



IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

...Another year of real-time support when time doesn't seem real...

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Fireside Community,

Fireside Project is deeply honored to provide you with this Impact Report for the second year of the Psychedelic Peer Support Line. During our first two years (April 14, 2021 through April 14, 2023), we set out to explore whether a national helpline for psychedelics—the first of its kind—could become a foundational part of the psychedelic ecosystem. We are pleased to report that it has.

We had 11,000 conversations in all, including a tripling of our call volume. The feedback from callers is that we are saving lives and helping people unlock the healing potential of their psychedelic experiences. This is best illustrated by a strikingly beautiful feature in WIRED magazine about a fateful call to the support line from Jeff Greenberg, who has since become our CTO.

Helping to make this all possible are our volunteers. They truly embody Ram Dass' ideal of being a "loving rock." We've trained 300 volunteers, who have put in over 25,000 hours of time. To our volunteers, a huge thank you and deep bow!

Delivering on our promise of culturally attuned care, we're proud to report that 100% of callers who identify as military veterans, BIPOC, and/or transgender can process past psychedelic experiences with a volunteer sharing that aspect of their identity. We hope to offer this service to more communities in the future!

We are also pleased to report that our first peer-reviewed article has been published in the inaugural issue of Psychedelic Medicine! Co-authored with Dr. Rachel Yehuda, Dr. Mollie Pleet, and Dr. Joseph Zamaria, the article shows that our support line reduces harms and helps reduce the burden on emergency services.

But this is only the beginning. We are committed to continuing to triple our call volume every year and reach over one million calls by the end of the decade. We could not be more excited, grateful, and humbled to be on this journey with you!

In community,



Joshua White
Founder | Executive Director



HIGHLIGHTS

FROM OUR SECOND YEAR

OUR CALLERS LOVE THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE!

95%

felt heard, supported, and understood, and would recommend us to loved ones!

OUR SUPPORT LINE COMPLEMENTS AND BUILDS ON OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT!

30%

Almost inform us they also talk to a clinician or integration coach.

OUR CALLERS LOVE THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE!

We trained **50+** volunteers who are BIPOC, transgender, and/or military veterans to support callers sharing an aspect of their identity.

One transgender caller told in response to our post-call survey:

"I am trans, and was able to talk to a trans volunteer. This wasn't necessary to get me through the experience I was having, but it really gave me an increased sense of safety and connection."

WE PRESENTED OUR RESEARCH AND TAUGHT PSYCHEDELIC SUPPORT AT



WE SPOKE TO THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



about the importance & challenges of psychedelic harm reduction.

WE SHARED OUR WORK AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM IN DAVOS!

Founder Joshua White gave a presentation entitled, "The Role of the Psychedelic Peer Support Line in Creating a Safer, More Equitable Psychedelic Field."

OUR WORK WAS FEATURED

in some amazing publications like



[You can read all of these articles in our Pressroom.](#)



WE PRESENTED AT MORE THAN A DOZEN CONFERENCES

including SAMHSA, Horizons NYC, Horizons Portland, and Sana Symposium, and spoke on 10 podcasts, including Psychedelics Today, Psychedelic Spotlight, and Psychedelic Medicine.



WE WROTE ARTICLES

in Medium about the uptick in unethical conduct by facilitators.

Read them [here](#) and [here](#).

WE SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT OUR SERVICES AT MAJOR FESTIVALS:

OUTSIDE
LANDS

DESERT
DAZE

Burning Man Project



"This was an oasis in the desert."

"I needed someone to understand. That happened."

"What you are doing is sacred work, and it is not an exaggeration to say that I was saved by it."

OUR THRIVING RESEARCH PLATFORM

Thanks to the reach of the support line, we speak to thousands of people during and after their experiences on a range of psychedelics. This places us in a unique position to conduct impactful studies leading to safer, more healing psychedelic experiences. We're proud of the strides we've made towards realizing that potential.

1

Publication in *Psychedelic Medicine* of our study showing that our support line reduces harms and ER visits

Over the last two years, we have conducted a cross-demographic study based on 850 survey responses from support-line callers. Co-authored with Dr. Rachel Yehuda (Mt. Sinai/VA), Dr. Mollie Pleet (Oregon Health Sciences University), and Dr. Joseph Zamaria (UCSF), and entitled "Reducing the Harms of Non-Clinical Psychedelics Use through a Peer-Support Telephone Helpline," the article will appear in the June 2023 issue of the journal *Psychedelic Medicine*. The article concludes that our support line reduces reliance on emergency services and lowers the risks sometimes associated with the unsupervised consumption of psychedelics in non-clinical settings. You can read the full article in Appendix C.

Read the study [HERE](#)

2

Three studies focused on healing outcomes and risk mitigation for diverse populations

We have three IRB-approved studies ongoing that explore the impact of providing callers with the option to process past psychedelic experiences with a support-line volunteer sharing their identity. The studies look at whether, why, and how this choice matters, including whether the choice impacts healing outcomes, risk mitigation, and likelihood of using the support line. One study, in partnership with Dr. Monnica T. Williams at University of Ottawa, focuses on BIPOC callers. Another study, in partnership with Drs. Chris Stauffer and Zach Skiles at Oregon Health Sciences University, focuses on callers who are military veterans. The third study, in partnership with Dr. Jae Sevelius at UCSF and Dr. Stauffer, focuses on callers who identify as transgender.

3

Studies regarding ketamine integration and self-care practices of psychedelic supporters

Many Fireside volunteers conduct their own high-impact psychedelic research, and we're proud to be able to leverage our research capability to support them. Jasmine Virdi, as part of her M.Sc. from The Alef Trust, is conducting a study exploring the most effective tools and techniques that psychedelic care providers can use to promote resiliency and reduce burnout. LouLou Ford is conducting a study for her PsyD dissertation on support-line callers' experiences integrating ketamine journeys.

LOOKING FORWARD TO TO OUR THIRD YEAR AND BEYOND!

Our vision is a Beloved Psychedelic Community, where people of all identities are represented, welcomed, and celebrated. We will be taking concerted steps in our third year and beyond to realize this vision. Here are the upcoming milestones:

1 **25,000 Conversations**

We plan on tripling the number of conversations from the previous year that we have on the Psychedelic Peer Support Line. We intend to train 150 volunteers, at least half of whom we hope will be from marginalized communities.

2 **Expand our Outreach Infrastructure**

Our goal is to inform over two million people about our services this coming year. We'll do this in creative and highly impactful ways such as expanding our TikTok presence and handing out materials at festivals, college campuses, and high schools. We'll also launch a community engagement platform to create incentives for people to spread the word.

3 **Expand our Equity Initiative**

We'll continue to create pathways into the psychedelic field for people from marginalized communities. We'll do this in ways such as hiring support-line volunteers and staff from those communities while expanding our outreach infrastructure to focus on people from those communities.

4 **Support the people of Oregon and Colorado**

With Measure 109 in Oregon up and running, we want to make sure every Oregonian knows we exist. We will partner with training centers and facilitation centers, emphasizing that we can complement and build on their work by providing free integration support. Now that Colorado has adopted a similar law, we will focus our efforts there as well.

5 **Offer Fireside Circles**

Healing happens in community. That's especially true when you're processing a past psychedelic experience. In that spirit, we hope to offer integration circles that are virtual, free, and confidential, and facilitated by the amazing peer supporters who answer calls on our support line.

6 **Improve our mobile app**

Our mobile app will be even easier to use, especially for people in the midst of psychedelic experiences. The app will also increase call volume by allowing us to remain engaged in an ongoing way with our community through interactive features and notifications. The app will also be a platform for us to share psychedelic educational materials.

7 **Launch our Psychedelic Citizenship series**

These courses will empower our community with the skills needed to thrive in a psychedelic world, including how to actively listen and hold space for someone during or after a psychedelic experience.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Our hearts overflow with gratitude for our donors.
Thank you for believing in us, our work, and our mission.

