



# **INSIGHTS INTO THE USE OF PSILOCYBIN AS A MENTAL HEALTH TOOL**

A report after 1 year of implementation of the  
Oregon legal psilocybin framework  
May 2024

Bendable Therapy  
[www.BendableTherapy.org](http://www.BendableTherapy.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report Overview .....	3
Background.....	4
Bendable’s Mission .....	4
The Bendable Process.....	5
Screening Application.....	6
Demographic Characteristics .....	6
Mental Health History.....	8
Reasons for seeking psilocybin services.....	9
Psychedelic Experience .....	11
Barriers to seeking psilocybin services.....	12
Bendable progress.....	13
Psilocybin session follow-up survey.....	14
Follow-up survey summaries .....	14
Facilitator support .....	18
Significance of the psilocybin experience.....	19
Future directions .....	22
Appendix.....	23
Appendix Table 1. Locations of submitted screening applications.....	23

# REPORT OVERVIEW

This report provides an overview of the legal psilocybin landscape after one year of implementation from the perspective of Bendable Therapy ('Bendable'). Within this report, we summarize the history of Bendable, the process and tools Bendable uses to screen and approve individuals seeking legal psilocybin services, and summarize the characteristics of those seeking psilocybin services, including their intentions for doing so and the barriers they face. We finish with an update on Bendable's progress over this past year, including responses to a follow-up survey completed by Bendable's previous clients, and Bendable's plans for next year. From the insights presented in this report, we hope to highlight the vital role of psilocybin as a mental health tool, and also showcase the necessity of providing resources and support so individuals may make an informed choice about including psilocybin in their mental-health journey.

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# BACKGROUND

Bendable Therapy ('Bendable') is a 501c3 located in Central Oregon and founded by Amanda Gow and Ryan Reid in March of 2023. Bendable is a comprehensive service that connects individuals seeking mental health therapies and treatments to licensed facilities and professionals. Bendable provides wrap-around community programming, education and training to mental health professionals, and informational guidance to individuals seeking treatments for well-being. Many individuals come to Bendable specifically seeking psilocybin services through the legal Oregon framework. However, due to the regulatory structure necessary for the legal implementation of psilocybin as a therapeutic option, a psilocybin session is costly and often those that most need access to additional mental health supports are those that may not be able to afford it. Therefore, a key component of Bendable's vision is to provide full or partial scholarships, made available through private donations, to cover the cost of the psilocybin session. Additionally, for individuals who can afford to pay the full cost of a psilocybin session, a portion of their payment helps support the scholarship program. As such, Bendable creates a circle of support among its clients.

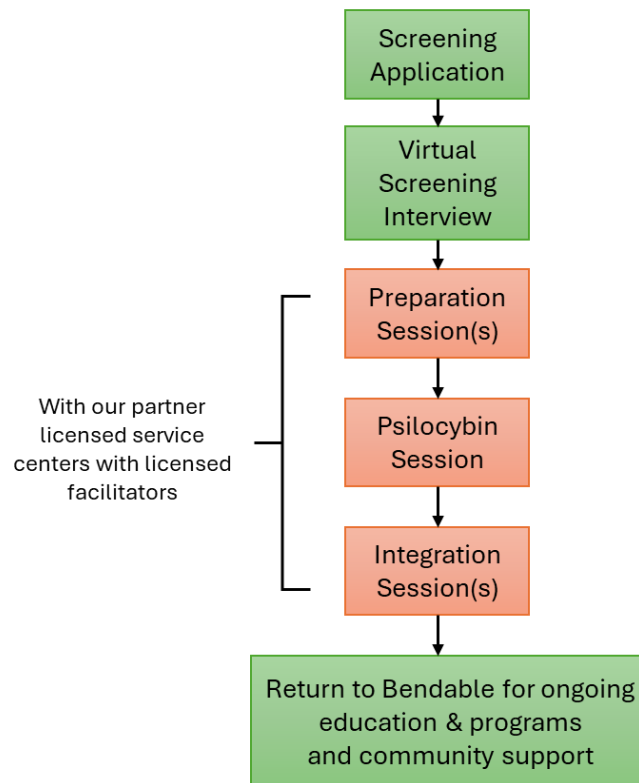
## BENDABLE'S MISSION

*Our mission is to coordinate safe & accessible mental health programs in Central Oregon. We strive to empower individuals in their journey towards greater well-being and self-discovery through the integration of these practices into existing mental wellness paths.*

# THE BENDABLE PROCESS

For those seeking legal psilocybin services through the Bendable Psilocybin Wellness Program, Bendable first conducts extensive screening of individuals' mental and medical history and their goals for seeking psilocybin, through an online application and a virtual interview. For those who move forward through the screening process, Bendable then connects the individual with a licensed service center and licensed facilitator who proceed with the state-regulated protocols for conducting a psilocybin session. With Bendable, this process includes 2 preparation sessions with a licensed facilitator, the psilocybin administration session, and 1 or more integration sessions. Note that integration sessions are not required by the Oregon Health Authority (the regulatory body), but Bendable strongly encourages them, as do the facilitators that partner with Bendable.

## Bendable Psilocybin Wellness Program



# SCREENING APPLICATION

Bendable began accepting screening applications on May 31, 2023. Between this date and March 29, 2024 (the date on which the Bendable research study launched and a new screening application was implemented), 429 applications were submitted, of which **408** consented for their screening data to be used for reporting and dissemination purposes.

