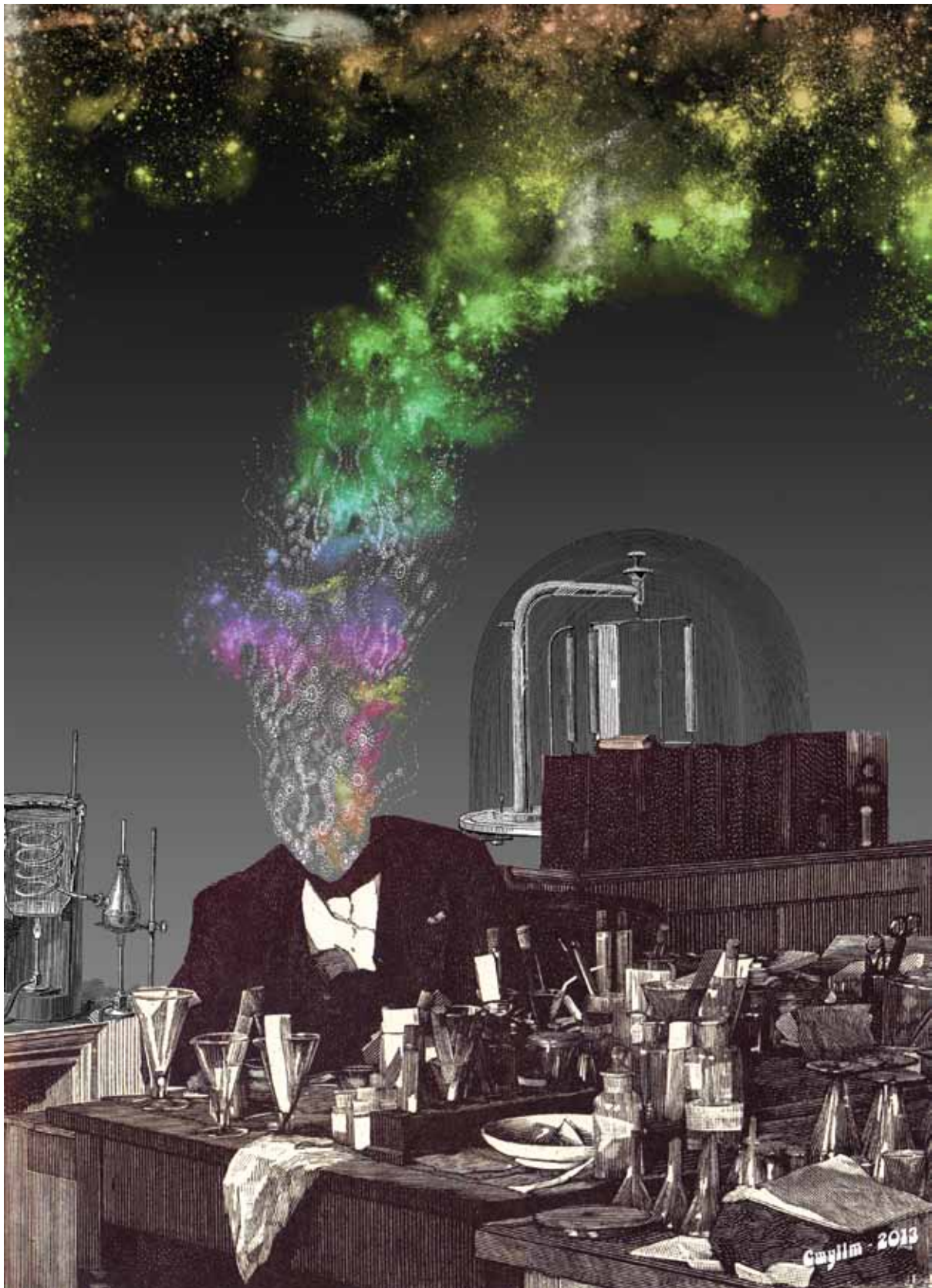


THE MANUAL OF PSYCHEDELIC SUPPORT

A Practical Guide to Establishing
and Facilitating Care Services
at Music Festivals and Other Events