\$100,000 & UP

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Riaz Valani
Anonymous DAF
Jeff Greenberg

Sandy & Joe Samberg
Austin & Gabriela Hearst
The Steven & Alexandra Cohen
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Brooke Markwell

Natalie Cormier

Chandler Fournier

Sam Curry

Hannah Hinckley-Smith

Case Newsom

Chad Cratsenburg

Josh Bandy

Javon Cosme

Julia Schlegel

Stefanie Jones

Kelly Davis

Kyson Dana

Sean Johnson

Michael Schoenberg

Stephanie Pocci

Teri Colucci

Dorothea Biba Naouai

Jonat Lenerson

Marnee Simon

Feanor Kelsick

Seth Grossman

Jon Estrada

Joann Christy

Nick Venegoni

Jessica Hughes

Deborah Wood

Andrew Huang

Marsya Ancker

Jackson Ward

Taylor Simon

Christine DeMatteis

Mason O

Michelle Eschenfelder

Daniel Smith

Jeremy Brautman

Douglas Finkelstein

Hanna Mahone

Marilou Flores

Lawton Stephens

Arielle Forrest

Haley Proctor

Dena Kuhn

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WE THANK YOU
FOR BELIEVING IN US,
OUR WORK & OUR MISSION

NAME, MISSION, VISION

NAME

The name "Fireside Project" was inspired by the feeling of sitting around a fire, experiencing a sense of community, connection, and openness. As long as people have been people, we've gathered together around the flames. Warming our hands and hearts, we've celebrated, mourned, feasted, danced, shared stories, and of course, journeyed. At Fireside Project, we look to our shared ancestry beside the fire as a way to light our path forward to a more loving, interconnected world.

MISSION

Our mission is to help people minimize the risks of their psychedelic experiences in ways such as providing compassionate, accessible, and culturally responsive peer support, educating the public, and furthering psychedelic research.

VISION

Our vision, our true north is a Beloved Psychedelic Community where people of all identities are represented, welcomed, and celebrated, and they have the skills to keep each other safe and support each other as they navigate their psychedelic experiences.

APPENDIX A

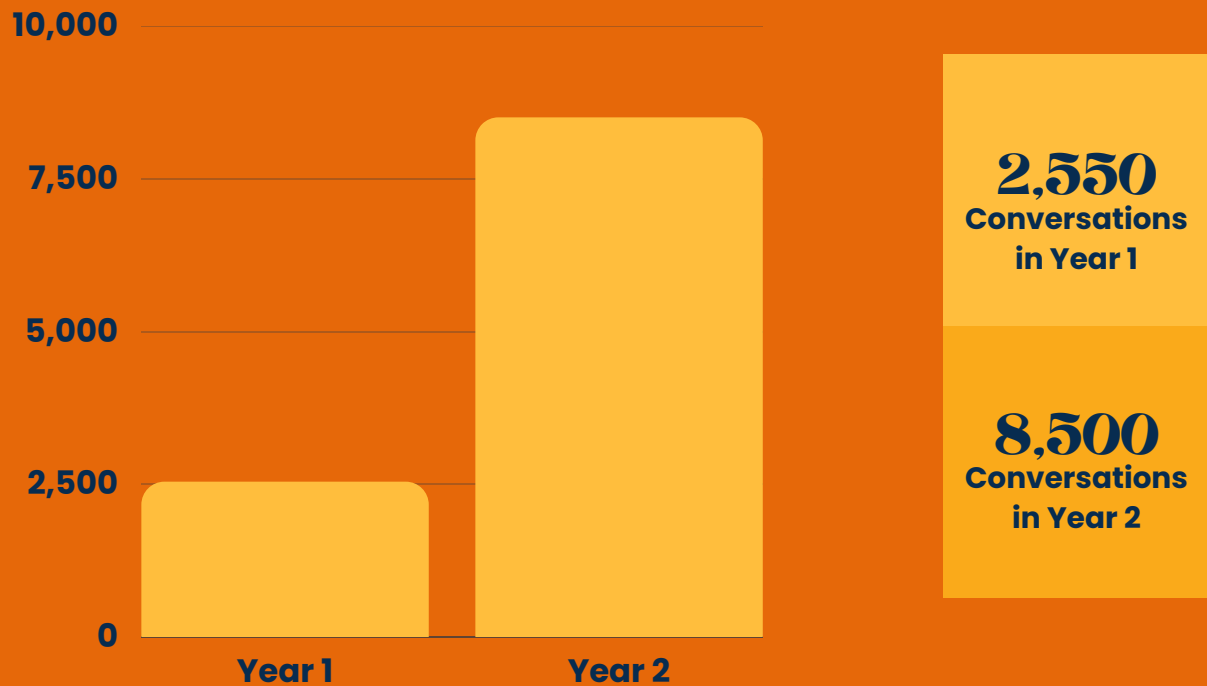
We are thrilled to share this overview of our first 11,000 conversations, which took place from April 14, 2021 to April 14, 2022. These insights come from anonymous post-call surveys and anonymous call logs filled out by our volunteers.

There are some key limitations. Our callers are a self-selecting group of people in need of support. Caution should be used in generalizing to all people who consume psychedelics.

Also, our post-call survey had a 21% response rate, so caution should be used in generalizing results to all callers.

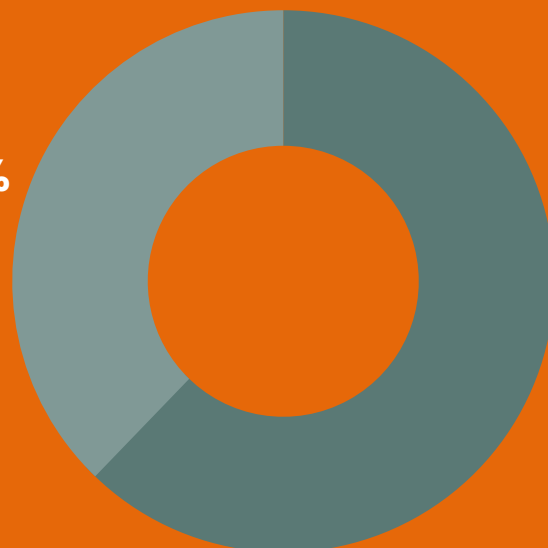
Finally, volunteers only ask questions of callers that build rapport and address the callers' needs, so logs should likely not be generalized to other callers or to others who take psychedelics.