## Demographic Characteristics

From the 408 screening applications, **60%** of applicants were from Oregon, of which **65%** were from Central Oregon (Bend, Redmond, Sisters, Terrebonne, Sunriver, and La Pine). **11%** of applicants served in the Armed Forces. Applicants identified predominately female (**53%**) with an average age of 50 years. **Table 1.** Additional demographic questions were added to the screening application in November 2023. From these 90 applications, the majority identified as White (**88%**), had completed a graduate or professional degree (**34%**), were employed full-time (**33%**), and had a total household yearly income of \$50,000-\$99,999 (**29%**). **Table 2.**

*Table 1. Screening Application Demographic Characteristics (n=408)*

		n	%
<b>State<sup>1</sup></b>	Oregon (Central Oregon)	243 (157)	59.6 (64.9)
	California	40	9.8
	Washington	22	5.4
<b>Armed Forces</b>		43	10.5
<b>Age (years)</b>	average (min, max)	50.2 (21.1, 83)	--
	21-29 years	31	7.6
	30-49	180	44.2
	50-69	131	32.1
	70+	55	13.5
<b>Gender Identity<sup>2</sup></b>	Female	216	52.9
	Male	181	44.4
	LGBTQIA2S+	10	2.5

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for a full list of all states with submitted applications.

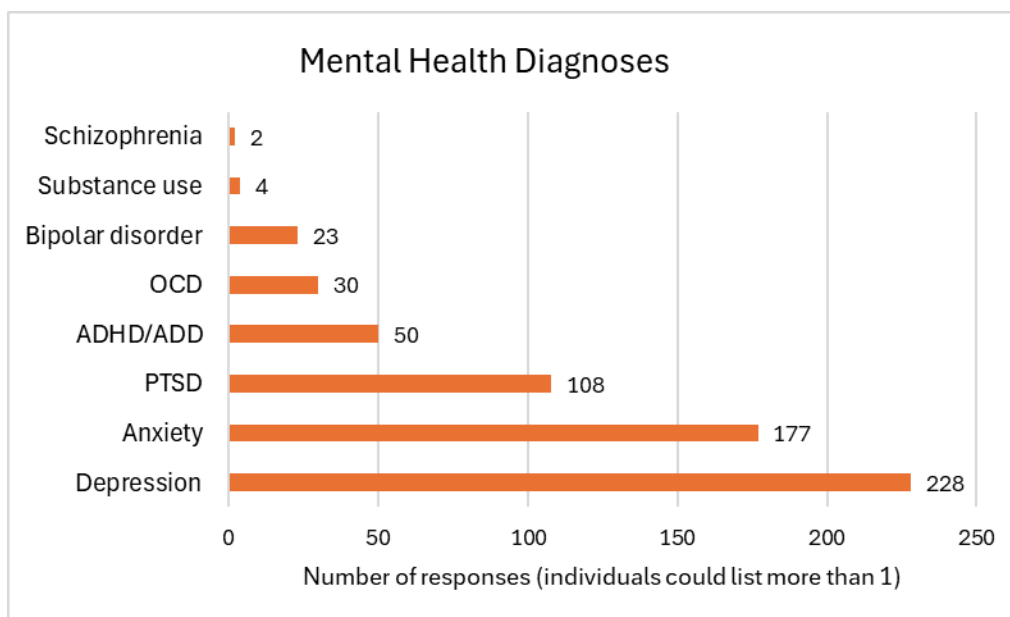
<sup>2</sup> LGBTQIA2S+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and trans, queer and questioning, intersex, asexual or agender, two-spirit.

*Table 2. Additional Screening Application Demographic Characteristics (n=90)*

		n	%
<b>Race</b>	White	79	87.8
	Black/African American	2	2.2
	Asian	2	2.2
	Other/Decline	7	7.8
<b>Education</b>	Graduate or profession degree completed	31	34.4
	Bachelors degree completed	21	23.3
	Associated degree completed	16	17.7
	High school and/or some college completed	20	22.2
<b>Employment</b>	Full-time, part-time, or self-employed	47	52.2
	Student	6	6.6
	Retired	16	17.8
	Disability	8	8.9
	Sporadically employed or unemployed	13	14.4
<b>Income</b>	<i>Household yearly</i>		
	\$100,000+	15	16.7
	\$50,000-\$99,000	26	28.9
	\$25,000-\$49,000	11	12.2
	Less than \$25,000	12	13.3

## Mental Health History

Of the 408 applications, the vast majority (**80%**) of individuals seeking psilocybin services through Bendable have a mental health diagnosis, with most having a diagnosis of depression (**56%**); **96%** have participated in therapy or counseling. Approximately **30%** of individuals were using at least one medication to treat a mental health condition or had used medication(s) in the past.



Abbreviations: ADHD/ADD, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder/attention deficit disorder; OCD, obsessive compulsive disorder; PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder.



## Reasons for seeking psilocybin services

The screening application provided a free response question where individuals could describe why they were seeking psilocybin services. Their responses paint a picture of pain, confusion, and hope, and being at a point in their mental health journeys where psilocybin feels like the logical, or only, next step. From their responses the most common themes were:

### *Common Themes*

1. **Mental Health Conditions:** Mentioned 281 times.
  - Conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, OCD, and bipolar disorder were prevalent.
2. **Trauma and Grief:** Mentioned 68 times.
  - Coping with trauma, grief, and abuse.
3. **Addiction Recovery:** Mentioned 42 times.
  - Seeking help for addiction and substance abuse issues.
4. **Alternative Therapies:** Mentioned 40 times.
  - Interested in psilocybin as an alternative or complementary therapy.
5. **Treatment-Resistant Conditions:** Mentioned 27 times.
  - Seeking alternatives due to resistance to conventional treatments.
6. **Personal Growth:** Mentioned 7 times.
  - Looking for personal development and self-improvement.

