

When the ceremony doesn't end: bridging interdisciplinary perspectives from psychedelic-induced psychosis to spiritual emergency.

February 25, 2025 - 5 hour Educational Seminar

Instructors:

Dr. Ranji Varghese. MD, Psychiatrist. Chief Medical Officer and Partner at Institute for Integrative Therapies. Medical Director, Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center at Hennepin Healthcare. Medical Director of Psychiatry, Choices Psychotherapy. Minnesota Governor's Psychedelic Medicine Task Force Member.

Kyle Keller. MSW, LICSW. Psychotherapist, Certified Psychedelic-Assisted Therapist. Co-founder, Operations and Clinical Officer, Ellie Mental Health, from 2015 until 2023. Co-founder, Director of Operations, Clinical Supervisor, Institute for Integrative Therapies, from 2020 until 2022. Certified in MDMA-assisted Psychotherapy through CIIS.

Dr. Yarissa Herman. C.Psych. Psychologist and Course Director with the University Health Network's Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Group in Ontario, Canada. Clinical Psychologist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Dr. Dennis McKenna. Ethnopharmacologist, Principal Founder & President of the McKenna Academy of Natural Philosophy. Co-Founder, Hefter Research Institute. Author and Ethnobotanist.

Mariya Garnet. Traditionally trained psychedelic facilitator, EXAT student-therapist.

Lee Kaiser. Wildlife Biologist and Independent Consultant.

Enrique Santiago Paredes Melendez. Traditional Peruvian Vegetalista (healer).

Loyver Jamilton Yui Lopez. Shipibo artist, ceremony facilitator.

Seminar Agenda:

1. Introduction of the subject and presenters - 10min
2. Introduction to psychedelics and entheogens - 10 min
3. Defining psychosis and "spiritual emergency" - 10 min
4. Lee Kaiser's case study presentation - 30 min
5. Responses from each presenter - 75 min total
6. Guided discussion among presenters - 30 minutes
7. EXAT activities (non-verbal creative practices and sharing) in breakout rooms - 30 minutes
8. Q&A and participants' reflections - 45 minutes
9. Closing commentary and future directions - 15 minutes
10. Pre-recorded interviews with indigenous practitioners

Content of Seminar:

This online event, organized by professionals with the support of the McKenna Academy, explores the phenomenon of psychosis among psychedelic users based on perspectives from clinical, indigenous, spiritual, and natural philosophy foundations. It highlights the importance of approaching psychosis through various lenses to address it as a public health issue, especially in the context of the growing global use of psychedelics in psychotherapy, trauma counseling, and spiritual practices. The seminar offers valuable Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for clinicians and will contribute to psychedelic-assisted therapy training programs. It features a panel of experts—researchers, clinicians, counselors, and indigenous practitioners—who will present a case study to examine the care of individuals experiencing psychosis associated with the use of psychedelics. The event includes individual presentations, a panel discussion, small group activities, a Q&A portion, and pre-recorded interviews, providing a comprehensive learning experience to expand discussions among professionals and the general public across many different areas of interest.

This presentation does not include an ethics component, nor will there be a focus on supervision.

Seminar Objectives:

- Gain a multidisciplinary understanding of psychedelic-induced psychosis and spiritual emergencies
- Explore the intersection of clinical, traditional, and spiritual perspectives on altered states of consciousness
- Develop skills for differentiating between psychosis and spiritual emergencies in psychedelic contexts
- Learn integration techniques for supporting individuals experiencing prolonged altered states

Specific Skills and Knowledge to be Gained:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of psychedelic-induced psychosis and spiritual emergencies from clinical, traditional, and spiritual perspectives
- Explore the intersection of Western psychiatry, ancestral healing practices, and modern psychedelic therapy
- Develop skills to differentiate between psychosis and spiritual emergencies
- Learn diagnostic criteria and risk factors for psychedelic-induced psychosis
- Understand evidence-based interventions for managing acute psychotic episodes
- Explore indigenous conceptualizations of altered states and their cultural significance
- Discover traditional methods for supporting individuals with intense psychedelic experiences
- Learn best practices for harm reduction in psychedelic settings
- Acquire techniques for grounding and stabilizing clients during challenging experiences
- Develop strategies for long-term integration of psychedelic insights
- Explore frameworks for bridging clinical and traditional approaches to mental health
- Learn communication strategies for discussing altered states across different paradigms
- Examine ethical considerations in cross-cultural psychedelic work
- Analyze real-world case studies to apply multidisciplinary perspectives
- Identify key factors contributing to prolonged altered states

- Develop comprehensive treatment plans for complex cases involving psychedelic-induced psychosis or spiritual emergencies
- Participate in creative expression activities to deepen understanding of the subject matter
- Engage in guided discussions and Q&A sessions with expert presenters
- Reflect on personal and professional experiences related to psychedelic-induced altered states
- Explore future directions for research and practice in this emerging field

Methodology Utilized:

- Case Study Presentation and Analysis
- Guided Panel Discussion
- Q&A Conversation
- EXAT Small Group Activities and Creative Integration
- Video Interviews with Indigenous Experts