it's natural to have reservations given the complexity of societal change. The existence of this uncertainty also underscores the honesty and reflexivity of the community.

# Contact.



Interested in learning more about the findings in this report, Psychedelics Today or the Vital program?

**On the Web:**

[Vitalpsychedelictraining.com](https://vitalpsychedelictraining.com)

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