## Sentiment Analysis

To better understand the emotional tone of the responses regarding why an individual was seeking out psilocybin, a 'sentiment analysis' of their responses revealed the following:

- **Positive Sentiment:** 138 responses. Positive sentiments reflect hope and optimism towards the potential benefits of psilocybin therapy.

*"I've spent the last two years in weekly psychotherapy. I have a lot of negative views of myself that were unintentionally passed on to me by my parents. 3/4 of my grandparents were holocaust survivors and neither they nor my parents made much effort to recognize or heal that trauma. I have two young children and I'm willing to try anything to better myself and give them a more loving and healthy upbringing than I had."*

*"I had depression and anxiety for a long time, I currently take Prozac but I don't feel that it has helped me, I just want to be a normal person, I want to heal my wounds, please help me."*

- **Neutral Sentiment:** 190 responses. Neutral responses indicate a straightforward description of their situations.

*"Help alleviate PTSD and social anxiety, I've also experienced homelessness in the past and have traumas associated with that."*

*"Mild depression that has not responded to several different psychotropic medications. Mild substance use disorder. Wanting to stop or limit use but haven't been able to. Feels like I'm stuck- I've got pretty much everything and still have issues."*

- **Negative Sentiment:** 80 responses. Negative sentiments indicate the severity and challenges of current mental health struggles.

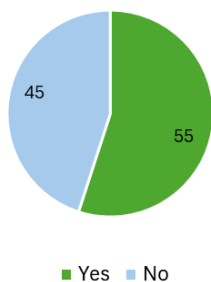
*"I am a disabled Veteran diagnosed with PTSD, depression, and anxiety. I have tried everything from SSRIs [selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors], CBT [cognitive behavioral therapy], and other methods."*

*"It is difficult to find joy in life."*

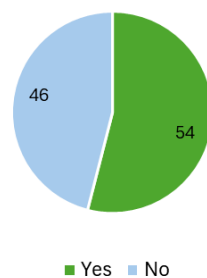
## Psychedelic Experience and Preparation

The screening application also asked for information on previous experience with psychedelics or non-ordinary states of consciousness (e.g., meditation, breathwork, hypnosis), and psychedelic preparedness. Applicants reported a mix of psychedelic naivety (45%) and psychedelic experience (55%), and the majority felt they had the support and preparation in place to proceed with a session.

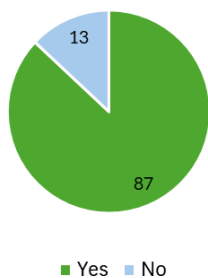
"I have previous experience with psychedelics"  
(% of applications)



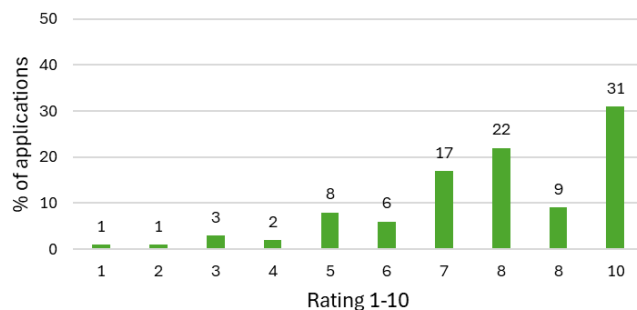
"I have experience with non-ordinary states of consciousness" (% of applications)



"I have a support system in place"  
(% of applications)

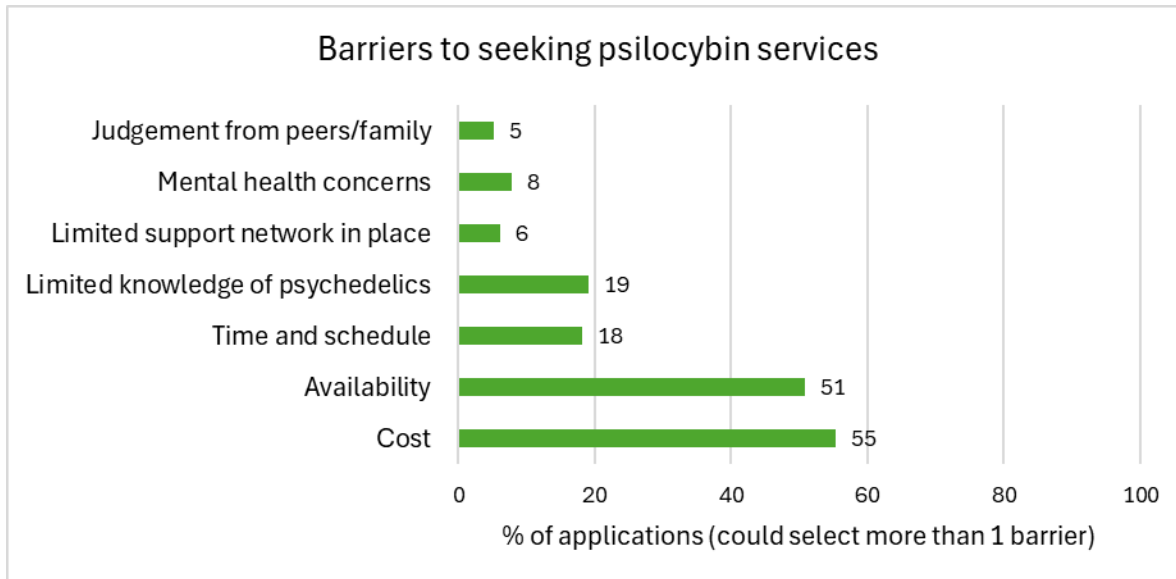


"I feel prepared for my psilocybin journey"  
1 = Not at all; 10 = Fully prepared



## Barriers to seeking psilocybin services

Gathering information on barriers to accessing psilocybin is a key to actualizing Bendable’s mission. In the screening application, **55%** of applicants selected “cost” as a barrier to seeking services.

