

REFUGE RECOVERY

A Buddhist Path to Recovering from Addiction

Refuge Recovery World Services Views on Prescription Medication and Psychedelics

As a community of recovering addicts it is very important for us to be welcoming and inclusive. Our literature and the culture of Refuge Recovery makes it very clear that we are an abstinence-based program. The Third Guiding Principle states, “All are welcome to participate in Refuge Recovery. The only criteria for membership is a desire to be free from addiction.” This includes people who are not yet abstinent from recreational drugs and alcohol.

The Fourth Guiding Principle states, “Refuge Recovery is an abstinence-based program. Elected volunteers are expected to maintain abstinence from all recreational drugs and alcohol, and to adhere to process addiction bottom lines.” The key word here is “recreational.” Some of our members may be taking prescription medication under the guidance and supervision of their medical doctors. These prescriptions may include psychotropic medications for anxiety, depression or other mental health issues. They may also include alcohol blockers such as Anabuse or opiate replacement and withdrawal drugs such as Buprenorphine (Suboxone and Subutex) or Methadone. A more recent issue for some of our members is physician-prescribed THC (Marijuana). Although Marijuana may be a good medical treatment for some ailments, it could very easily be abused and misused in a recreational fashion.

We here at Refuge Recovery World Services have various personal views and opinions, but as a recovery program that intends to be open and welcoming to ALL, we must set aside our personal views and defer to medical professionals.

The bottom line is that all are welcome in Refuge Recovery and the only requirement to hold a service position in a Refuge group is to abstain from the recreational use of drugs and alcohol. This of course includes the recreational use of prescription medications. We must remain mindful that many of us have become addicted to using physician-prescribed medication. Just because someone has a prescription doesn't mean they are not in active addiction and/or using the drugs recreationally.

The Fifth Guiding Principle states, “Each group operates independently, except in matters affecting other groups or Refuge Recovery as a whole.” This principle does not give groups the right to exclude members who are using any form of medication that is prescribed by their physician. We believe that if a group were to exclude a member from holding an elected service position for this reason, it would affect Refuge Recovery as a whole.

In recent years we have seen more and more people become interested in psychedelic drugs as a potentially helpful treatment for addiction or a short-cut to spiritual insight. This includes but is not limited to the use of LSD, Psilocybin, Ketomine (which is a psychedelic already being prescribed by physicians to treat depression and addiction), Ayahuasca, Peyote, Ibogain, DMT, 5MeO, Mescaline (San Pedro), etc. Although there very well may be some good arguments in favor of psychedelic treatments or “sacred” plant medicine ceremonies, as a Buddhist-based program of recovery we follow the path of abstinence. The Refuge Recovery program is based in meditation and renunciation. Therefore, we currently view non-prescribed psychedelics in the “recreational” category and encourage all our members to avoid seeking a refuge in drug-induced altered states. It may come to pass that more psychedelics are legalized and prescribed at which point we will again defer to the medical community.