First Edition (2015)
Psychedelic Care Publications



GWYLLM LLWYDD • *The Chemist* (dedicated to Sasha Shulgin), 2013 • multimedia, digital collage
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The modern history of psychedelic care services can be traced back to the mid-1960s, when young people began to consume mind-altering substances at concerts and events. Emergency medical services were not trained to provide compassionate support for participants in non-ordinary states of consciousness. In an effort to offer more effective and informed care, a number of groups created their own specialised teams to work with those who were having difficult experiences. This chapter takes a look at some of those early efforts in the United States, as well as a selection of more recent and current ones around the world, and how they developed specialised spaces and techniques as part of their on-site care services. Some of the first attempts at providing support for people who ingest psychedelics and other drugs were launched by the Hog Farmers, the CALM volunteers of the Rainbow Family, Rock Med, White Bird, and the innumerable parking lot medics who went on tour with the Grateful Dead. More recently created psychedelic care services have been developed by the Green Dot Rangers at Burning Man, by KosmiCare at Boom Festival, the Zendo Project, and the Full Circle Tea House. These groups are just a sample of the various services that exist around the world today. See [Chapter 17, “Online Resources and Obtaining Assistance”](#), for a more comprehensive list and links to further information. The groups profiled below represent almost fifty years of creative, compassionate care that has helped innumerable people.

Services Launched in the 1960s and 1970s

1.1

The Hog Farmers at Woodstock

In the mid-1960s a group of forty people associated with the Grateful Dead and the Merry Pranksters were offered a job feeding hogs in exchange for rent-free living on a Southern California mountaintop. The community, now known as the Hog Farm, is widely considered the longest running hippie commune in the United States. The Hog Farmers are best known for their services at the 1969 Woodstock Music & Art Fair, which attracted nearly half a million participants. Recruited by event organisers to build fire pits and trails on the festival grounds in Woodstock, New York, the Hog Farmers persuaded the promoters to let them set up a free kitchen. After flying into New York, the group was met by the press at the airport and informed that they had been assigned the job of providing security at the festival, which had been hastily relocated to a 600-acre dairy farm. Hog Farm co-founder and professional clown Wavy Gravy named this security team the "Please Force" (as in please don't do that, please do this instead) to reflect their non-intrusive approach. When asked by reporters what the group's strategy was for keeping order, Gravy replied, "Cream pies and seltzer bottles".



Wavy Gravy, still helping out on the festival circuit after all of these years; seen here at the 2010 Harmony Festival in California. Photo by Jon Hanna.

After the perimeter fence was cut down by incoming crowds, the festival became a free event for hundreds of thousands of attendees. Whilst the county declared a state of emergency, the Hog Farmers valiantly fed, comforted, and looked after a flood of participants, effectively launching one of the first large-scale psychedelic care services. For three muddy, historic days, the Hog Farmers found creative ways to support attendees at the site, which lacked adequate sanitation and medical services. Standing on stage one rainy morning during the event, Gravy announced, "What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for 400,000!". The Woodstock Festival was remarkably peaceful considering the conditions and number of people involved. There were two recorded births during the three-day event and two fatalities, one from a suspected heroin overdose and another caused when a tractor accidentally ran over an attendee sleeping in a nearby hay field. After Woodstock, the extended family of Hog Farmers bought a fleet of buses and hit the road to perform theatre shows. The activists and entertainers who made up the collective eventually settled in Northern California, and currently operate a 700-acre ranch where they host large music festivals, run a children's circus camp, and raise money for charitable work around the world.