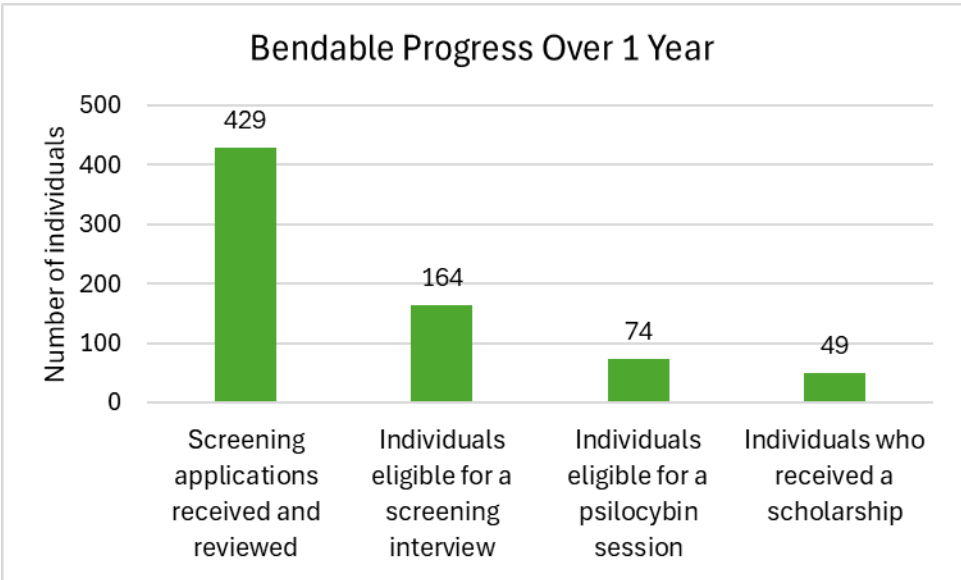


### *Elaborations on barriers to seeking psilocybin services:*

- **Cost:** Many applications mentioned the high cost of psilocybin therapy as a significant barrier. The expense associated with legal therapy services can be prohibitive for many people, especially those with limited financial resources.
- **Accessibility and Availability:** Several applications indicated that psilocybin therapy is not readily available or accessible where they live. Some mentioned difficulties in finding qualified providers or locations where such services are offered.
- **Fear and Stigma:** Fear of judgment from family, friends, or society, as well as concerns about the stigma associated with using psilocybin, were common themes. Some applications expressed apprehension about discussing or seeking these services due to potential negative perceptions.
- **Time and Scheduling:** A number of applications highlighted the challenge of finding time to attend psilocybin therapy sessions. Busy schedules, work commitments, and other life responsibilities can make it difficult to prioritize therapy.
- **Trust and Efficacy:** Trust in the effectiveness of psilocybin therapy and confidence in the providers were mentioned as barriers. Some applications spoke of uncertainties about the benefits and hesitations in pursuing a treatment they were not convinced would work.

# BENDABLE PROGRESS

Over the past year, Bendable received and reviewed 429 screening applications, moved 164 individuals forward to the screening interview, and approved 74 individuals for a psilocybin session, 49 of whom received a scholarship (full or partial, depending on need). Some reasons applicants did not move forward to the screening interview, or did not move forward to a psilocybin session, include diagnoses of bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, lack of a support system, withdrawal of application, lack of financial resources, or non-response, among other reasons. Many others may have been eligible for a psilocybin session, but 74 sessions was the capacity of Bendable this past year with the resources available.



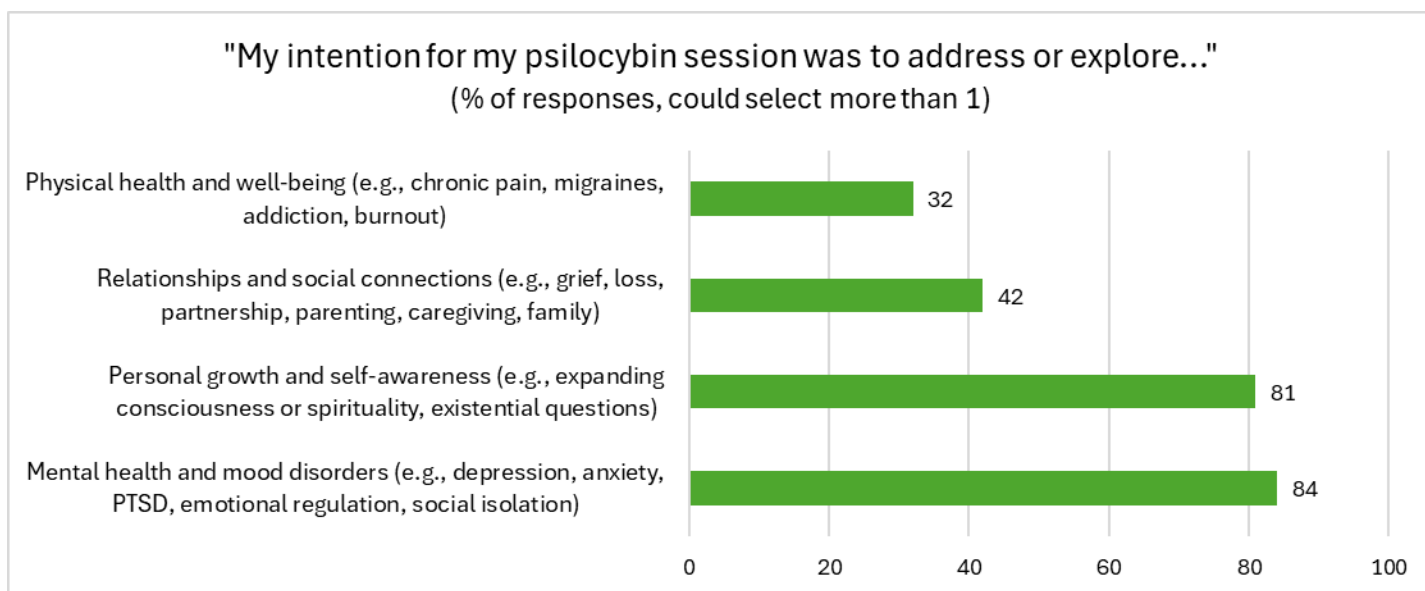
Individuals who completed a psilocybin session participated in either individual or group sessions, including 2 group sessions specifically dedicated to veterans in collaboration with *Heroic Hearts Project*. These veteran retreats were the first legal veteran psilocybin sessions to occur in the United States.

