

# Psychedelic-assisted therapy hub debuts in Johannesburg

The Equanimity Wellness Centre in the heart of Johannesburg has rebranded itself as a best-practice psychedelic-assisted therapy facility in Africa.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The holistic, science-based wellness centre was founded on the desire to create a refuge for anyone in search of professional, trustworthy and compassionate therapeutic support.

Equanimity Wellness stands out as a facility implementing cutting-edge therapeutic practices, couched within a broader wellness framework, and delivered in an expertly curated, tranquil environment conducive to healing, recovery, and exploration.

Anthony Townsend and Brad Kallenbach, co-founders and clinical psychologists spearheading this groundbreaking venture, explain that, "Our team's mission is to alleviate unnecessary suffering, to catalyse healing and to support personal transformation through evidence-based practices."

In addition to offering services to support those wanting to optimise their habits and wellbeing, Equanimity also strives to offer new hope for often debilitating conditions like (among others) depression, anxiety and PTSD, workplace stress and burnout, as well as chronic pain.

According to a study published by the MRC/Wits Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU) last year, South Africans appear to be suffering higher rates of depression and anxiety than other countries also evaluated.

In addition, workplace stress and burnout are considered the leading causes of employee underperformance and sick leave, not to mention the toll it takes on the physical and mental health of those affected.

According to a nationally representative study conducted in 2020 by Peter Kamerman and team, nearly one in five South African adults suffer with chronic pain, leading to additional physical and mental-health complications and often, to socioeconomic limitations.

## Addressing healthcare gaps

Despite the widespread need for healthcare support to address these concerns, South Africa faces a shortage of appropriate services, effective implementation, as well as trained mental-health professionals.

The Equanimity Wellness Centre team aims to address these pressing issues effectively and scalably through world-class therapeutic initiatives, as well as continuous professional development opportunities for healthcare and wellness professionals.

When discussing the centre's cornerstone treatment - a psychedelic-assisted therapy programme - Townsend and Kallenbach explain that, "The last decade has seen a resurgence of interest in psychedelic medicine. When used in safe, controlled therapeutic settings, there is compelling scientific evidence to suggest that psychedelics have profound healing potential for a variety of mental-health concerns."

Equanimity intends to harness this potential by adhering to the highest ethical and international-best practice standards in this burgeoning field and will only ever work with medicines and methodologies that have been legally approved for therapeutic use.



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Key features of the centre's psychedelic-assisted therapy programmes include:

- **Thorough screening:** Each client undergoes a comprehensive, non-invasive health and psychological screening to ensure the suitability of treatment, prioritising safety above all else.
- **Preparation:** Before each treatment, clients receive preparation guidance and support from a qualified psychologist, to ensure an optimal therapeutic experience.
- **Safe, monitored psychedelic journeys:** The psychedelic treatment is administered intravenously by a qualified medical professional in a comfortable, private environment optimised for healing and recovery.

Each session, lasting approximately 45 minutes, is monitored throughout. The number of sessions and dosages vary, based on scientific best-practice, depending on each individual's unique circumstances and desired treatment outcomes.

- **Integration therapy:** Integration therapy, taking place three to four days after each treatment, supports clients in making sense of their experiences and translating insights gained during their treatment session into meaningful, more lasting change.

When asked about the outcomes of their psychedelic-assisted therapy experience with Equanimity, a client simply stated that, "I was given a second chance at life and this is truly the greatest feeling in the world! I am extremely grateful."



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Ahmed El Hofy 24 Oct 2023



In addition to their world-class, legally administered psychedelic-assisted therapy programme, clients can access a range of wellness services, including:

- Traditional therapy.
- Physiotherapy for acute and chronic pain management, injury prevention and rehabilitation.
- Life coaching.
- Audiologist services for comprehensive hearing care.
- Medically approved vitamin drips to improve hydration, address fatigue, and to support immunity and recovery from intense physical activity.
- Various styles of yoga, including aerial vinyasa to enhance mind-body connection through mindful movement.
- Sex and relationship coaching.
- Breathwork workshops guided by an integrative medical doctor; and
- A professional aesthetician offering expert skin and body treatments.

The Equanimity Wellness Centre is committed to staying at the forefront of the mental-health and wellness industry. "We understand the importance of community education and reducing stigma around mental- and physical-health struggles," added Townsend and Kallenbach.

"To that end, we have developed a first-of-its kind in South Africa, CPD-accredited psychedelic-assisted therapy workshop for healthcare professionals.

"We often host open-to-the-public seminars, and create free mental-health resources on our social-media platforms, while actively seeking partnerships to advance the understanding and practice of holistic, evidence-based healthcare."

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