CONVERSATIONS IN OUR FIRST TWO YEARS



**DID THE
CONVERSATION
OCCUR BY PHONE
OR TEXT MESSAGE?**

**Text
37.8%**



**Phone
62.2%**

AVERAGE DURATION OF CONVERSATIONS

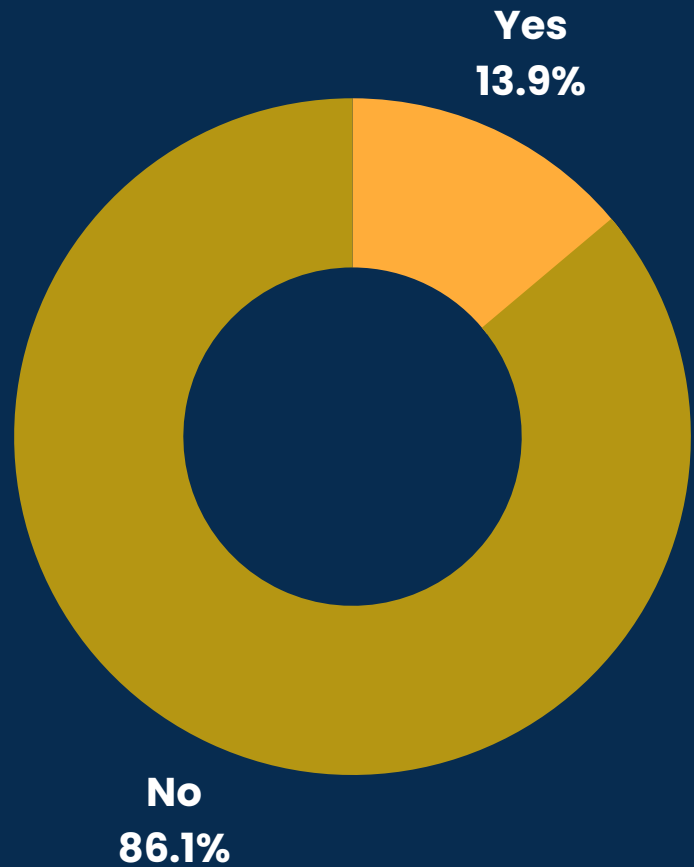
CALLER
HAVING A
PSYCHEDELIC
EXPERIENCE

Phone call: 34 minutes
SMS: 50 minutes

CALLER
PROCESSING A
PAST PSYCHEDELIC
EXPERIENCE

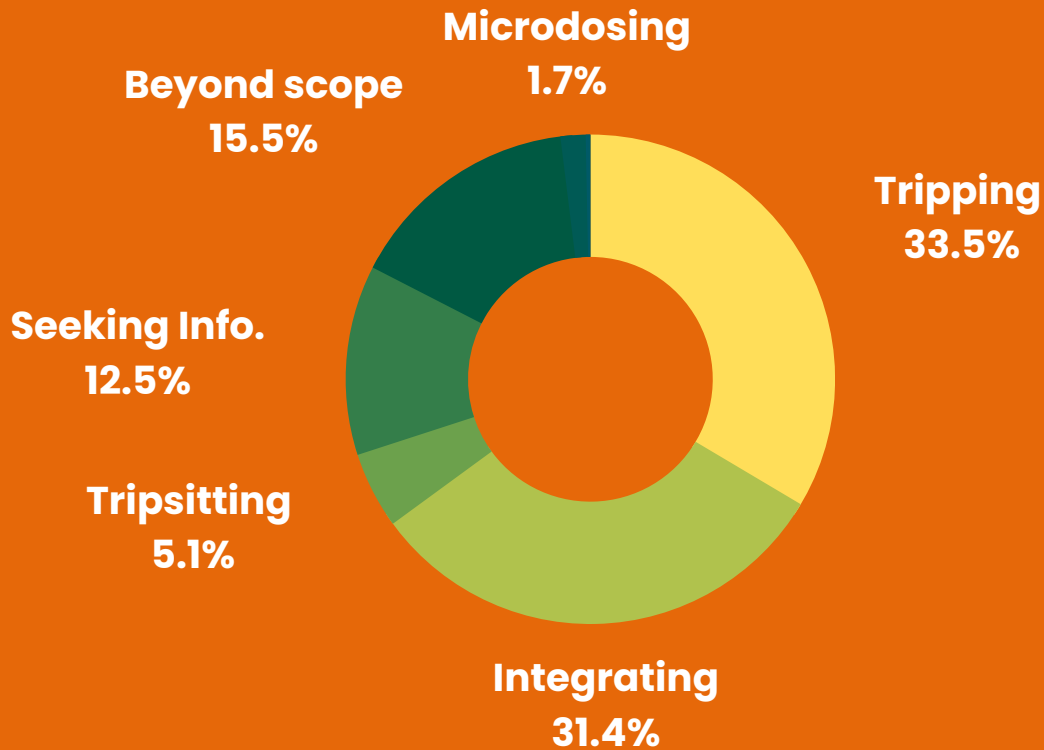
Phone call: 34 minutes
SMS: 56 minutes

WAS THIS THE CALLER'S
FIRST TIME TRYING
PSYCHEDELICS?



11,000 CALLS

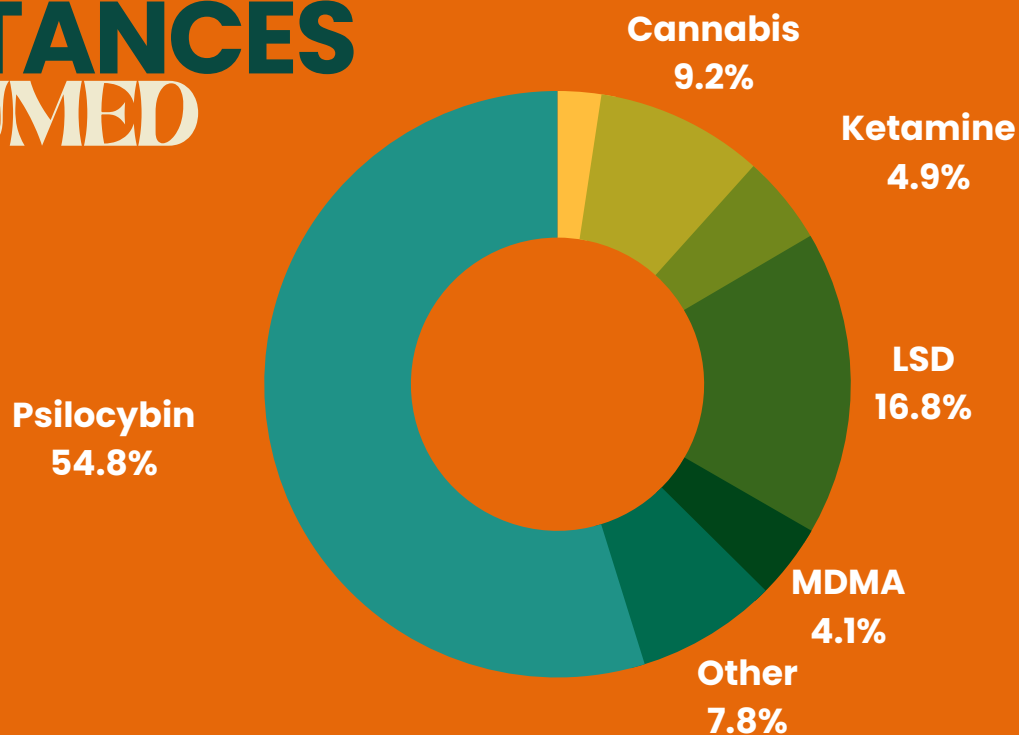
BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF CALL



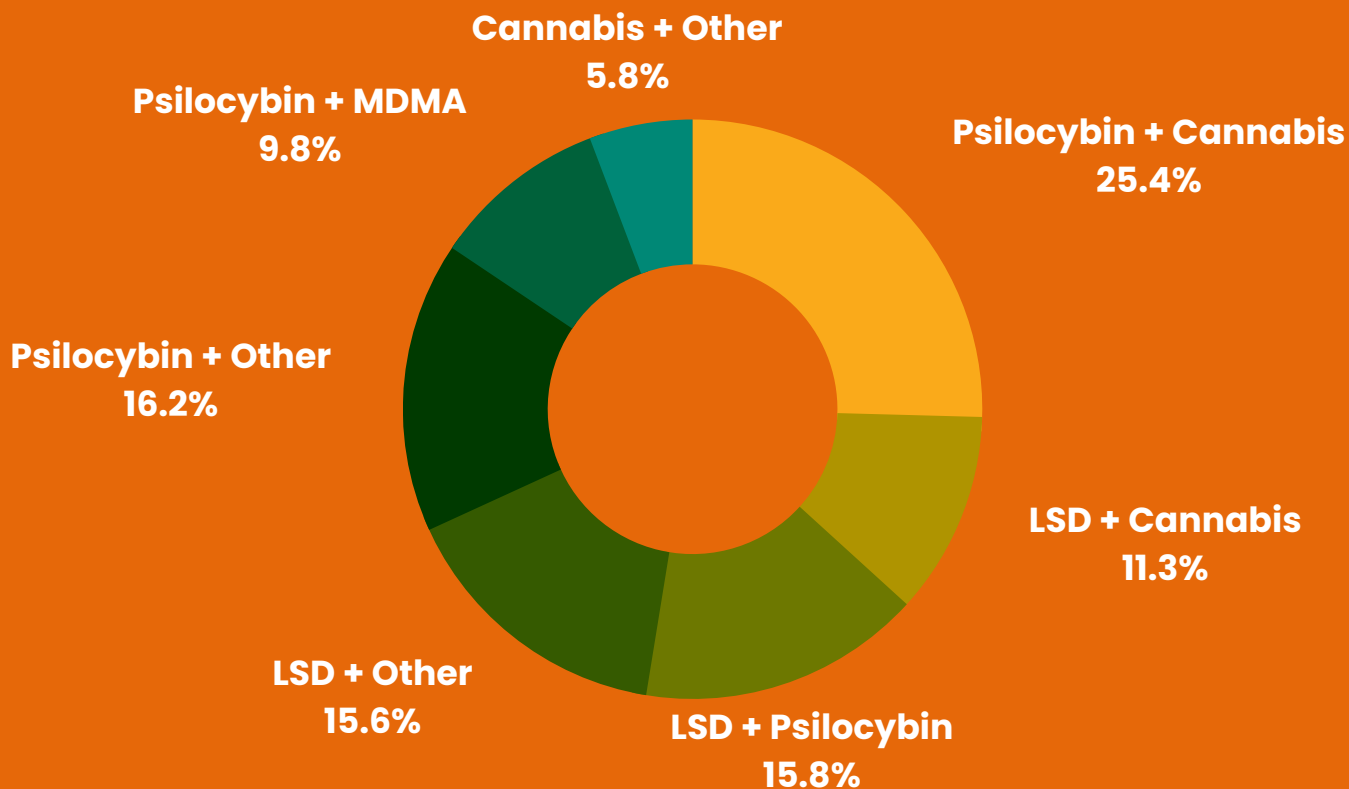
FOR INTEGRATION CALLS, HOW LONG AGO WAS THE TRIP?