# PSILOCYBIN SESSION FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

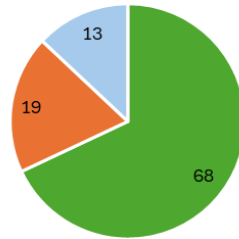
We recently sent out a survey to the 74 clients who were connected to psilocybin services through Bendable this past year. This survey asked about the clients' intentions for seeking psilocybin, the success of addressing their intentions with the psilocybin session, and the lasting effects of the session. We received 31 responses (42% response rate), and from the responses we learned that most **(87%)** felt that the psilocybin session was overall a positive experience, and many **(65%)** described lasting improvement to their mental health and well-being. Additionally, of 13 respondents who were taking medication for mental health prior to their psilocybin session, **8 (61%)** reported decreasing their usage following their psilocybin session, **4 (31%)** made no changes, and **1 (3%)** increased their usage.

## Follow-up survey summaries

Intentions for a psilocybin experience are deeply personal and most focused on addressing connections to mental and physical health. The majority of respondents **(68%)** felt that the psilocybin session was extremely or very effective in addressing their intention, and **65%** believe the insights from their session were permanently transformative or long lasting.

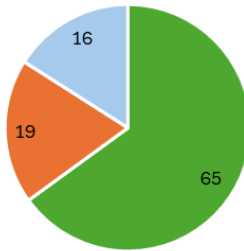


How effective was the session in addressing your intention(s)? (%)



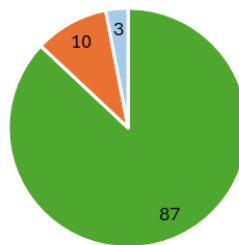
■ Extremely/Very Effective ■ Moderately effective ■ Slightly/Not Effective

How lasting have the insights from your session been? (%)



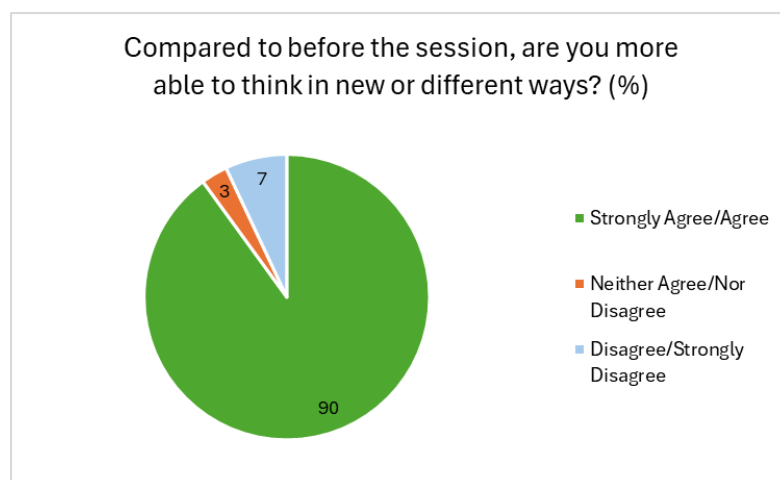
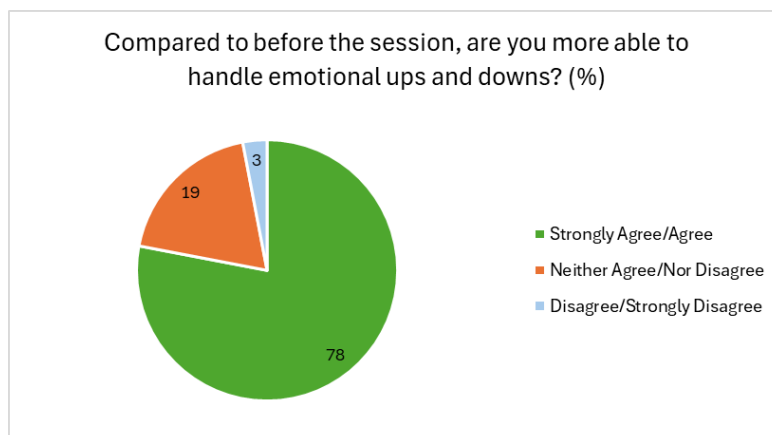
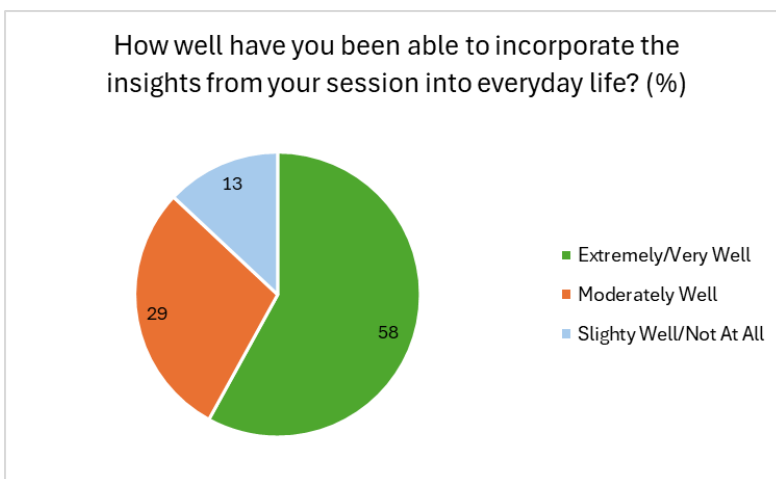
■ Permanently Transformative/Long Lasting ■ Lasting For Some Time ■ Briefly/Not Lasting At All

