

Another way to minimize the impact of adverse events is to minimize the number and severity of those events. Organizations and individuals offering integration support or similar services can help. In some cases, immediate support will be available in the form of a guide, facilitator, or therapist, and defined therapeutic protocols often include follow-up integration sessions as well. However, as access becomes more widely available (and not always within defined protocols), the need for other forms of community-based integration support will increase in turn.

Finally, education efforts to demystify psychedelic therapy and its benefits can help make the population of those receiving treatment less of an “exclusive club” and less intimidating to join for those who have not considered psychedelics a viable option in the past. This will be an important step towards ensuring treatment can reach historically underserved populations.

Critical Pathways and Recommendations

A. Public awareness and education initiatives

A certain amount of psychedelic awareness and education marketing will likely be done by commercial operators, who have an interest in generating enthusiasm for the treatments they offer. However, education driven by marketing priorities will not always align with the broader mission of psychedelic therapy access.

Philanthropic funding can support more mission-driven dissemination of information. Funding for education, fellowships, and programs for journalists and other influential communicators would prepare them to approach psychedelic therapy as a credible, science-based topic. This could help ensure that their audiences are regularly receiving credible information about the opportunities and risks of psychedelic therapy in medical and non-medical contexts, and that bad news is covered responsibly and proportionately.

Michael Pollan posited that a good step forward might be to “proactively launch a public relations strategy and journalist training program akin to the environmental movement, which has trained journalists through fellowships and grants.” He pointed out, “Public opinion is a bit of an insurance policy, one of the few you have.” On the journalistic front, Pollan noted, “We don’t yet have a cadre of beat reporters committed to this subject. And they could become an interesting bulwark against backlash, or they could clear up information.” (For more on a coordinated effort to measure and shape public opinion, as well as influence political actors, see the “National Coordinating Hub” concept discussed in the next goal section.)

Another option for funding is to bypass the “gatekeepers” and directly support the creation and dissemination of content focused on the messages we want the public to hear and understand. Documentaries, public awareness campaigns, and direct outreach campaigns through community-based organizations can all contribute to a more supportive public perception of psychedelic therapies. There are opportunities to highlight some of the most compelling healing stories in a credible, and sober manner that emphasizes the therapeutic promise of psychedelics.

B. Integration support

As many new people are being inspired to try psychedelics and psychedelic therapy, we must build safeguards to ensure these experiences are as safe as possible. This includes ensuring psychedelic therapy participants have clear and easy access to integration support to help them through challenging experiences.

While some medical and therapeutic regimens include integration support by default in the form of facilitators or therapists, many psychedelic experiences take place outside those contexts. Philanthropic funding can support the growth of organizations that train and provide direct access to community support for individuals