

## What is Psilocybin?

Psilocybin is in a class of compounds that act on specific brain receptors. Psilocybin occurs naturally in certain mushrooms that have been used sacramentally for thousands of years. Other drugs in this class include mescaline, which is contained in the peyote cactus used in religious ceremonies by the Native American Church, and dimethyltryptamine, which is contained in the ayahuasca sacrament used by several South American religions. Their effects include changes in perception and cognition. In medicine they are often called “hallucinogens,” although they rarely cause “hallucinations” in the sense of seeing or hearing things that are not there. In anthropology the term ‘entheogen,’ roughly meaning “spirit-facilitating,” is coming into prominence for this class of substances.

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5510 NATHAN SHOCK DRIVE  
BALTIMORE, MD 21224  
USA  
T: 410.550.5590