Grateful Dead Parking Lot Medics

During the long concert tours of the Grateful Dead that began in the 1970s, many ardent fans, known as "Deadheads", followed the band and created lively, temporary communities that took up residence in parking lots near the music venues. After the shows were over, a group of volunteer medics remained behind to assist Deadheads who still roamed the lots. [Rob Savoye](#), who served with one of these loosely organised medic teams from 1978 to 1986, is a founding member of the Ilchester Mountain Search and Rescue group, a collection of rock climbing buddies from West Virginia who provided parking lot services. Savoye says the medics tried to create a calm and secure space for people who were over-stimulated by psychedelic experiences or other psychological challenges. Savoye often brought a bus or truck to the lots—first a VW camper and later a 1964 Ford truck—and created a chill space inside the vehicle to care for guests. The medics, many of whom had formal medical training, also provided first aid for minor injuries. Frequently, says Savoye, law enforcement officers would try to chase the Deadheads from the parking lots, but he would let them hole-up in his parked vehicle for a day or two, often driving them to the next show to reconnect with their friends.

self-destructive. For psychedelic care cases, the CALM and Brew HaHa staff are sensitive about protecting the anonymity of attendees. Guests are asked for information regarding what substance they took, what it looked like and where they got it from, but few formal records are kept. In a non-confrontational manner, care givers sometimes inform the source of the substance about adverse reactions, especially in cases involving “newer” drugs such as GHB and toad venom. According to care givers, suppliers sometimes volunteer information about treatment approaches and usually agree to stop distributing the substance(s) in question.

White Bird

White Bird is a non-profit human service agency based in Eugene, Oregon, that has been serving the people of Lane County and nearby festivals for more than forty years. A collective of largely volunteer care providers, White Bird was founded in 1969 by a Eugene-based community of care givers. The group provides direct service and education that helps people gain control of their social, emotional, and physical well-being. White Bird provides services at the annual Oregon Country Fair, where some participants visit the on-site White Bird clinic to receive their annual check up and primary health care. White Bird also operates three permanent clinics that provide free health and dental care, mental health counselling, and other services to an estimated 12,000 homeless people in the Eugene area. CAHOOTS, or Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets, is a department of White Bird funded by the City of Eugene. CAHOOTS fields a mobile, crisis intervention team—integrated into the city’s public safety system—that responds to more than 85,000 service requests a year. The care givers of CAHOOTS receive 911 dispatch calls and provide services for cases involving severe intoxication, drug overdose, disorientation, mental illness, dispute resolution, non-emergency medical care, first aid, and transport to services. Pioneers in providing on-call psychedelic services and other care to marginalised communities, CAHOOTS operates a van that is staffed and managed by the White Bird Clinic.

Rock Med

For more than forty years, **Rock Med** volunteers have been providing medical care at large concerts and other events in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organisation was founded in 1972 when music promoter Bill Graham asked the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic, a medical service based in San Francisco’s famous Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood, to staff a medical tent at outdoor concerts of the Grateful Dead and Led Zeppelin. Rock Med became a standalone organi-

volunteers called the [Black Rock Rangers](#) who address safety issues and provide community mediation. Black Rock Rangers often hold a current certification in CPR and basic first aid (and this training is available on-site prior to the event). Care for participants undergoing challenging drug experiences is provided by psychiatric services from the ESD Mental Health Branch, and peer counselling comes from the Black Rock Ranger "Green Dots". The Green Dot Rangers also provide compassionate support for addressing interpersonal issues and offer mediation services throughout Black Rock City. They follow a FLAME model, which directs Green Dots to Find out, Listen, Analyse, Mediate, and Explain.

Together with members of the ESD Mental Health Branch, the Green Dots staff the Sanctuary space for non-medical, supportive care. Sanctuary offers a limited number of beds and provides a quiet location to help participants transform potentially difficult situations into positive experiences. Sanctuary is not advertised at the event, but Rangers, law enforcement, medical responders, and other Burning Man departments bring participants there for care. The space and its services are also available to the event's staff. As a safe haven for confidential care, the Burning Man Sanctuary space is open at all times during the event. The Green Dot Rangers and their ESD partners provide on-call counselling outside of Sanctuary—alongside warming fires contained in metal barrels and at other locations throughout the festival—during situations requiring emotional trauma support. Green Dot Rangers also work on-site as foot-, bicycle-, and vehicle-mobile Dirt Rangers. In addition to receiving training as Black Rock Rangers, they obtain instruction from the [Green Dot Advanced Ranger Training Manual](#), a practical guide for compassionate care. The text [Meeting the Divine Within](#) is also used to train those working with psychedelic crises at Burning Man.



