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## WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO DEVELOP A PSYCHEDELIC COURSE?

My motivation to develop a psychedelic course is closely tied to the founding of Centerspace in 2020. The Center was established with grant funding to offer novel medication-assisted psychotherapy interventions for treatment-refractory mental health disorders. Our initial clinical platform focused on ketamine-based treatments, and from the outset, we've seen strong interest from trainees eager to learn about ketamine-assisted psychotherapy (KAP) as well as other psychedelic therapies. The initial development of our course program in 2021 was a direct response to this interest, aimed at providing comprehensive education to equip healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to integrate these innovative treatments into clinical practice.

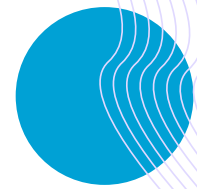
## WHO ARE THE STUDENTS YOU TEACH?

Our program's students are a diverse, interdisciplinary group of trainees. Many of them are psychiatry and combined training residents, but our program also attracts social work, nursing, and psychology trainees as well as medical students. The interdisciplinary nature of the group has been very beneficial in informing how we can best implement a collaborative approach to the use of these emerging therapies in clinical practice.

## HOW DID YOU DEVELOP YOUR COURSE?

Our course is continually evolving to reflect both the interests and educational needs of trainees. We currently offer two types of psychedelic therapy education in the psychiatry residency program at MUSC: an online, didactic curriculum and a longitudinal clinical elective in KAP. The didactic curriculum is designed as a series of modules based on the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education \(ACGME\)](#) framework for physician training. This framework provides milestones for the evaluation of trainees in six core competencies: patient care, medical knowledge, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, and systems-based practice. Using my own training experience and research, I began to develop learning objectives for psychedelic therapy coursework and align them with the ACGME core competencies.

The different interdisciplinary healthcare professional accrediting organizations recognize that a written assessment alone cannot fully demonstrate clinical competency, only that an individual has acquired a certain level of medical and professional knowledge. Consequently, hands-on clinical practice, supervision, and clinical competency assessments are key parts of healthcare professional training. To meet this need, MUSC's Centerspace offers a longitudinal clinical elective that leverages our KAP clinical platform to facilitate trainees' experience working with non-ordinary states of consciousness for therapeutic purposes.



Additionally, our program has evolved in its approach to the integration of both traditional and contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches into psychedelic-assisted therapies (PAT). In addition to the non-directive PAT and MDMA-therapeutic approaches, we have also designed modules to illustrate how a broad variety of traditional and contemporary psychotherapies (e.g., psychodynamic therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and mindfulness-based approaches) can be incorporated into PAT. We feel this broader therapeutic lens provides trainees with greater skills as these treatments move forward, possibly without FDA-regulated, mandatory therapy components.

### **CAN YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR COURSE CONTENT?**

The online, didactic modules cover a wide range of psychedelic-related topics, including those related specifically to ketamine-based treatments, as well as MDMA- and psilocybin-assisted therapies, and other forms of psychedelic therapies documented in the science literature. Additionally, the modules cover fundamentals related to psychedelic therapies overall, including phases and methods of psychedelic therapeutic journeys, self-care and wellness for psychedelic therapists, ethics and consent, the historical context of psychedelics, and how psychedelic therapy differs from recreational use. The modules also include more practical content such as how to give intramuscular injections, how to conduct esketamine visits, as well as set, setting, and music for PAT, and qualifications for psychedelic-assisted therapists.

Trainees in the longitudinal clinical elective receive supervised, hands-on training in KAP. This year-long clinical elective operates almost like an apprenticeship, exposing trainees to all stages of the treatment process. I find KAP to be a very useful starting place for residents interested in psychedelics because it requires a much shorter appointment time (45 minutes to two hours) compared to traditional psychedelics while promoting trainee exposure to all basic psychological difficulties that may arise in this and even longer sessions.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE YOUR COURSE?**

I developed these learning and training opportunities to meet students where they are and, in particular, to meet the needs of two types of students. Some students just want some piece of this education (notably, many just want an understanding of currently clinically available treatments such as intranasal esketamine). These students want to understand the basics of this treatment and how to identify and screen patients who could benefit from it and refer them for such care. Other students will make PAT the focus of their subsequent clinical practice. For these students, the year-long clinical elective offers a solid foundation and preparation for launching a career in psychedelic therapy.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR PSYCHEDELIC COURSE CONTENT AT YOUR INSTITUTION?**

I have plans to expand the didactic content to include new modules on a range of topics including the therapeutic potential of psychedelics, predictors of psychedelic experience, microdosing and placebo effect considerations in psychedelic research, and a comparative psychedelic overview. I also plan to expand our content to include psilocybin-assisted therapy.

Regarding the clinical experience, I feel strongly that in-person training and assessment is a key component of the hands-on skills development important to preparing psychiatrists to provide PAT. I envision the establishment of educational centers of excellence that will train initial cohorts of students and, eventually, “train the trainers” from other academic institutions who are establishing their own programs.

To get in touch with academic leaders introducing psychedelic coursework in their institutions, please visit our [\*Psychedelic Therapy Curriculum Contact List\*](#)