

Documentary explores use of psychedelic drugs for mental health issues

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A Toronto-area war hero is taking a giant step to help treat his mental distress and he's sharing his story—in its entirety, with CityNews.

Can a mind-altering psychedelic drug heal his troubled mind? He invited our cameras to show his journey in a new documentary “VeraCity: The Psychedelic Frontier.”

Backed by recent scientific and clinical studies, ancient psychedelic medicines are moving from underground to mainstream.

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“It’s happening now for several reasons,” said Ethnopharmacologist Dennis McKenna. “For one thing, the current mental health treatments are not very effective. We needed something better.”

“There’s a lot of people suffering from depression,” said comedian Russell Peters, who recently joined a Canadian-based psychedelic company. “I’m not saying I’m not one of them, I’m definitely one of them.”

“We may have something here that has the potential to be the equivalent of a cure for cancer in the mental health space,” said Dr. Evan Wood, who’s a world-renowned addictions specialist.

But can these drugs succeed where modern medicines have failed?

One war hero is on a new mission to find out.

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“The Psychedelic Frontier” follows the journey of Patrick Moulden, who’s from Hamilton, and received the Medal of Bravery for his work in Afghanistan.

“It represents freedom from being stuck in a dark place in your head. And I just hope that we can help a lot of people find freedom”

“What I saw in Afghanistan and what I experienced was a level of hatred that’s hard to imagine,” Moulden said.

The horrors he witnessed haunt him to this day. Suffering from extreme PTSD, he has tried modern medicines like antidepressants, sleep medications and pills to help with anxiety but nothing worked. So now, he’s trying an ancient psychedelic plant called Iboga to help treat his mental anguish.

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“Iboga is a shrub that grows mainly in Africa,” said experienced practitioner Mark Howard, owner of IbogaSoul. “The medicine has physical abilities to help someone purge toxins out of their body. It has the ability to go and clean someone’s spirit up as well. It offers them the opportunity to take a deep dive into their self, and get an idea of different experiences that have happened that are affecting them now.”

In this documentary, we follow Moulden from Hamilton to Vancouver where he’ll take the drug in an ancient ceremony under the care of professionals.

We’ll also introduce you to scientists, here in Canada, who are studying other psychedelics like magic mushrooms.

“The studies have shown that these psychedelics can be safe and effective in treating mental health,” said McKenna.

But, clinical trials are still not conclusive. Psychedelic drugs like magic mushrooms are not legal to prescribe in Canada.

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In this documentary, we'll tell you how that could change. We also take you underground inside an illegal mushroom selling operation run by two men who are sick of hiding.

"Freedom. This represents freedom. It represents freedom from being stuck in a dark place in your head. And I just hope that we can help a lot of people find freedom," said Steve Sayer, who makes capsules for friends.

The documentary will also take you overseas to the Netherlands, a place where one psychedelic is legal and how one Canadian company, where Russell Peters now works, is making money there.

Will these drugs be a breakthrough in treating mental health and can they rescue one war hero from the grips of despair?

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VeraCity: The Psychedelic Frontier airs Monday, Jan. 25, at 10 p.m., only on Citytv.

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