Sanctuary care giver rewards co-worker Rick Doblin after his shift has ended at the 2005 Burning Man Festival. Photo by Jon Hanna.



Official signs posted by the drug-testing service warn of dangers and deception related to drugs sold at the 2012 Boom Festival. Photo by Zevic Mishor.

Also in 2008, KosmiCare collaborated with Energy Control, a Spanish drug-testing organisation that made its services available at Boom. Working out of a small, well-equipped laboratory, these professionals used thin-layer chromatography (TLC) to assay substances brought to them by festival-goers, or in some cases submitted by the KosmiCare team after the substances had been given to care givers by care space guests. The service provided information regarding the active compounds(s), as well as adulterants, present in the samples tested. This information was very useful not only for individual cases, but also in helping to build a general picture of the kinds of drugs that were being circulated at the festival, and indeed, of trends of disinformation and deception; for example, when one psychoactive was being sold under the guise of another. The photo on the previous page, taken at Boom 2012 (which hosted a similar testing service), shows the level of honest concern and transparency possible under (and indeed, as part of its emphasis on harm reduction, largely supported by) current Portuguese law. These official signs, unthinkable at present under other jurisdictions in certain countries around the world, help to convey a sense of the atmosphere of openness, saneness, and support that has so far characterised Boom Festival. The article [“Energy Control: TLC and Other Risk Reduction Approaches”](#) by Sylvia Thyssen and Jon Hanna gives some background information on Energy Control, and presents an excellent depiction of their work at the 2008 Boom Festival.

In 2008 the Boom Festival worked closely with paramedics and security to maintain the KosmiCare psychedelic care space and provide effective medical care during a large-scale outbreak of a gastrointestinal illness that was dubbed the “Boom Bug”. This phase of the project is documented in Svea Nielsen and Constance Bettencourt’s essay, [“KosmiCare: Creating Safe Spaces for Difficult Psychedelic Experiences”](#).

In 2006 and 2008, CosmiKiva/KosmiCare launched a strategy to pursue a vision of expanded support and improved guest-outcomes for current and future care services. It consisted of a partnership between Boom organisers, the Faculty of Education and Psychology at the Catholic University of Porto (Portugal), and the Portuguese General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies (SICAD). The purpose of this partnership was to transform the existing care strategy into an *evidence-based crisis intervention model* that addressed the use of psychoactive substances in recreational settings.

The first results of these partnerships were delivered in 2011; psychedelic care resulted in very positive feedback from guests and staff, producing significant improvements in

guests' short-term psychological and physical well-being as a result of treatment. Boom organisers continued to support research related to intervention, and more data was collected at KosmiCare in 2012. As results were made available during 2013, it was possible to verify that other, more quantitative measures of crisis resolution also prove equally positive, with mental state exam indicators increasing significantly between the periods of admission and departure of guests. Please see [Appendix B, "Monitoring, Evaluating and Researching—Recommendations from an Academic Perspective for an Evidence-Based Approach to Psychoactive Crisis Intervention"](#), for further discussion on this research.

At the 2012 Boom Festival the KosmiCare space was moved to a more central area of the event, compared to where it had been set up in 2010, making it easier for participants to locate. An increasingly experienced team of care givers, using tested-and-true methods, continued to provide and improve psychedelic care services, despite budget restrictions.