Overall, do you feel the session had a positive or negative impact on your life? (%)



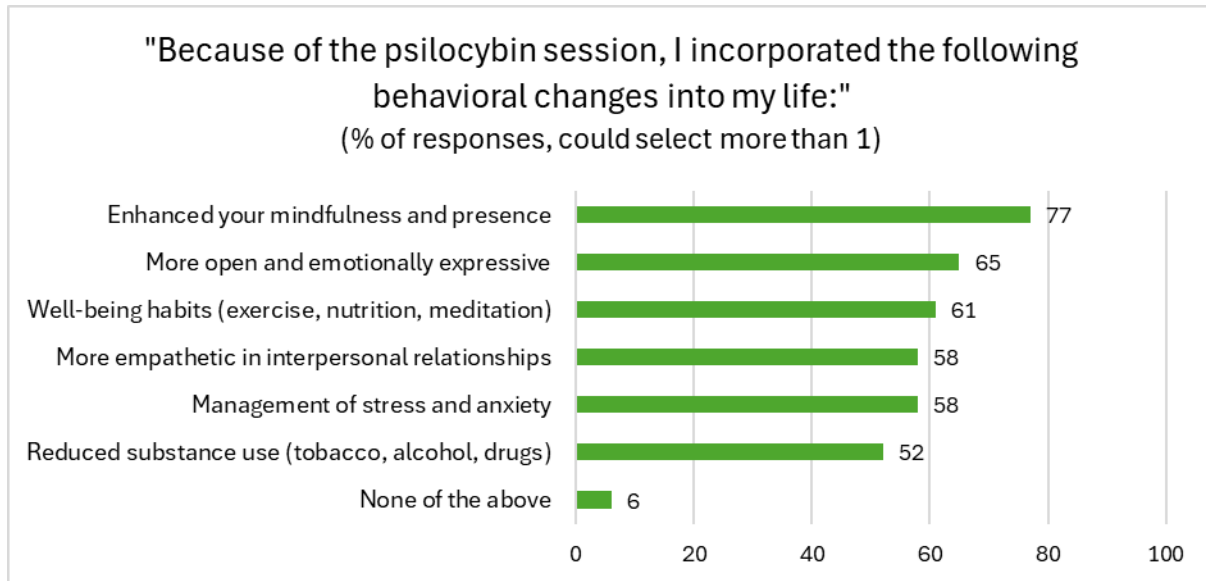
■ Positive ■ Neither positive or negative ■ Negative

To gather additional insights on the lasting effects of the psilocybin session, the survey asked for reflections about how well respondents were able to incorporate their session insights into their lives, and since the session, if they felt they were more able to handle emotional ups and downs, and more able to think in new or different ways. The majority of responses were positive.



