

Frequently Asked Questions

For those new to the fellowship

Please note that answers have been sourced by the community. We are not clinicians or professional therapists.

Who are we, and why are we here?

Psychedelics In Recovery™ is a 12-step fellowship of people from many 12-step programs and other paths of recovery who share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. Our primary purpose is to pursue recovery, as defined by the individual, and to help others do the same. The only requirement for membership is a desire to recover from addiction and/or an interest in the use of psychedelics and/or plant medicines as an aid to our process of recovery.

Is this Fellowship for people who are addicted to psychedelics?

No. Although some members may have experience with abuse of psychedelics or plant medicines and might be able to help identify signs of psychedelic addiction, PIR® is focused on integrating the safe, intentional, and/or ceremonial use of psychedelics and/ or plant medicines into a healthy 12-step process of recovery.

How does PIR® help?

PIR® is open to all seeking recovery from addiction, with an overarching awareness of the potential for the responsible use of psychedelics and/or plant medicines to improve and enhance the individual and communal lives of our members. We encourage our members to speak openly about recovery. We are an informal, peer support space that provides an opportunity for individuals to heal in community by incorporating practices gleaned from a spectrum of group-sharing models, ranging from silent or neutral group acceptance to kind and loving reflection ("feedback") from others.

When and how do I ask questions?

If you are new, the best place to ask questions is from more experienced members in the virtual "parking lot" after the meeting. The parking lot is considered the 'meeting after the meeting' and allows for more open discussion and community- building. We share our experiences, but do not give advice or tell others what to do. It is worth noting that the parking lot is not a space to promote oneself for financial or material gain.

How are PIR® meetings similar or different from other 12-Step fellowship meetings?

PIR® groups tend to be more accommodating to a wider range of approaches to recovery than those typically espoused by members of traditional abstinence-based 12- step groups. PIR® members often find healing by following models of recovery that integrate harm-reduction strategies or medication- assisted therapy. However, as is true in many traditional 12-step fellowships, our meetings typically open with a few standard readings, including the 12 Steps as adapted for PIR®, and provide participants the opportunity to share their experience, strength, and hope. Participants who choose to share about their use of psychedelics and/or plant medicines will not be stigmatized in PIR®. We allow members to self-define their understanding of recovery/sobriety/ abstinence, and we encourage individuals to embark on a process of exploration to discover for themselves the most effective methods for recovering from their addictions.

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Are people in PIR® in other recovery programs, too?

Many fellow travelers have been or are currently also in AA, NA, ACA, Al-Anon, CoDA, Recovery Dharma, and non-faith-based fellowships, to name a few. Some members have experienced trouble with substances like drugs or alcohol; others may have found themselves suffering from process- based or behavioral addictions, such as gambling, overeating, or codependency.

Do I have to work the Steps to recover?

No. We encourage members to find their own path to recovery. For some, this may involve following the 12 Steps. We encourage members to work the Steps and apply those principles and concepts in their daily lives.

Do I have to admit I have a problem with drugs or alcohol?

If we find we have a problem with drugs, alcohol, or harmful behaviors, healing can begin when we accept this for ourselves and we admit it to others. Admission of loss of control (or "powerlessness") over addiction is the First Step. We encourage you to practice rigorous honesty with yourself and trusted others. Share when you feel comfortable and safe.

What does sobriety mean in PIR®?

In PIR®, we allow members to define what sobriety means to them. Generally, sobriety is characterized by abstinence from self-defined harmful behaviors. These behaviors could be substance- based or process-based. Some members are sober from alcohol, narcotics, or tobacco; others are sober from codependence, self-injury, gambling, sex, or food addiction.

Regarding alcoholics and addicts using psychedelics and plant medicines, what about the phenomenon of craving or relapse?

"Craving" and avoidance of the symptoms of withdrawal are part of the basis for addiction. "Relapse" refers to engaging in self-defined harmful behaviors after a period of abstinence. For alcoholics and addicts, the phenomenon of craving occurs as a response to ingesting our drug of choice or engaging in self-destructive behavior. Addiction is generally defined as craving, compulsion, and a loss of control or an inability to stop engaging in self-defined harmful behavior(s). In PIR®, some members mindfully work with psychedelics and/or plant medicines to reduce the craving and obsessions often associated with addiction. Most psychedelics are not considered inherently addictive. If we experience the phenomenon of craving or relapse, we contact our sponsors, fellow travelers, or trusted others to promptly restore a healthy recovery process. Please find more information in our Cares and Considerations document.

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More questions from the interactive FAQ

How do I identify my Sobriety in PIR®?

