



## The Assembly

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**Version 3.0**

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# The Assembly

- **Length:** 3.5 - 4 hours depending on number of players in each breakout group, including workshop and debriefing
  - **For Stockholm Scenario Festival run:** Use lowest estimates for time
- **Players:** 5 - 8 with 1 facilitator, 10 - 16 with 2 facilitators
- **Facilitators:** 2, scalable

What are the limits of freedom? Should the government be able to decide what a person can do with their own body, such as taking psychoactive drugs? Come join the Assembly, where community members will deliberate on this topic and potentially have a tangible impact on an important political issue.

*The Assembly* is a larp about community members engaging in democratic deliberation about issues related to tensions between bodily autonomy and public safety. The larp takes place in a fictional version of Sweden. People from diverse backgrounds and political perspectives have been invited to take part in an Assembly to share their thoughts and feelings about legalizing the psychoactive substance psilocybin. The question they seek to answer is, "Should psilocybin be legalized or criminalized? Under what conditions?" At the end of the scenario, the community members will collectively construct guidelines that will be considered at the next parliamentary session.

## Learning objectives

Deliberation focuses on articulating a position on an issue and listening deeply to the positions of others, even in situations of strong disagreement. The emphasis is on building common understanding rather than escalating drama to the point of causing the activity to break down. While the characters will discuss the legalization of drugs in this scenario, the larger goal is to practice necessary skills for a functioning democracy.

This scenario is part of the Horizon Europe research project Larpocracy, which studies the potential impacts of larp on democratic values and skills. Players will be asked to complete questionnaires and interviews, but may opt-out and still participate in the scenario.

## Materials

- 1 room with chairs that can seat all players and facilitators (up to 18 if running 2 groups)
- Ideally, a separate breakout rooms for each additional group
- Pens
- Blank sheets of paper (2 per player)
- Character sheets (1 copy of each per group)
- Character Overview Sheet (1 copy per group)

- Rules of Engagement (1 copy per group)
- Psilocybin Fact Sheet (Sweden) (1 copy per player)
- **In person:** 1 timer per facilitator
- **In person:** A large screen monitor and/or projector if possible to project the chat
- **In person:** A laptop to host the chat, which should take place over a private Discord channel specifically made for the larp
- **Online:** Video conferencing software with a chat function like Zoom

## Part 1: Workshop

(1 hr 25 - 1 hr 40 min including break)

### 1) Hi and welcome, introduction (5 min)

The facilitator will welcome players into the session and read the introductory text at the beginning of this document. Hand out pens to everyone.

### 2) Share content advisories and offer opt-out (5 min)

The facilitator will say, "This scenario deals with sensitive content, including:

- Drunk driving accidents, death of a parent, organized religion, anti-religious views, alternative spiritual communities, addiction to alcohol and drugs, overdose, depression, pain after surgery, sports injury, criminalization, violent behavior, robbery, fear of death, anxiety attacks, PTSD, hallucinations, visitations from spirits, governmental and religious restrictions, shame of bodies and sexuality

This content is featured in the backstories of characters. You will be given the option to choose your character, but these topics may be discussed during the deliberation. If you would like to opt-out based on this information, please let us know."

### 3) Consent form (optional 5 min)

Send out a QR code and ask everyone to sign if collecting data for research purposes (if relevant).

### 4) Choosing characters (15-25 min)

The facilitator will explain, "The seeds of your characters have been given here based upon their demographic information. Assemblies seek a representative sample, meaning they want to include as many perspectives from the public as possible. You will also be

provided with your character's initial thoughts about the topic, and their thoughts after reading the fact sheet, which may be different.

Unlike in traditional larp structure, the characters will not have relations, as they are strangers, but they may have affinities based on demographic or ideological similarities. However, the goal of the scenario is for everyone to learn to listen to the reasoning of others, even those who are different from themselves, so affinities may shift. Affinities will emerge during play, rather than pre-planning them."

- The facilitator will explain that we will choose characters based on the short character sheet, then give players the longer one afterward. Organize the characters according to three categories: Left, Centrist, and Right. The facilitator will ask players to raise their hands or type in the chat any immediate preferences for playing a specific political leaning. The facilitator will decide a leaning for players who do not have a preference until all categories are full through random counting. The categories should aim for balance so that all positions are equally representative if possible:
  - i) **5 players:** Right (**R**), Left (**L**), Center (**C**), Right (**R**), Left (**L**)
  - ii) **6 players:** R, L, C, R, L, C
  - iii) **7 players:** R, L, C, R, L, C, C
  - iv) **8 players:** R, L, C, R, L, C, R, L
- Then, share the **Assembly Character Overview Sheet (Appendix A)**. The default 5 characters are A-E, so aim to distribute those characters first unless players opt-out of certain content in their backstory, in which case recommend someone else play the character or remove from play if necessary. Ask players if they have an immediate preference for a specific character, i.e., "I want to play B." Distribute the remaining character sheets randomly maintaining balance in political leanings. (**The Assembly Full Character Sheets** can be found in **Appendix E**).
- Then, players read their characters, explain, "You get to decide what the demographic information means to your character based on their own cultural context. However, remember you live in the democratic welfare state of Sweden, which will shape cultural norms where you live."
- Ask them to choose a profession. They should also choose a name based on the first letter provided. In some cases, they will choose if they are from another European country or outside of Europe. They should role-play the gender provided unless they request otherwise.
- Ask them to play a cultural background similar to their own whenever possible and avoid stereotypes.
- **(In-person):** Hand out paper for pop-up Name Tag. Ask players to write their name and pronouns featured prominently, ideally with a thick marker.