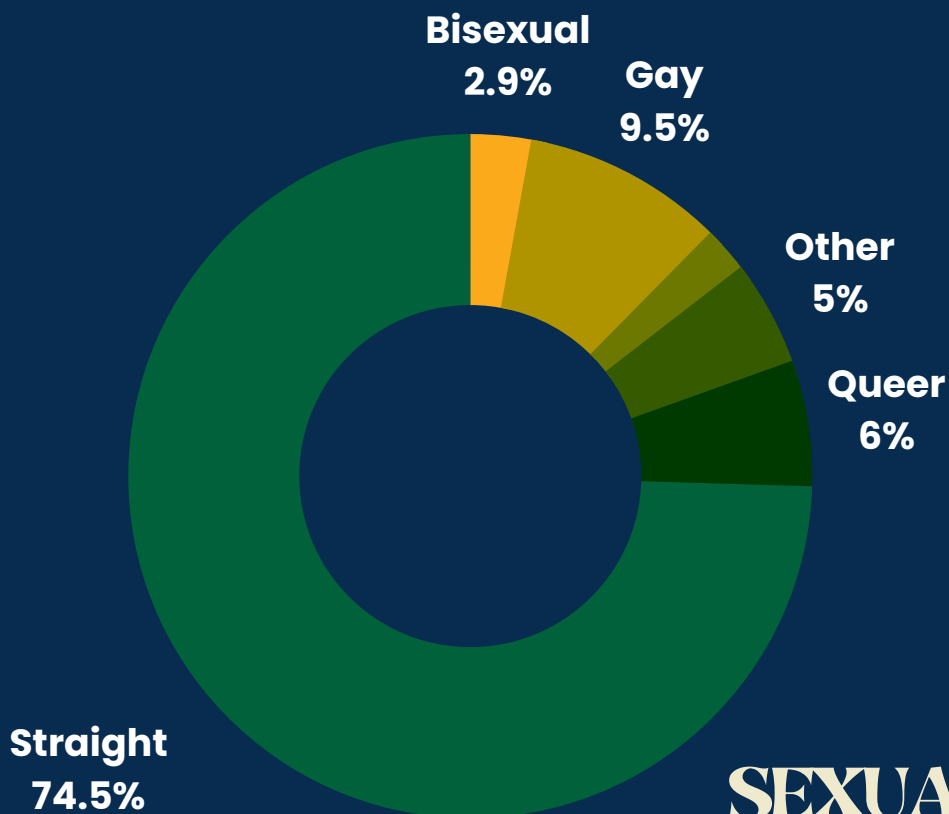
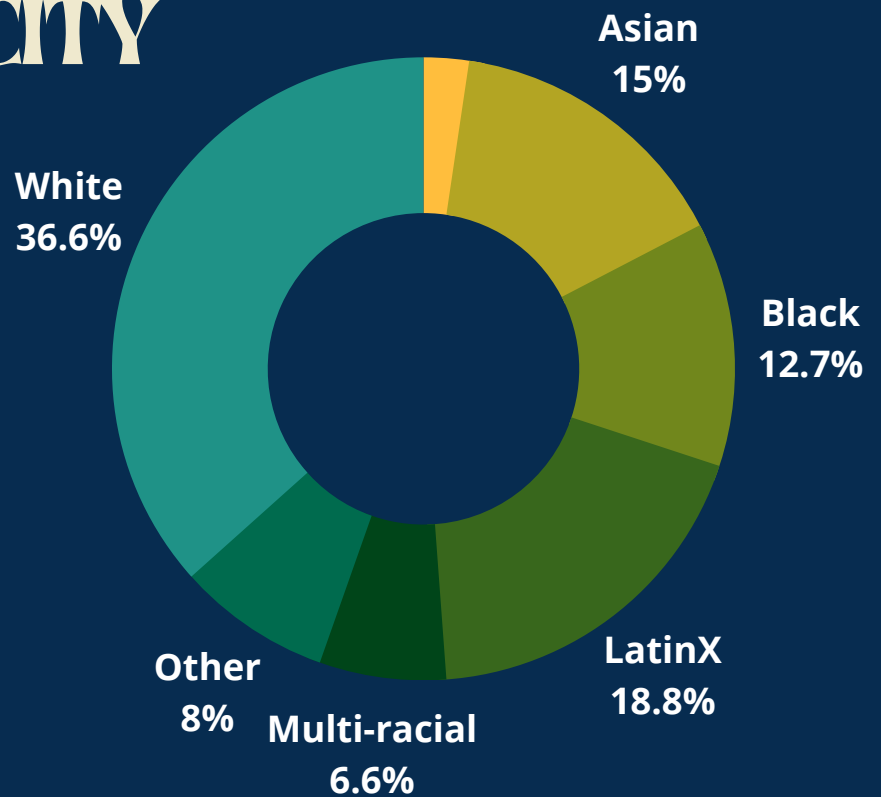
SUBSTANCES CONSUMED



