

# Research Insights: Effectiveness and Benefits of Medicinal Mushrooms

**Galloway, N.J.** — Recent research conducted by Stockton University Professor of Psychology, Justin Ostrofsky, and his team of student researchers, has demonstrated significant anti-depressant and anti-anxiety effects from the use of psilocybin under professional supervision. Psilocybin, the psychoactive compound in magic mushrooms, has been shown to effectively reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in multiple randomized clinical trials.

The study, published by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, highlights the therapeutic potential of psilocybin-assisted therapy. Professor Ostrofsky's research team, including Shayla Nagle, Morgan Seidman, and Katherine Wilkinson, analyzed existing clinical studies and conducted an original poll of over 600 New Jersey residents to gauge public support for legalizing this treatment.

## Key Research Findings:

**Efficacy:** Psilocybin-assisted therapy has shown significant anti-depressant and anti-anxiety effects, comparable to traditional pharmaceutical treatments such as SSRIs.

**Dosage:** Clinical trials indicate that 1-2 doses of psilocybin can produce lasting anti-depressant effects for months with minimal long-lasting side effects.

**Safety:** The treatment, when professionally supervised, poses minimal risks for physical and psychological harm. Safety guidelines have been established to ensure proper candidate selection, supervision, and training.

## Poll Results:

**Awareness:** 57% of New Jersey residents are at least somewhat aware of the medicinal use of psychedelics for mental health disorders.

**Support:** 55% support legalizing psilocybin-assisted therapy under doctor supervision, while 20% oppose and 24% are unsure.

**Demographics:** Support varies by age and political affiliation, with younger individuals (18-49) and Democrats showing higher levels of approval.

The study was motivated by a recently introduced bill in the New Jersey state senate that, if passed, would authorize the production and use of psilocybin for health and wellness purposes, and decriminalize its use while expunging past related offenses.

**Hughes Center Interim Director, Alyssa Maurice**, commented on the importance of the research, stating, "The Hughes Center aims to be at the forefront of new, and perhaps lesser-known, policy discussions. We hope this report adds to the public discourse around this topic and helps New Jersey residents feel more

informed.”

**Methodology:** The Stockton Polling Institute conducted the poll from February 20 to March 3, 2024, using a mix of text-to-web invitations and phone calls. The sample included 606 New Jersey adult residents, with data weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2022 data for New Jersey. The margin of error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

The full research report and poll results are available through the Hughes Center.

**About the Hughes Center:** The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis, and policy solutions on key issues facing New Jersey, promoting civic engagement and education. The center honors the late William J. Hughes, a distinguished public servant and educator.

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