- **(Online):** Ask players to change their Zoom name to their character's name, an **R, L, or C** for their political beliefs, and add pronouns for their character.
- **(In-person):** Give players colored lanyards according to their political affiliation. Rearrange the seating, instructing the players to sit so that they alternate between **R, L, C, R, L, C, R, L**. Call upon these characters in that order. Do not let people with the same political leaning sit together if at all possible.
- **(Online):** Rearrange the character screens in Zoom so that they alternate between **R, L, C, R, L, C, R, L**. Call upon these characters in that order. Do not let people with the same political leaning sit together if at all possible.

**5) Introduction round:** The facilitator will say, "We will now take a round for each of you to describe your character's physical appearance in terms of their age, the gender they are presenting to the group, any distinctive clothing they are wearing, and any other relevant aspects of their appearance. Please do not reveal less visible aspects of the character sheet."

- Thank the players and tell them, "While you can play on biases toward other characters, remember your characters agreed to follow the Rules of Engagement. Also, please do not deliberately misgender characters in-game. If someone accidentally misgenders a character, please gently correct them off-game in the chat."

## **6) Hot Seat (20 min)**

Split into deliberation groups (maximum of 8). (Use breakout rooms if needed).

- Hand players the **Hot Seat Questions Sheet (Appendix B)**. "In this next exercise, we will learn more about your character and help you practice getting into your role. You will interview each other's character, asking each question in turn. You are not playing your character when asking the questions or hearing the answers, but rather a disembodied voice 'from the universe.' Please try to keep your character's cultural background close to your own if possible. Avoid stereotypical answers and behaviors when playing someone different than yourself."

## **7) Safety (10 min)**

- The main facilitator will ask the group to reconvene and will explain the following metatechniques. If short on time, then the facilitator will brief the players and ask them to face each other and "repeat after me" the safety word, but if there is more time, have the players enact short scenes and practice. Remind the players they can also type the metatechniques in the chat (if relevant).
- **Softer:** Use this word if you would like your co-player to decrease the intensity of their play.

- **Cut:** Use this word if you need to cut the scene for any reason. Facilitators will also use this word.
- **Off-game:** Use this word if you want to calibrate with your co-players during play, ask for clarification, or give them any off-game information.
- **X-card:** Use this word if you want to remove content from play, no questions asked, e.g., “X-card: spiders” or “X-card: child endangerment.”

## 8) X-card and calibration (5 min)

The facilitator will ask:

- “Are there any topics you would like to X-Card now? If so please write them on a sheet of paper and give them to me (or send them as a private message in the chat). Keep in mind, some topics are central to the scenario and cannot be removed.”
- “Do you have any other calibration requests regarding how others should play toward your character in the larp?”
- **(If X-cards have been sent):** The facilitator will review the X-Cards and announce any new excluded content. If content is central to play, the facilitator will say so, and ask again if anyone needs to opt-out.

## 9) Rules of engagement (2 min)

- The facilitator will explain, “As characters, you have all joined the Assembly with a willingness to follow certain Rules of Engagement, listen to others, and be prepared to potentially change your mind. We will present to you the Rules of Engagement in game. Your character will have limited time to speak at a time -- usually 2 minutes -- and will spend the majority of their time listening.
- Because of this structure, one challenge as a player in this larp is to maintain a high level of emotional engagement practicing deliberative skills. You can play upon the Rules of Engagement being difficult to follow, but make sure to keep the scene flowing as planned so the activity does not completely break down, even if your character is having an emotionally explosive moment. We encourage you to communicate your character’s feelings, not just thoughts, during their allotted time to share, tell stories about their personal experiences related to the content, or other forms of expression, like communicating about art. We are not expecting or wanting your character to always be hyper rational.”

