Psychedelic Psychotherapy

Approaching my teenage years, I became fascinated with mind-altering substances that have profound effects on human consciousness, most of which being psychedelic substances. This fascination started when I first researched the medicinal properties of marijuana, which opened my mind to the possibility that some substances in which are demonized by the general public may provide medicinal benefits if used correctly. This realization inspired me to thoroughly research the medicinal and therapeutic applications of traditional psychedelic compounds, particularly psilocybin, LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide), mescaline, and DMT (Dimethyltryptamine). Upon this extensive research, I discovered that these psychedelic compounds can have profound effects on illnesses such as addiction, depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) if used responsibly, and in the correct environment. For this reason, I have decided to write my essay on the subject of psychedelic psychotherapy, which is a practice that involves the use of psychedelic substances in a clinical setting for therapeutic purposes. Upon my research for sources on this subject, I believe that I have found a credible and reliable source. This source is an academic article titled, “Psychedelic Medicine: a re-emerging therapeutic paradigm” drafted by Dr. Kenneth W. Tupper, and revised by Dr. Evan Wood, Dr. Richard Yensen, and Dr. Matthew W. Johnson. I found this source through searching the key term “psychedelic medicine” in the FRCC Online Research Database when searching for an article that elaborated on the therapeutic potential of psychedelic compounds. This source was originally published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), which is a peer-reviewed medical journal that is published by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), on October 6th, 2015. I believe that this source is reliable due to meeting various criteria of credibility and reliability:

Upon evaluation of trustworthiness, I found many key indicators that reveal the credibility and reliability of this source. The first of which being that the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) is published by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), which is the largest association of medical doctors in Canada. Also, the currency of this article is credible due to being published in 2015, which indicates that it is relevant to the modern era of psychedelic research. The next indicator of credibility is that the contributors of this article are highly qualified on various subjects that this article entails, which conveys that the information is reliable. Dr. Kenneth W. Tupper, who drafted this article, is an adjunct professor at the University of Columbia School of Population and Public Health and focuses on various issues surrounding psychedelic substances such as use, education, and policy. Dr. Evan Wood, who assisted in revising this article, is a Professor of Medicine at the University of Columbia and primarily focuses on improving methods of medical care for those suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. Dr. Richard Yensen, who also assisted in the revision of this article, is the director of the Orenda Institute, which is a research company that conducts psychedelic studies. Dr. Matthew W. Johnson, a contributor who reviewed this article, is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and is an expert in Addiction Medicine, Drug Abuse Research, and Drug Dependence. Now that I have established the key indicators of credibility and reliability that this article contains the thorough evaluation of trustworthiness, I will evaluate its usefulness to my final project.

In terms of usefulness, the purpose of this article is to inform academic audiences on the

reappearance of clinical research involving psychedelic substances as agents in psychotherapy due to their historically recorded therapeutic potential and acknowledging the benefits and possible harms of this practice. This article fulfills this purpose by examining the various classes of psychedelic substances, the psychedelic substances that are included in these classes, and the potential that these substances possess as agents in psychotherapy. Then, the article goes on to provide research regarding the therapeutic effects of psychedelic substances on various mental disorders, such as anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and addiction, which is the most extensively researched. “Researchers in the 1950’s and 1960’s studied the use of psychedelic-assisted therapy for the treatment of addictions such as alcohol dependence, […] In renewed clinical research on treating alcohol dependence with psilocybin-assisted therapy, a New Mexico team recruited 10 participants with a diagnosis of active alcohol dependence.” (Tupper et al.) Finally, this article accounts for historical knowledge, potential risks, and a framework for future research regarding these psychedelic substances. This information will provide immense value to my final project because it contains reports of clinical research that support my thesis and viewpoint on this subject. This will also be useful because the use of psychedelic compounds tends to be a taboo subject in western culture, therefore with clinical research, the medicinal properties of these substances cannot be logically refuted. Another aspect of usefulness is that this article provides the potential risks of using psychedelic substances as agents in psychotherapy, which will help reduce personal bias in my final project.

In conclusion, this source is valid because it is published by the largest association of medical doctors in Canada, is relevant to the modern era of psychedelic research, and the contributors being highly qualified in various subjects of focus. This source is also immensely useful due to the variety of clinical research that is provided, and logical assessments of the benefits and potential harms of using psychedelic compounds as agents in psychotherapy. Through this article, it is clear that utilizing psychedelic compounds as agents in psychotherapy for their therapeutic potential may be a practical course of action for effectively treating a variety of mental disorders.

Works Cited

1. Tupper, Kenneth W, et al. “Psychedelic Medicine: a Re-Emerging Therapeutic Paradigm.” CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal, 8872147 Canada Inc., 6 Oct. 2015, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4592297/.
2. Samata, Cahli. “Treating Mental Disorders with Psychedelic Psychotherapy.” Medical Xpress - Medical Research Advances and Health News, Medical Xpress, 10 Oct. 2018, https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-mental-disorders-psychedelic-psychotherapy.html.