Kosmicare UK

Kosmicare UK is an organisation separate from the original KosmiCare project set up by Boom Festival, but owes much of its philosophy and ethos to that pioneering project. After a successful, challenging, and rewarding time as a volunteer with KosmiCare at the Boom Festival in 2008, Karin Silenzi de Stagni recognised the need for similar services at festivals in the United Kingdom. With support from the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, Karin formed Kosmicare UK, using the framework for psychedelic emergency services that MAPS had developed with Diogo Ruivo, chief organiser of the Boom Festival.

Recognising the hard work and innovation of those involved with the original project, Kosmicare UK gratefully utilised their resources, building upon them to meet the challenges of working at festivals in the United Kingdom. The demands that Kosmicare UK faces include the harsh climate—often wet and cold even in the summer months—the logistics of attending a number of different festivals across the nation, and the lack of funding. Kosmicare UK is an independent community project that does not have sponsors, depending entirely on donations and voluntary work. In addition, many small festivals have a limited budget and are able to only just cover basic expenses; nevertheless, the Kosmicare UK team make every effort to have a presence at as many festivals as possible, because the team really believes in the importance of their project.

Since 2009, Kosmicare UK has provided care services at several festivals across England, Wales, and Scotland, including Sunrise Celebration, Eden Festival, Waveform,

The volunteers staff harm-reduction booths at raves, night-clubs, and other dance events, providing information on drugs, safer sex, and assorted health and safety issues of concern to the electronic dance community. DanceSafe also provides adulterant-screening/pill-testing services for ecstasy (MDMA) users, an important harm-reduction service that may save lives and reduces medical emergencies by helping users avoid fake and/or tainted tablets that can contain substances far more dangerous than actual MDMA. In 2013, the Drug Policy Alliance acknowledged Dance-Safe by honouring them with the Dr. Andrew Weil Award for Achievement in the Field of Drug Education.

The Psychedelic Nurses

The Psychedelic Nurses is a European organisation of health care providers that has offered psychedelic support services at parties and festivals in France and Switzerland since 2006. Members of the group base their care on natural healing and holistic therapies, including qigong, tai chi, Reiki, ayurvedic and Thai massage, and shiatsu. Whilst in recent years the Psychedelic Nurses have shifted their focus to offering natural health and exercise services at parties and festivals, they will still provide care for someone experiencing a psychedelic crisis if the need arises.