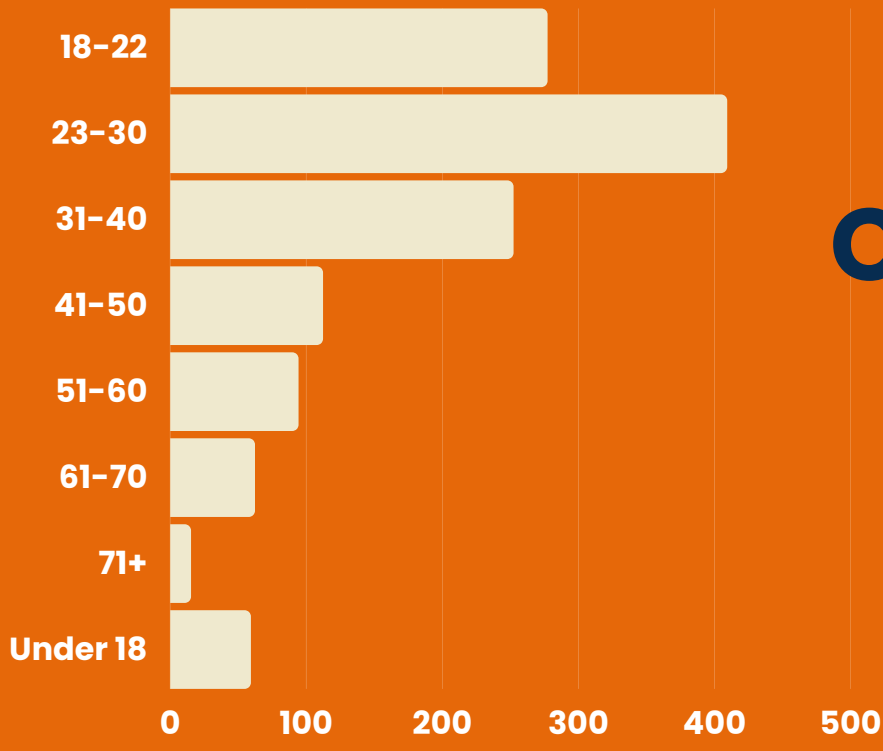
MOST COMMON PAIRINGS OF SUBSTANCES



CALLER'S RACE/ETHNICITY

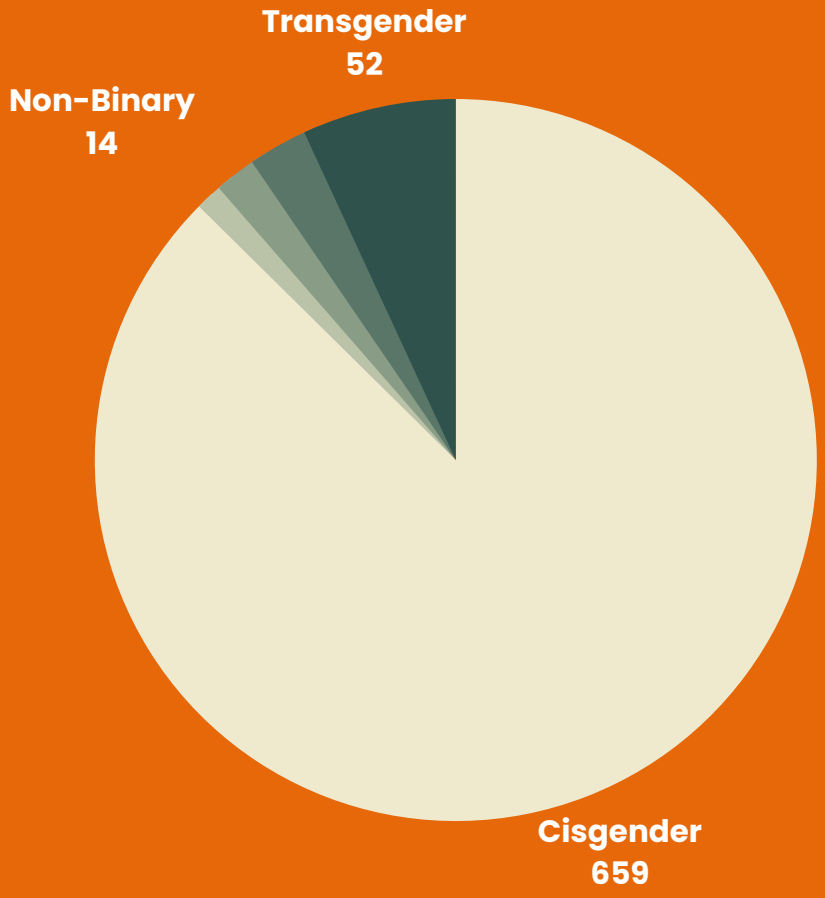


CALLER'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION



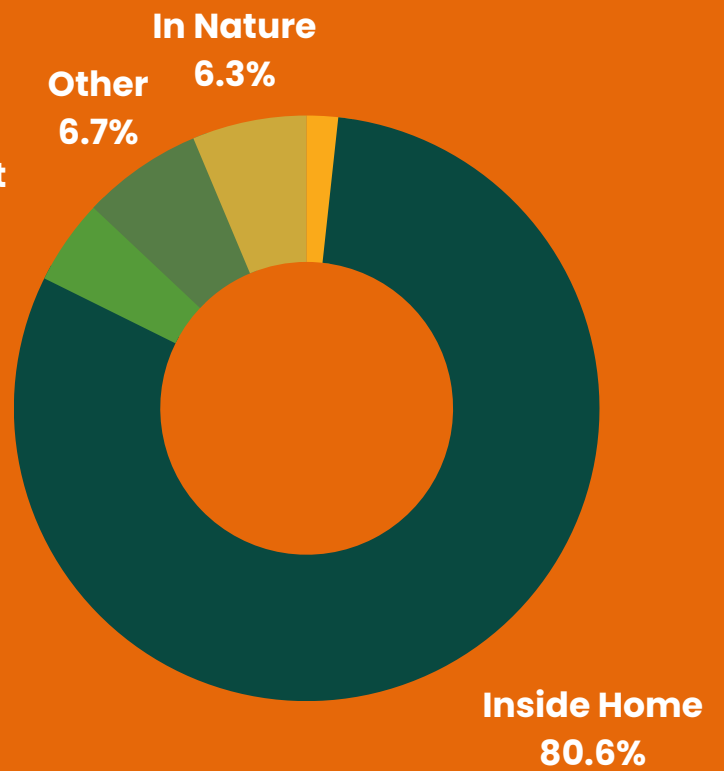
CALLER'S AGE

CALLER'S GENDER

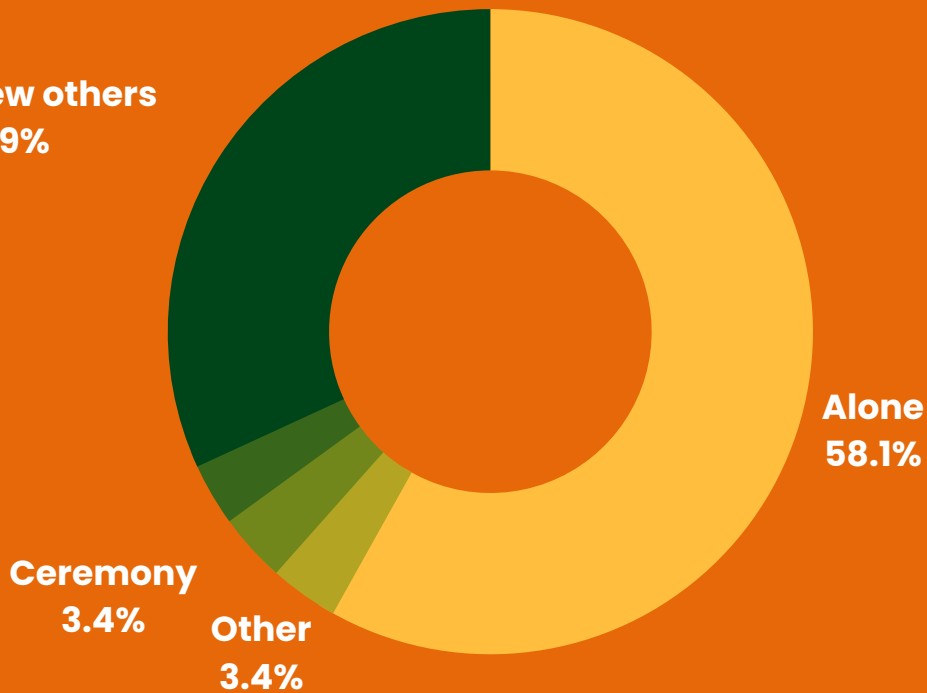


ENVIRONMENT

Public Venue/Event
4.7%

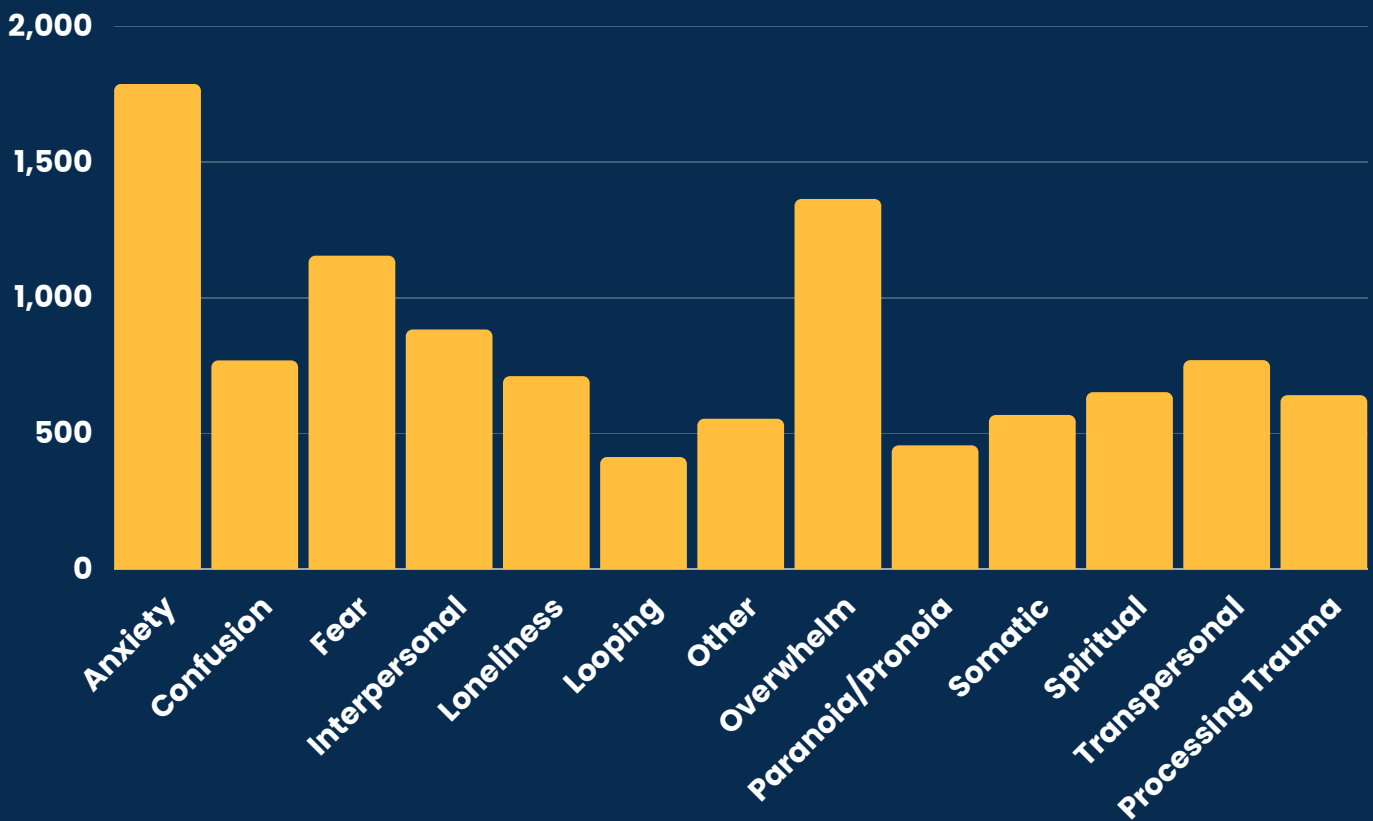


One or few others
31.9%

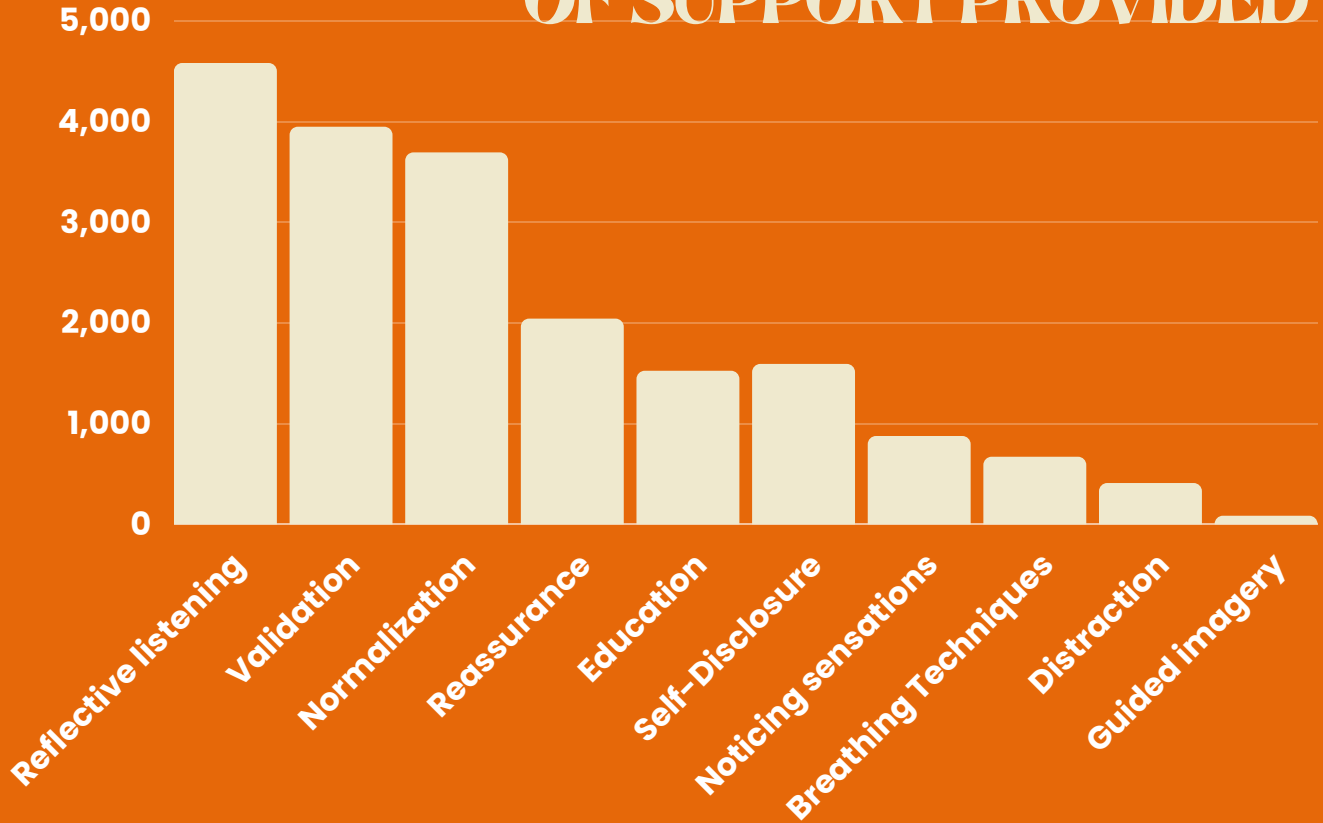


SOCIAL CONTEXT

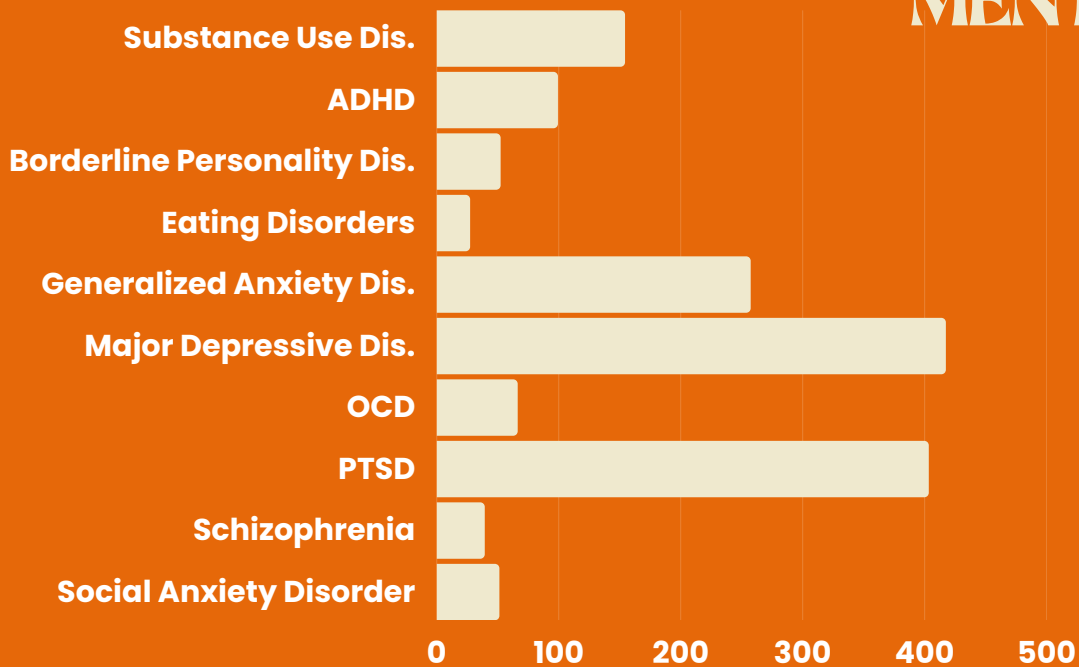
TRIP CONTENT



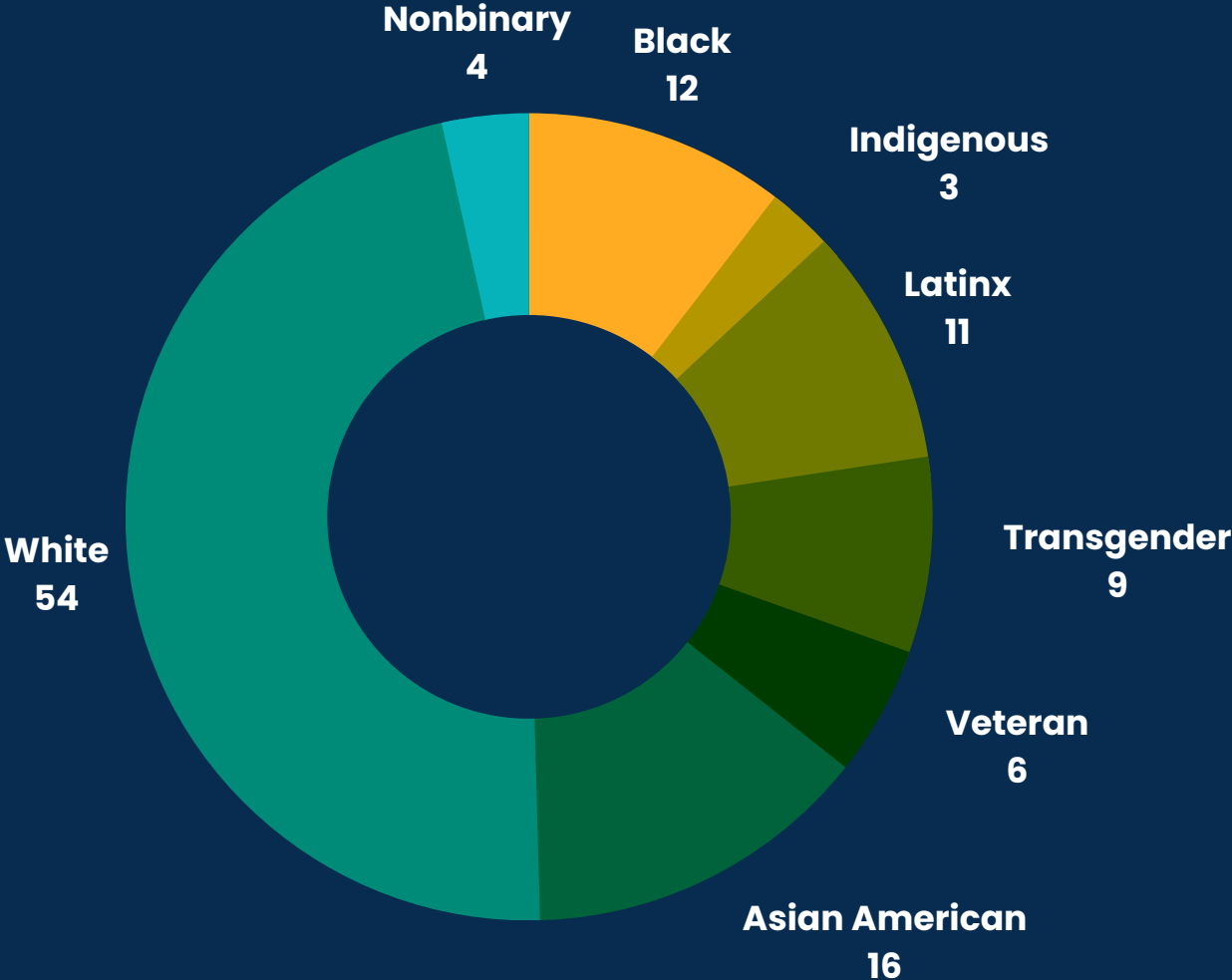
TYPE OF SUPPORT PROVIDED



DISORDERS MENTIONED



IDENTITIES OF CURRENT SUPPORT LINE VOLUNTEERS





APPENDIX B FIRESIDE STORIES

Here we share stories from three callers whose conversations with Fireside helped transform their life. The first story is excerpted from a [WIRED feature](#). The remainder are from interviews we conducted several months after the call. In the second and third stories, names have been modified to preserve anonymity.

JEFF'S STORY

EVERYTHING WAS INSANE and fine. The walls had begun to bend, the grain in the floorboards was starting to run. Jeff Greenberg's body had blown apart into particles, pleasantly so. When he closed his eyes, chrysanthemums blossomed.

A tech executive of 54, Greenberg had eaten 5 grams of psychedelic mushrooms that afternoon. He had discovered in recent years the world--expanding powers of psilocybin. At some point that afternoon, Greenberg's thoughts took a dark turn, and soon dark melted into horrifying....

Greenberg thought of his puppy. He and his ex-wife shared it from when they'd been married, and now a memory came tumbling out of some corner of his mind: One day, in the aftermath of the divorce, he'd dropped off the dog with his former father-in-law. The two had always enjoyed a friendly relationship, but once the handoff was complete, the older man had slammed the door in his face.

