

# Seeking Volunteers with a Cancer Diagnosis to participate in a scientific study of self-exploration and personal meaning

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In recent years, scientists at some U.S. universities have been conducting studies using *entheogens*, resuming research in pharmacology, psychology, creativity, and spirituality that was suspended following the drug excesses of the 1960s.

Entheogens include the peyote cactus used by the Native American Church, the psilocybin-containing mushrooms used as sacraments in Mesoamerica, and certain other plants and chemicals. Such substances have been used for thousands of years in cultures from the Amazon to ancient Greece as a means of inducing non-ordinary states of consciousness for psychological self-exploration and spiritual or religious purposes.

These states of consciousness are most widely known in connection with practices such as meditation and prolonged fasting. Context seems to play a major role in shaping entheogen experiences and their consequences. Despite the well-known problems that can arise in unstructured settings, the risks of entheogens in research and ritual contexts have proven to be very small.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University are seeking volunteers with a current or past diagnosis of cancer who have some anxiety or are feeling down about their cancer to participate in a scientific study of self-exploration and personal meaning brought about by the entheogen psilocybin, a psychoactive substance found in mushrooms used as a sacrament in some cultures, given in a comfortable, supportive setting. Questionnaires and interviews will be used to assess the effects of the substance on consciousness, mood, and behavior.

Volunteers enrolled in the study will receive careful preparation and 2 sessions in which they will receive psilocybin. Structured guidance will be provided during the session and afterwards to facilitate integration of the experiences. The study complies with FDA regulations.

Volunteer must be between the ages of 21 and 70, have no personal history of severe psychiatric illness, or recent history of alcoholism or drug abuse, and have someone willing to pick them up at the study site at the end of the two psilocybin sessions (around 5:00 PM).

For more detailed information about the study, see "[www.cancer-insight.org](http://www.cancer-insight.org)". If you would like to discuss the possibility of volunteering, please call **410-550-5990** or email **cancer@bpru.org** and ask for Mary, the study's research coordinator. Confidentiality will be maintained for all applicants and participants.

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