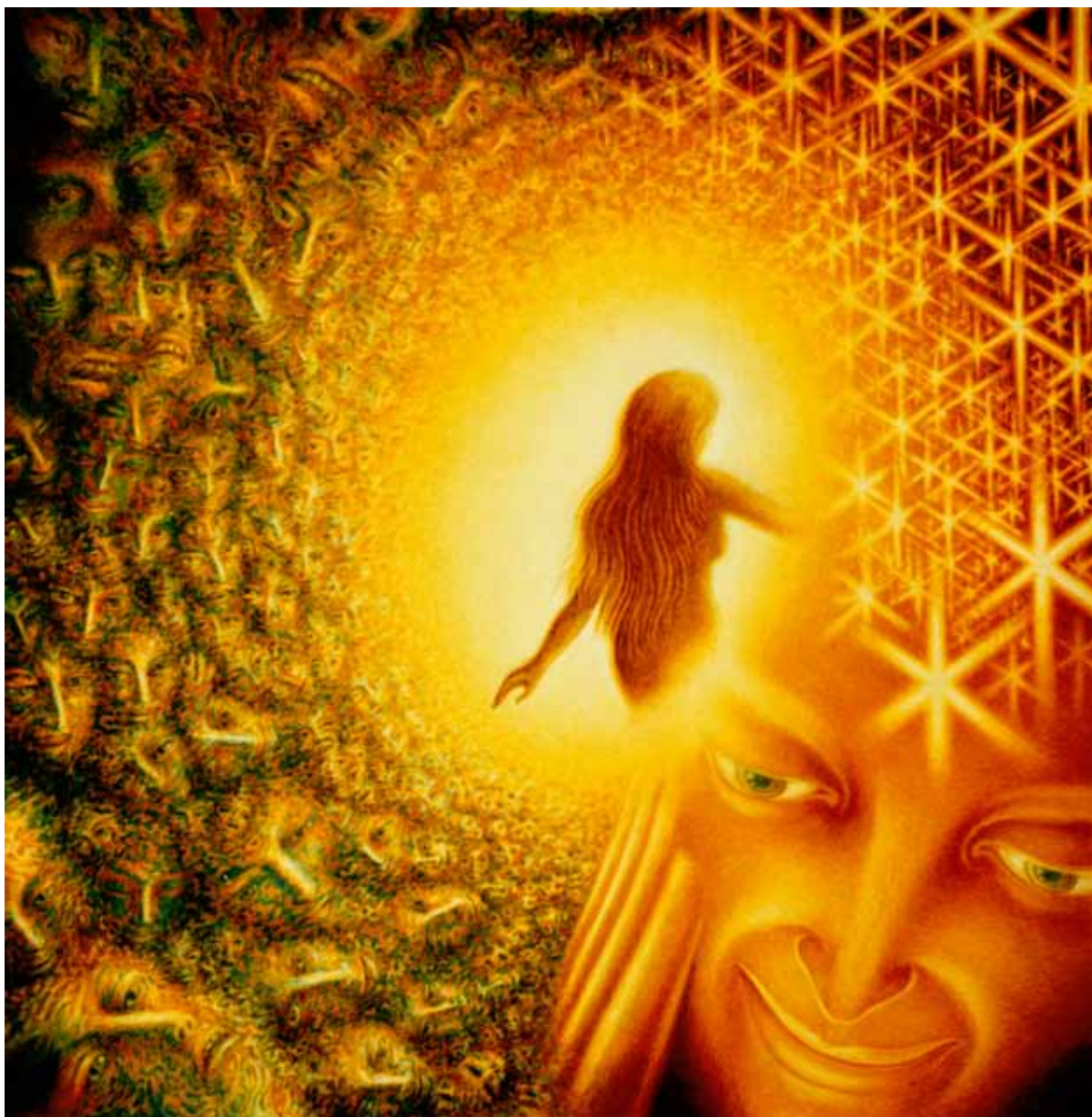
The Zendo Project

The Zendo Project was launched at the Burning Man Arts Festival in 2012 as an outreach service sponsored by MAPS. Zendo operated from a circular structure near a popular music stage, and was staffed by trained volunteers. Since 2001, MAPS has brought together a diverse team of therapists, doctors, researchers, and experienced peer counselors to provide compassionate care and psychedelic harm reduction at large gatherings. MAPS first provided volunteer recruitment and training for the Sanctuary space at Burning Man in 2003. The organisation later also joined production efforts to help develop a model for psychedelic harm reduction at the Boom Festival (see "[KosmiCare at Boom Festival](#)" above). Following these efforts, MAPS continued to expand its services to a circuit of international events.

The mission of the Zendo Project is to provide a supportive space to help people obtain some benefits from difficult psychedelic experiences, reduce the number of psychedelic drug-related arrests and hospitalizations, and train volunteers to provide compassionate care. The Project strives to address the public's fear of psychedelics and encourage honest and responsible conversations about their use. The service clearly demonstrates that it is possible to mitigate the risks associated with the non-medical use of psychedelics at



LUKE GRAY • *Peace Pipe*, 2012 • Staedtler Triplus Fineliner
<http://www.lukegray.net>



MARK HENSON • *Inner Voices*, 1983 • watercolour on paper

<http://markhensonart.com/all-art-gallery-shop/inner-voices>

*The woman is about to enter into a state of communion
with the source of all beingness.*

*As she passes into the light,
voices of doubt and fear make one more attempt
to direct her thoughts elsewhere.*

What if there is no love?

What if there is no caring?

Will I be left out?

*As the light comes closer and closer,
the unresolved "Inner Voices" fade,
drawing her through the door of consciousness,
into the love that was there all the time.*

— Commentary by Monti Moore