And now it wouldn't stop slamming. How had he done something so awful that a fellow human would slam a door on him after being handed a puppy? A dam burst. The difficult elements of Greenberg's life began exploding in dark technicolor. What had happened? Who was he? He felt the mushrooms clamping his head in front of a massive screen showing the movie of his life.

Greenberg was looping. Passing thoughts became black holes clawing him to untold depths, playing and replaying in a mad whirlpool.

Tricks that would have typically changed the channel—classical music, a splash of water to the face, waiting it out, crying it out—had no effect. Worst of all, he had no help. Who do you call in such a state? Who could possibly understand this otherworldly misery with its indescribable new dimensions, its billowing revelations, its slithering dream logic?

So it was that, in a fleeting instant of lucidity, Greenberg remembered to reach into his pocket.... The day before his trip, he'd downloaded an app he'd seen somewhere called Fireside Project.

What happened next was life-changing. A volunteer named Jasmine picked up the phone. Immediately she emitted a gentle, knowledgeable, and grounded vibe. She didn't try to distract him from his anguish or minimize it. On the contrary, she validated what he was feeling and gave him permission to explore his pain further. "Very quickly she turned it into something I felt that I could go through," he said.

Greenberg spoke with Jasmine for nearly an hour and a half, then called again later, as the crisis softened into something more like curiosity. With her help, his angst metabolized into a searing peek under the hood. Where before he'd felt abject terror, he now saw an invitation to make real changes in his life....