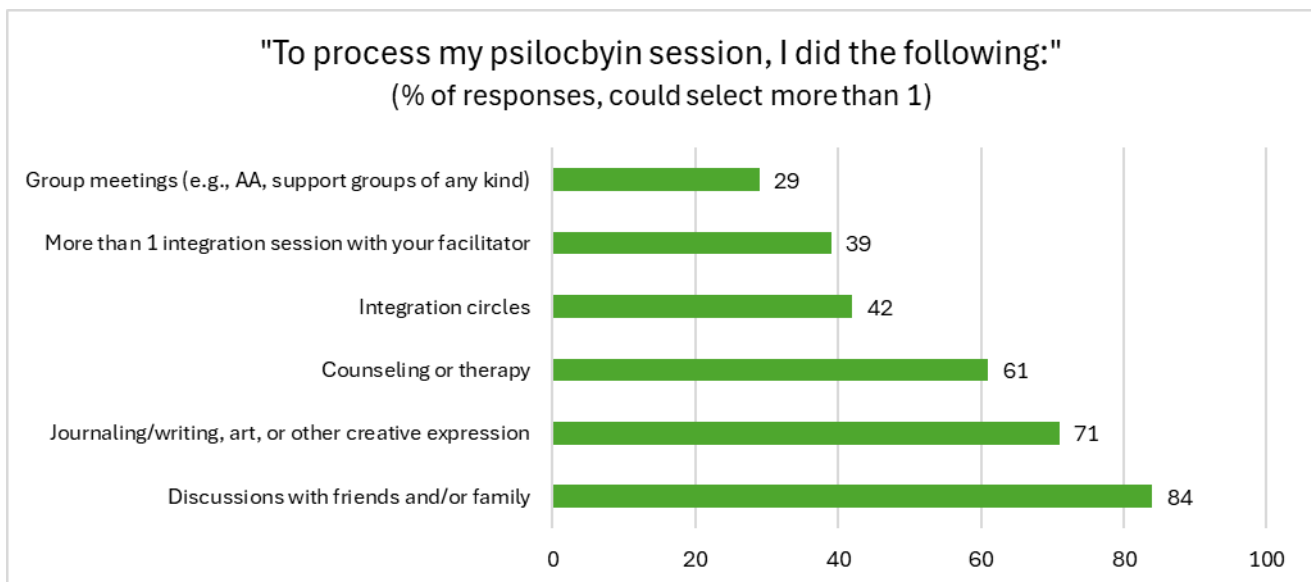
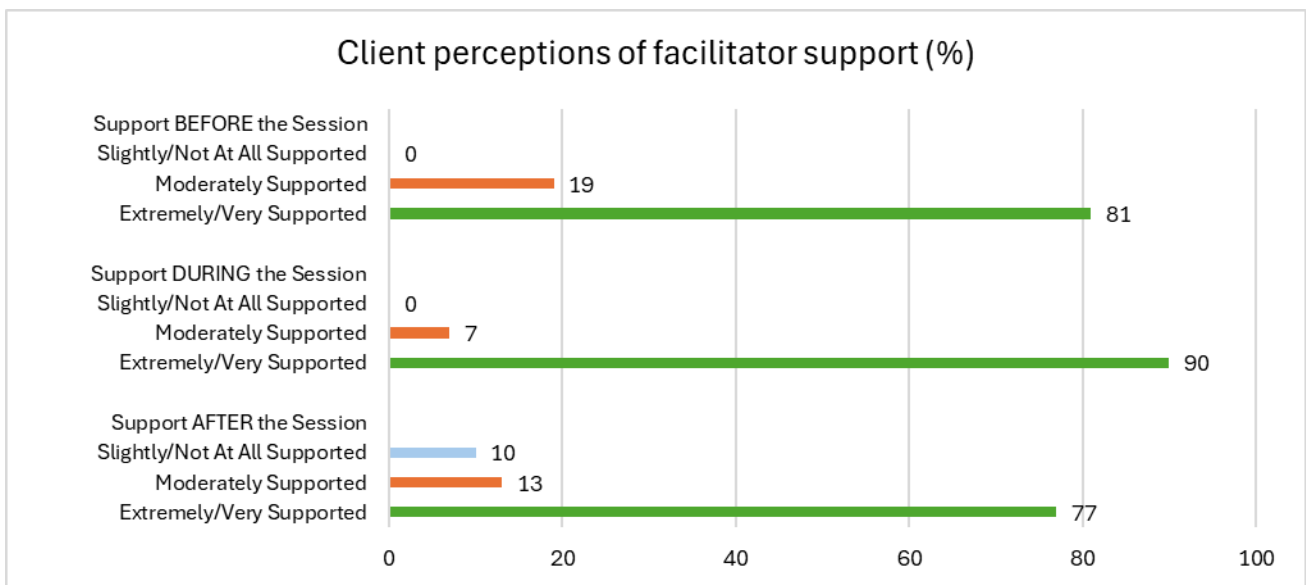


Almost all respondents reported making or noticing at least 1 positive behavioral change since their psilocybin session, including enhanced mindfulness and presence (77%) and an ability to be more open and emotionally expressive in their interactions (65%).



## Facilitator support

The follow-up survey also asked about how supported the clients felt in relation to their licensed facilitator. Through Bendable, each client is assigned to an experienced licensed facilitator to complete the preparation, administration, and integration sessions. The majority of clients felt well supported at all times by their Bendable facilitator, and the majority also actively took steps to integrate (or process) their psilocybin experience through other channels, such as therapy, discussions with friends/family, Bendable programs, or creative activities.



## Significance of the psilocybin experience

The final question of the follow-up survey asked clients to *share anything that has remained significant to them since the psilocybin session, and to which they attribute the psilocybin session*. The responses highlight the wide spectrum of experiences that take place in a psilocybin session, from life-changing experiences and personal growth to challenging experiences and unmet expectations. This showcases how important it is to have psilocybin available as a potential tool for mental health well-being, but it is not a panacea, and individual experiences differ greatly.

Common themes from the responses to this final survey question were:

- **Spirituality:** Respondents reported a heightened sense of spirituality, a connection to nature, and an appreciation of energy and presence, suggesting a deepening of spiritual awareness and practices.
- **Life-Changing Experiences:** Many participants described the therapy as life-changing, providing new perspectives, optimism, and a sense of purpose.
- **Emotional Healing:** The session helped many respondents deal with past traumas, reduce PTSD symptoms, and find emotional resolution, indicating its potential for deep psychological healing.
- **Mental Health:** Respondents commented on improvements in mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and grief, showcasing the potential therapeutic benefits of psilocybin sessions.
- **Personal Growth:** Respondents noted significant personal growth, including insights into their life paths, improved self-care, and better relationship-building skills.
- **Social Relationships:** Improvements in social relationships were noted, with respondents feeling more connected to family and friends, indicating the potential social benefits of the therapy.
- **Disappointment:** A few respondents were disappointed by unmet expectations, especially regarding addiction treatment, which points to the variability in individual responses to psilocybin.
- **Gratitude:** Many expressed a strong sense of gratitude towards the session and facilitators, and highlighted the positive support system provided by Bendable and its impact on respondents.

