

recognized the importance of addressing potential ethical concerns—especially given its historical associations with eugenics—psychedelic research must acknowledge and address its own complex history, including instances of unethical experimentation, like those during Project MKUltra. By proactively confronting these historical shadows, the field can build a foundation of transparency and trust. This forward-looking approach not only addresses past controversies but ensures that future advancements are pursued responsibly, with public trust and societal benefit as guiding principles.

## Risks

- *Resistance from stakeholders:* Some stakeholders may resist adopting ethical standards, fearing it could stifle innovation or expose past unethical practices. This resistance may slow the development and enforcement of ethical guidelines, particularly among those who feel they are already operating responsibly or who may prioritize rapid growth over careful ethical considerations. To address this, incentives such as funding opportunities tied to ethical compliance or technical assistance in implementing these standards could encourage broader adoption.
- *Perception of philanthropy as an inappropriate ethics steward:* There may be skepticism about whether philanthropic organizations should take on the role of ethical gatekeepers in the psychedelic space, as some might question their impartiality or expertise. To mitigate this, it will be crucial to clearly acknowledge and learn from past ethical challenges in philanthropy—such as conflicts of interest or inadequate oversight in other fields—and demonstrate the current safeguards in place. A collaborative approach, where the push for ethics is a genuine inclusive multi-stakeholder effort will help demonstrate the positive intent of the initiative.
- *Lack of coordination across ethical initiatives:* With multiple groups working on ethical frameworks for psychedelics, there is a risk that efforts remain fragmented, leading to overlapping or contradictory guidelines. This lack of coordination could confuse stakeholders and reduce the overall effectiveness of these initiatives. A coordinated effort to harmonize these guidelines, possibly through annual summits or a dedicated ethics consortium, could mitigate this risk.

## Indigenous Medicine Conservation & Access

Plant medicine healing traditions have roots dating back thousands of years in what is now the U.S., and globally, and serve an estimated 1-2 million individuals worldwide. Members of these Indigenous communities are the single largest cohort currently receiving supervised psychospiritual support with psychedelics. In the U.S., Native Americans face the highest rates of suicide, mental illness, and substance use disorders in the country and ~350,000 Native American Church members currently access healing through peyote.

Increased demand from the resurgence of global interest in psychedelics has compounded ecological pressure on wild sources of plant-based psychedelics central to these Indigenous traditions. These ecological threats are exacerbated by cultural and legal threats such as the criminalization of traditional plant medicine practices, as well as patenting and misappropriation of traditional plant medicine knowledge, placing the continued survival of Indigenous plant medicine healing systems at risk.

At the same time, the extraordinary depth of knowledge and experience around plant medicine healing held by traditional practitioners has begun to be recognized by Western scientists and policymakers, including in a [2024 Request for Information](#) on psychedelic-assisted therapies from the U.S. Congress. Initiatives to foster connections and dialogue between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems will require a foundation of relational integrity, trust, and care, and should only proceed where mutually beneficial. Efforts to foster dialogue between these knowledge systems around psychedelic healing are still in their early stages, but will be vitally important in order for the globalization of