Within months, he had walked away from his job to focus on work "that adds value to the universe." Eventually he got on the phone with Fireside again—this time not to ask for help but to offer it. By the time we spoke, he'd donated \$100,000 and was poised to start as CTO, working for free....

”

JOHN'S STORY

John didn't plan on using the Fireside app the evening of his five gram mushroom journey, but when he found himself breaking through to a state of consciousness he had never reached before on psychedelics, a Fireside volunteer was there to provide support.

John grew up in Idaho in a strict conservative Mormon community. As a child and young adult, the pressure to conform to the expectations of the religion caused him to believe he was insignificant unless he followed the rules perfectly. John taught himself to stifle uncomfortable emotions so he would not have to feel them. He believed that if he just continued to follow the teachings and practices of his religion, his life would have value.

In his mid-twenties, John began to question his relationship to Mormonism and his place in the Mormon Church. John got married, and he and his wife had their first son. It was around this time that his family decided to relocate from Idaho to Northern California. While living amongst the Redwood forests and the oceans of Santa Cruz, John was exposed to a culture that was drastically different than the religion he grew up in. Mormonism was no longer aligned with John's beliefs, and he made the decision to leave the Church.

However, this also meant leaving everything he had ever known and losing a sense of identity in the world. John began experiencing depression and anxiety in a way he had never experienced before. He had panic attacks that sent him to the hospital on several occasions, and had a nihilistic view of the world that made it difficult to find meaning in anything.