## *Key insights as reported by respondents*

### *Spirituality:*

- "I was able to experience the observability of spirituality."
- "I had an experience during my day-two session where I felt a presence and since then have been more open to the idea of spirituality."
- "At my age I feel my session reaffirmed my spiritual and psychological groundedness."
- "I am able to appreciate the power and energy that is nature. All the elements that abide around me. At times I can feel their energy."

### *Life-Changing Experiences:*

- "Since my session, I've kept a more optimistic outlook on things that would have devastated me before the session."
- "I have a newfound sense of joy in my life, feel at peace with myself and life."
- "I am now living life - not enduring it."
- "Life changing!!"

### *Emotional Healing:*

- "I was able to receive the healing and transformation that unfolded throughout the journey."
- "The biggest perpetual change for me since my psilocybin session has been noticing a small slice of time between a triggering event and my reaction to that trigger."
- "One thing that remains significant is the shift in my relationship to childhood traumatic experiences and the lessening of the burden that had been placed on me through them."
- "I've been able to find the root cause of many of my life's dysfunctions."

### *Mental Health:*

- "I gratefully attribute a heightened awareness of the primal and important role of play to my psilocybin experience. The effect this has had in attenuating my dysthymia."
- "A lot of my PTSD anxiety come from childhood trauma and being conditioned to never feel that anything was good enough."
- "The clarity and insight I received help tremendously in my processing of grief."
- "The one big thing that the psilocybin helped with is my alcohol consumption and cravings have decreased significantly."

### *Personal Growth:*

- "Since my psilocybin session I have noticed that I'm able to not get stuck in certain situations in my thought process."
- "Insights into direction and path that I am on and need to follow."
- "Generally more positive attitude toward others."
- "A significant take away is knowing my way to my inner peace."
- "EVERYTHING! I can genuinely say that I am a much better person now that I have gone through psilocybin therapy. The main thing that has resonated with me since my session is my love for myself and others."

### *Social Relationships:*

- "I attribute feeling more present and connected with my family."
- "I'm slowly building positive loving relationships, just being very careful, as I've not been so good at building relationships with healthy people over the years."
- "The love and support I felt before, during, immediately after the ceremony, and still now, brings me great comfort."

### *Disappointment:*

- "I was disappointed because I had expectations of greater impact on my intentions of treatment for addictions."
- "I did not have the most pleasant experience, but it definitely gave me a lot to think about."

### *Gratitude:*

- "You provide a lifesaving service. I am very grateful for your dedication to this therapy."
- "The Bendable team provided excellent resources and support in preparation for the experience."
- "I tell anyone who will listen how beneficial and life changing this experience was for me and how great it was to work with Bendable Therapy."
- "I am very grateful for Bendable Therapy and the work they are doing!"
- "My facilitator was EXCELLENT."
- "I am forever grateful to Bendable for providing an opportunity to take this life-changing journey."

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Over the past year, Bendable has become an innovative community and industry leader in providing access to tools to improve mental health. Going forward, Bendable is committed to expanding access to its services through growing its donor base and collaborating with existing organizations with similar commitments to improving mental health and well-being. To help achieve these goals, Bendable already has the following programs and initiatives underway:

- Expanding the scholarship program for individual participants by increasing monthly targets.
- Creating a higher tier of licensed “Bendable facilitators” that have demonstrated experience with specific demographics, mental health backgrounds, have completed an apprenticeship program, are committed to social equity programs, and will provide training and community outreach.
- Launching a practicum program where facilitators-in-training can complete their state-required practicum requirements at a Bendable-approved service center with Bendable facilitators and clients screened through Bendable, providing high-quality training and access to reduced-rate sessions to the community.
- Developing and launching the ‘Quartet Program’ that provides access to lower cost, easily scaled, four-person group sessions with specific themes and objectives (such as grief, disordered eating, women’s groups, substance use, veteran’s, first responders, mental health providers, etc.; *first group session to take place June 7, 2024.*)
- Continuing to support larger sponsored retreats with partners such as [Heroic Hearts Project](#) and [RiverStyx Foundation](#).
- Continuing to successfully connect individuals to psilocybin sessions for an opioid addiction program through [Project New Day](#).
- Continuing to partner with local mental health providers to host integration circles and support our local community.
- Launched a research collaboration with [Osmind](#) to better understand the demographics and outcomes of individuals seeking psilocybin services through the legal Oregon framework.

*Bendable is committed to improving the mental health and well-being of our local community and society at large. By providing resources and support to access effective tools, such as psilocybin, we hope to continue improving the physical and mental spaces we all share together.*

# APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1. Locations of submitted screening applications

State	Number of applications submitted
Alabama	2
Alaska	2
Arizona	3
California	40
Colorado	3
Connecticut	4
Florida	5
Georgia	2
Hawaii	1
Idaho	4
Illinois	3
Indiana	3
Iowa	2
Kansas	1
Louisiana	1
Michigan	2
Minnesota	4
Missouri	2
Montana	2
Nevada	1
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	5
New Mexico	2
New York	10

Noth Carolina	2
North Dakota	1
Ohio	4
Oregon	243
Pennsylvania	4
South Carolina	1
Texas	9
Utah	5
Virginia	6
Washington	22
West Virginia	1
Wisconsin	2
<b>Countries outside the US</b>	<b>Number of applications submitted</b>
Canada	1
Hungary	1
Malaysia	1