Many people in PIR® come from other 12-step groups and other paths of recovery have varying lengths of sobriety or clean/recovery time from their harmful drugs/addictive behaviors. Some members find that traditional 12-step groups do not feel like the right fit for them. In PIR®, we encourage individual members to identify their own version and definition of what sobriety means to them. We encourage people to find sponsors or co-travellers to foster a sense of community, work the steps to build a connection to a Higher Power, and get active service commitments to practice humility and responsibility. It may be helpful for a new member to start identifying their own harmful behaviors that they do not wish to engage in, to start to self-define their sobriety or clean time as part of their path of recovery.

Am I still "sober" if I use psychedelics?

Each member gets to define their own version of what it means to be sober, with or without the use of psychedelics. Many members of abstinence-based 12-step fellowships or other paths of recovery may be resistant or feel uncomfortable considering the use of psychedelics. In PIR® we see these substances as medicine and we strive to use them consciously and aligned with our primary purpose, integrating their use into our 12 step recovery process. This is what integration in PIR® is all about. The 12 steps give us a way to process our psychedelic experiences. PIR® does not judge or make recommendations one way or the other about anyone's psychedelic use or integration into their program of recovery.

What is considered destructive or chaotic use of psychedelics?

There are some potential destructive or chaotic behaviors to watch out for when starting to integrate psychedelics into our recovery. A few of those behaviors may include: If we are using psychedelics to escape our feelings or to avoid circumstances in our lives. If our psychedelic misuse is impacting our physical/mental health, or our relationships with friends and family, then that may be considered destructive and harmful to our recovery. We encourage rigorous honesty with self and others about our behaviors, our psychedelic use and integration (based on our self-defined recovery) to stay accountable to ourselves, our program, and in the community.

How can you tell the difference between "integrating" and "using"?

Integration is a big, important process that can happen before, during and after participating with psychedelics/plant medicine, 12-step work, or other ceremonies. Everyone has their own unique process that would be too long to explain here. Roughly, integration is what we do for ourselves, or in community with others AFTER we use/ingest the medicine or as part of our step work. "Using" is an unrelated term that can carry a negative connotation that we are ingesting substances or engaging in harmful behaviors against our recovery.

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How does a newcomer get started on the journey of integrating psychedelics and/or plant medicines into their recovery?

Some members come to PIR® with long periods of abstinence-based sobriety, while others are seeking relief from their primary addiction through the use of psychedelics, plant medicine and/or the 12 steps. Most of us started by going to meetings, asking others how they learned about psychedelics and incorporated them into their 12 step work. We do our research and learn from reputable sources. We proceed with caution, guided by our Higher Power and trusted others.

Where's the line between therapeutic use & abuse?

Each member gets to define for themselves what constitutes therapeutic, intentional use of psychedelics and/or plant medicines and what they consider harmful or abusive use of those medicines. What works for one person's program of recovery may not work for another. We refrain from judging another person's path, focus on our own recovery, sharing from our own ESH (Experience, Strength and Hope). We encourage sharing about your experiences with trusted others for caring feedback.

How do you know when you are relapsing or when you've lost your sobriety?

Many of us find it helpful to define "Bottom Line Behaviors" (BLBs) that we do not engage in for our self-defined sobriety. BLBs can range from avoiding substances like alcohol, hard drugs, cannabis, or nicotine to avoiding process-oriented harmful behaviors, like porn, gambling, self-injury.

How do I make friends and build community within PIR®?

Attend meetings, parking lots, get involved with your group through service commitment opportunities. Joining some of our unofficial social media platforms, and asking respectfully for phone numbers (and using them!) are great ways to start building deeper connections with other PIR® members. Skillfully navigating new relationships in recovery takes time, patience, mutual trust and reciprocity.

I am in another fellowship and I have taken psychedelics or other plant medicine. Do I have to start (ed. re-start) my sobriety in my other fellowship?

We recognize that sharing about psychedelics in mainstream 12-step meetings is deemed an "outside issue". Sharing openly about psychedelic use and/or integration has been met with resistance (and/or shame) in some traditional 12-step abstinence-based fellowships. PIR® does NOT consider intentional psychedelic use/integration a relapse or slip in sobriety/recovery/clean time. Each member in PIR® has the opportunity to choose for themselves if they need to restart their sobriety/clean time.

Does PIR® promote drug use?

No. We do not consider psychedelics "drugs" when they are used intentionally for healing. We affirm that they have the potential to help us heal on many levels; physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. We encourage each member to decide for themselves if psychedelics could be an aid to their program of recovery.

Note* PIR® prohibits promotion. Sourcing medicines or recommending individuals or retreat centers breaks our Traditions and is out of alignment with our primary purpose which is to recover and help others to do the same.

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