During this time, a friend suggested that John try using psychedelics as a way to cope with the challenging emotions he was experiencing.

While he was skeptical at first, he decided to give it a try and ate about 1.5 grams of psilocybin mushrooms. John described having feelings of connectedness and oneness with the world not associated with religion for the first time in his life. Meditation became a consistent practice for him, and John began taking larger doses of psilocybin. John wanted to figure out, "who am I, and where do I fit in this whole big picture of everything?"

On the night of his 5g dose, his wife put his children to bed early and John settled into the intentional space he had created for himself for his journey. As the sensations of the mushrooms began to take hold, he saw visuals that were beautiful and chaotic and described witnessing time on a cosmic level. Suddenly, his experience changed. The visuals stopped immediately, and John described this as the point he became one with everything; feeling both connected and united to all of existence. The experience of feeling that all life lived inside himself was so profound, he felt like he needed to tell someone about what he was feeling. That's when he called Fireside.

John and the volunteer explored the teachings of enlightenment, and walked the nuance of carrying both beauty and pain together. John was able to uncover how the Mormon teachings of enlightenment had primed him to think that Heaven was the place he would finally prove that he had done enough for his life to be worth something. It was the place where he would become God, and start to create new worlds in that ethereal plane. The volunteer reflected these thoughts back to John, and asked a question that would have a deep and lasting effect on his life: if he was saying that all of life lived inside of him now, wouldn't that mean that in a sense he's already created everything he needs to, and that his life is already worth so much?

This was John's "lightbulb moment", where all of the remnants of his Christian Mormon background were deconstructed and destroyed in the most beautiful way. The volunteer held space while he cried and released the feelings of negative self-worth that he had been holding onto for so many years.

JOHN'S STORY (CONT.)

John and the volunteer also came up with a metaphor to help him integrate this experience into his life; John now imagines life as a vinyl record. He can hold the record up and look at it, but in order to hear the record play he needs to put it on the record player.

Sometimes the record plays happy music, and sometimes it plays sad music. All he has to do is dance when the music is happy, and cry when the music is sad. "Because of the volunteer's guidance, I'm able to know what song is playing, and I'm just going to feel that all the way".

The impact of John's psilocybin journey and conversation with Fireside Project has had a ripple effect on his relationships. He recently went hiking with his dad and they shared an LSD experience that deepened their bond in a way that he didn't think was possible before.

He sat with his mom during her first mushroom experience, and held space for her while she processed her own history of trauma.

John said: "Before this experience, spirituality and religion felt like an arbitrary list of rules; if you break the rules it's a sin and if you follow the rules it's a point.

"And now I recognize that there are things in life that create a sense of disconnection from you to others, or you to the natural world.

"I don't hold sin as a tally mark of good or bad, but there are things that you can do that are harmful that create suffering and disconnection, and there are things you can do that create unity and a sense of oneness.

"Now spirituality for me means looking for ways to increase my sense of passion and connection, and avoiding things that create a sense of disconnection. I feel at ease when I'm feeling connected to everything."

”



SARAH'S STORY

Sarah had been living with OCD since childhood, but it wasn't until her mid-30s that she finally received a diagnosis. Sarah describes OCD as akin to walking through cement; moving through everyday life can be overwhelming and exhausting.

After receiving her diagnosis, Sarah took the route of traditional talk therapy. She was also seeing a psychiatrist and was prescribed several different medications. But the combination of therapy and medication was not doing much to relieve her symptoms.

Sarah had used psychedelics recreationally with friends in her early twenties, however later in life she moved away from psychedelics and began heavily using substances such as alcohol, cocaine, and pills to self-medicate.

For Sarah, this period of her life was particularly difficult, as the use of drugs and alcohol began to affect her health, family life, and relationships. Five years ago, Sarah made the choice to become sober, but her OCD was still making daily life challenging.

She had heard about using psilocybin therapeutically, and out of desperation decided to see if micro-dosing might help.

Small doses of psilocybin mushrooms seemed to help manage some of her symptoms, but she felt that a higher dose might give her more relief.

On the evening of one of her doses, Sarah decided to take about four grams. As a frequent user of mushrooms, Sarah felt that she knew what to expect, however she began to experience a trip that she was unprepared for:

"It was like everything kind of came crashing down all at once. I was hyperventilating, and didn't know what to do with these feelings, and I was feeling very afraid and overwhelmed".

That's when Sarah called Fireside.

Sarah stated that her conversation with the Fireside volunteer allowed her to not be overwhelmed by what was coming up, but instead gave her the support she needed to sit with these difficult feelings.

"They really helped me re-center and reminded me that it was okay to have those feelings, and that none of this was dangerous and I was okay. Calling Fireside really made what had been I think my most challenging trip to date a lot easier to deal with".

Sarah stated that if she had not called Fireside that night, it may have changed her outlook on using psilocybin to manage her OCD and cause her to stop using it altogether.

While she knows that psilocybin is a treatment that works for her, the cost of psychedelic-assisted therapy prohibits her from accessing those services.

Fireside provides Sarah with a way to continue using psychedelics for her treatment of OCD in a way that she can afford and that works for her lifestyle.

"Calling Fireside that night helped turn [my experience] into a positive, and I'm not sure that I could have done that entirely on my own. I'm grateful for you guys, and this just works for me more than anything else I've ever done".





APPENDIX C TESTIMONIALS

PROVIDED BY OUR CALLERS IN RESPONSE
TO OUR POST-CALL SURVEY

To help a human like this in a time of need with the understanding that your volunteer did is the most amazing thing. I'm truly thankful for them.

I can honestly say I don't think I've ever felt so heard, understood, supported, and, to me, most importantly, accepted by somebody else.

This resource was highly tailored to the type of trauma I experienced, and I haven't been able to find support like it elsewhere.

What you all are doing is sacred work, and it is not an exaggeration to say that I was saved by it.

The lady I spoke with listened to me and made me feel like everything was okay, it was the touch to reality I needed in the moment.

My volunteer was so incredibly amazing and supportive. She led a meditation for me that brought me to tears. I sincerely appreciate her helping me work through a bad trip I had in a group setting.

I was struggling with "connection" and loneliness and a few simple texts really helped me "course correct" to find a path worth seeking.

I was dealing with severe psychedelic trauma from a recent experience, and they helped calm me and aided in my processing. People understood my experiences and helped me contextualize them.

[My volunteer] was very calming and grounded, she gave me advice for how to cope through my trip and methods to handle the high amounts of anxiety I was feeling. I really wouldn't have been able to handle the trip if it wasn't for her because I had felt so alone previously.



I was planning to call 911 if I wasn't able to get in touch with you all. I then would have been in the hands of people who likely did not understand what I was going through and it would have caused the whole situation to escalate even further. The person I spoke with initially assured me that other people experience these emotions when tripping. They did not tell me not to call 911, but helped me process my experience to the point where I could understand that I did not need to - that I was safe.

*When I was on my trip I was suffering from high amounts of anxiety and fear. My volunteer prevented me from serious emotional harm.
I am extremely grateful for her.*

Knowing you're talking to someone who completely understands where you're at can make all the difference in this situation. I'd have likely laid there crying for five hours had I not reached out.

Experienced but I failed to respect the shroom. At the moment I called I had lost all grip of my thoughts, I was terrified and alone and literally had no one I could call to explain what was happening to me. The volunteer clearly was experienced talking to tripping folks. Guided me back to reality, helped clear thought loops, helped reaffirm the positive nature of the experience. What specifically helped me the most was encouraging things like breathing, or in my specific case providing positive feedback about a life experience I shared

I reached out because my daughter was experiencing a bad trip. I was very happy to have help as I've never done that stuff but my daughter tried it and was having a bad trip. Anyone going through this situation should reach out. I found it very helpful and someone was even texting my daughter to help her. Thank you for what you do. I just needed to know I was helping her since it was all by texting with my daughter or I would have sent the ambulance.

I was in a very dark place and felt hopeless, trapped in my mind, just truly horrible. [My volunteer] not only helped pull me out of that, but patiently spent a great deal of time listening and helping me work through a lot of really deep issues. He was just nothing but gracious, kind, equanimous, accepting, and loving. Thank you so much.