

Psychedelic Retreats: Working Ethically, Safely, and in Right Relationship



The modern-day, above-ground psychedelic retreat industry is nascent. There are no gold standards for integrating traditional models of psychedelic use in Indigenous historical contexts with emerging science to offer transformational psychedelic experiences legally, safely, and ethically in a retreat setting. With our collaborators, Beckley Retreats is aiming to lay a foundation for how psychedelic retreat providers can operate with ethics at the heart of their missions. This document lays out the six facets of psychedelic retreat ethics, as we see them. Underpinning all of this is a mindset of humility, a willingness to listen and learn, and nimble approaches that allow for an evolving paradigm to unfold.



Our mission

Set the standard for transformative experiences that can spark broader positive change.

Our vision

Psychedelics have the power to unlock a new way of seeing, to perceive what we could not previously; this leads to new understandings that can shift both our stories and our lives. Our experiences are designed to set the ideal conditions for this higher purpose: To unlock a new way of seeing for those who are ready, and to inspire a more harmonious way of life.

Our values

- Nurture Personal Growth
- Honor Heritage
- Stay Curious
- Spark Change

Regenerative Business Model

We are conscious of the potential for the psychedelic retreat industry to be extractive and are addressing this risk, beginning with our business structure and our financial strategy:

- Beckley Retreats is a Public Benefit Corporation (a corporate entity legally structured to take into account the interests of social good, not just shareholder interests) aiming to provide more equitable access to holistic wellbeing programming and retreats in legal settings.
- We build relationships with investors who are aligned with our values, believe in our mission, and support our financial strategy.
- We are bold in our distributed equity ownership and have committed 22% of the founding equity to employees and partners..
- We pay equal wages to our facilitators regardless of their home countries.
- We are exploring regenerative financial models that will empower the local communities where we operate.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

DEIB is used as a lens for decision-making across all aspects of our work. Our DEIB focus areas are:

- Generating equitable access to our programming for those who may not otherwise be able to participate, through scholarship and sponsorship programs (prioritizing applicants who have demonstrated financial need and/or who have been historically underserved, underrepresented, and oppressed).
- Building a diverse team (Our core team: 60% women; 50% BIPOC; Our facilitation team: 50% women; 50% BIPOC; stretch goal: greater LGBTQIA+ representation and age diversity).
- Developing a culture of belonging for participants, facilitators, staff and partners through community agreements, Code of Ethics, and opportunities for dialogue.
- Offering training and professional development opportunities for our team in critical DEIB topics (psychedelics and justice, trauma-informed care).
- Implementing feedback loops (facilitator community debriefs, participant and facilitator feedback surveys, anonymous harm reporting form, incident report form).



Philosophy of Participant Care

As a non-clinical provider of psychedelic care drawing from both traditional wisdom and modern science, we honor many ways of knowing, seeing, and being; a philosophy of care is important and ensures diverse teams can come together to operate with clarity and alignment. Such a philosophy addresses:

- Providing a robust preparation and integration experience.
- The understanding that psychedelic work is psychological, spiritual, energetic, emotional, and physical – and tending to all realms supportively without pathologizing participants.
- Centering, revering, and honoring Indigenous ceremonial traditions – and bringing intentionality to how we conduct psilocybin ceremony space on Jamaican/Caribbean and Dutch land.
- Cultural considerations regarding diversity of international facilitators and participants.
- The role of touch and talk in ceremonial support settings, prioritizing participant and facilitator safety.
- Avoiding spiritual bypassing (specifically: avoidance, toxic positivity, gaslighting).

Personal Safety (Participants, Facilitators, Staff)

Safety is one of our top priorities. We have spent the bulk of our first year of operations implementing a comprehensive safety plan which includes:

- A thorough participant screening/application process informed by advisory from medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and ethicists.
- Data security and protection of participant personal information.
- An informed consent process that communicates risks and includes transparent language about the types of experiences our participants should anticipate.
- Proper set, setting and support through our 11-week program (preparation, immersion retreat with 1:4 facilitator to participant ratio, integration; cohort and 1:1 care).
- Clear participant community agreements and facilitator code of ethics.
- Extensive on-site safety protocols and ease of access to medical care.
- Feedback loops and mechanisms for reporting harm/abuse.

Additionally, we offer affinity group programs, for example Black Women's Retreat, Women's Retreat, Veterans Retreat.



Facilitator Engagement

Our facilitation teams are the backbone of our business. Our professional facilitators are experts in their fields: psilocybin ceremony leadership and music; yoga, meditation, and breathwork instruction; and live and virtual (group and 1:1) preparation and integration facilitation. Our facilitator hiring process is multi-step and ensures the proper experience, skills and disposition for various aspects of our work.

We provide for/with our facilitators:

- A psychedelic retreat competency model, developed in collaboration with our facilitators, for clarity and alignment on the behaviors that constitute stellar retreat facilitation.
- Facilitator onboarding, and training opportunities through partnerships (for example, with Chacruna Institute for Psychedelic Plant Medicines, HeartMath, and through trauma-informed care experts).
- Virtual and on-site team preparation and bonding before each retreat.
- Weekly office hours, monthly email digests, post-retreat feedback forms, an annual survey, and an online community space for facilitators to stay engaged.
- Monthly peer support groups for facilitators to meet, discuss important issues, and build community.
- Quarterly all-team calls for sharing updates and building community.



Featured left to right, top to bottom: Dr. Dingle Spence, Ben Sheinwald, Lucyne Jade Pearson, Eber Rodriguez, Deva Oliver, and Micah Tafari.

Right Relationship

Right relationship is an Indigenous guiding principle that describes how we engage in reciprocal relationship with the people and traditions we collaborate with and learn from, the land we inhabit and work on, and the plants/fungi we commune with.

Right Relationship with Facilitators

- Building strong bonds and engaging in discourse on issues of DEIB and reciprocity with facilitators
- Providing opportunities for facilitators to travel to facilitate in locations other than their home sites
- Giving facilitators a voice in decision-making
- Comprising Jamaican retreat facilitation teams of at least 50% Jamaican facilitators (2024 target)
- Amplifying the voices of our facilitators on social media

Right Relationship with Local Communities and Land

- Developing relationships with and supporting local community projects, e.g. Unity Primary School in Trelawny, Jamaica
- Planning fully funded retreats for local residents
- Considering opportunities for program participants to engage in the local culture and/or contribute to local projects
- Honoring the land we are on (and [offering transparency about the history of our Jamaican retreat site, Good Hope](#))
- Sourcing 100% of our psilocybin mushrooms from local growers

Right Relationship with Indigenous Lineages

- Setting the expectation that our facilitators must have received permission to use certain practices, and verbally name the lineages they draw from, during our retreats
- Avoiding cultural appropriation, fetishization, idealization
- Collaborating with organizations and individuals to better understand Indigenous perspectives to inform our decision-making and work



Our Next Steps and Community Dialogue

This document is a high-level summary of our full ethics and community impact plan. As that plan matures, we will update this document accordingly. Our work in ethics is governed by the Beckley Retreats Leadership Team, informed by input from our facilitators and staff, program participants, the Board of Directors, community partners, and select advisors.

We welcome feedback on the contents of this document, and we are committed to ongoing discourse:

- Discovery Calls can be scheduled with our Leadership Team through our website.
- We regularly host live Q&A sessions for the public with our CEO.
- Our team is available to schedule time to meet with members of our community to engage in discussion.

Please direct questions to info@beckleyretreats.com.

Acknowledgements

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