## 10) The WhatsApp chat and Monologue metatechnique (3 min)

- **(In-person only):** Have a QR code and/or link ready with the invite link for everyone to join a private WhatsApp group made specifically for the larp.
  - i) Once created, type in the chat: “This chat is for the live action role-playing game (larp) *The Assembly*. All comments are purely fictional.”
- Players should be able to temporarily join without a full account if using the link. If they do not want to participate in WhatsApp, ask them to write their character’s thoughts privately on paper.
- Ideally, you will project the chat on the wall so people can see it easily without having to look at their phone all the time.
- If a player opts-out of WhatsApp, indicate they can still read the thoughts of others in the chat.
- **(Online only):** If played over video conferencing, use the built-in chat.
- **(Both versions):** The facilitator will explain, “While others are speaking, your character will get to express themselves freely in the chat. In the game, we have a **Monologue** meta technique that takes place in a chat and will be visible for all players to see. A Monologue allows a character to express their inner thoughts externally. Players can see the monologue, but the characters cannot, so please do not engage with each other’s comments in-character. The chat is not a dialogue. As a player, you should make sure to focus primarily on the verbal deliberation of the character speaking at that time even while the chat is flowing, as that is where the discussion in the scene is taking place.
- “We also invite you to take notes on a separate sheet of paper or online document for points you wish to make during your turn or clarifying questions for other participants. These notes will not go in the chat, which is reserved for your character’s inner thoughts.”

## 11) Fact sheet (5-10 min)

- The facilitator will hand out the Psilocybin Fact Sheet (Sweden) to players and explain, “You have all received this fact sheet about the topic we are discussing today. The off-game accuracy of the facts listed are not important to the scenario, but they have been gathered based on real recent research. You will be deliberating the following questions:
  - i) What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of psilocybin use?
  - ii) Should psilocybin be legalized, decriminalized, or continue to be criminalized?
    - (1) For mental health/medicinal use?
    - (2) For use in spiritual practices?
    - (3) For recreational use?
    - (4) Under what conditions?

We will not have time to discuss all topics in depth.

In-game, your character has agreed to attend and treat these facts as real. While you can play on having mixed feelings about them, thinking some information is missing, or believing the sheet is politically biased, please do not spend the larp disputing the fact sheet. Instead focus on your character's perspective on the topic. You will have the fact sheet with you during play as well if you want to discuss a specific fact. Do you have any questions?"

## **12) Break (10 min)**

- **The facilitator says,** "Now, we have an off-game 10 minute break. When we return, we will start the larp."

## **Part 2: Game Play**

(1 hr 30 min - 2 hrs 20 min)

### **A. Countdown (2 min)**

The facilitator will ask players to close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so. The facilitator will explain that they are counting down from 10 to 1 and at 1, the larp will start. As they count, they should adding parts of fiction to help ease players into the game, e.g.,

- "You have been brought here to provide your unique perspective on this important topic"
- "You wonder if you will be able to build understanding with people quite different from you, but you are willing to try."

### **B. Scene 1: Plenary Session (10-20 min)**

- All characters are gathered into one room.
- The Lead Moderator will hand out the **Rules of Engagement** sheet (**Appendix C**). Then, they will say, "Welcome to the plenary session of this Assembly on the topic of the legalization of psilocybin, also known as psychedelic, or 'magic mushrooms.' We appreciate you giving your time and energy to deliberating about this important topic. The potential legalization of psilocybin will be discussed in Parliament in five months. We will spend the next two hours discussing the topic, then will create a set of recommendations for parliament members based on our discussion."

Just a note: while I can try to answer your questions about the Fact Sheet, I am not the expert who put this sheet together and they are unfortunately not present. So please do not defer to me as the expert here.

Keep in mind it is not necessary for you to agree with one another, but we ask that you follow our rules of engagement. They are:

- This deliberation session will be facilitated by a moderator, who will keep time and help direct the conversation. Please do not exceed your allotted time to speak. You will treat the moderator and other participants with respect, even if you disagree with them.
- Please feel emboldened to share alternative perspectives and feelings. We are not expecting agreement here, but we aim for respectful engagement and presenting multiple points of view.
- Always allow others to speak for their allotted time and try to listen deeply without interrupting. You will have time to voice your own thoughts during your turn. If you have a point related to another person's share or a clarifying question to ask them, please note it down for your turn on a separate sheet of paper. We may invite less vocal people to speak first before allowing someone to speak who has shared multiple times.
- Focus on the facts given and the perspectives each of you have. The goal is to provide as many diverse perspectives on the issue as possible. Avoid any sort of confrontational or accusatory language toward others. We are all here to learn.
- We all agree that the facts provided to you leading up to the event are true. You may discuss other facts or perspectives not listed, suggest facts that should be included, or share your feelings about the facts, but please do not dispute the fact sheet.
- When we create our recommendations, we will likely still have different opinions. We are not aiming for consensus on the issue here, but rather recommendations the group can all agree to include, if possible.

Are there any rules missing that you think should be added?"

- If the rules are reasonable, the Lead Moderator should add them. If not, they should explain why. Ask each of them to write the new rules on their sheet.

"Do you have any questions?"

- Answer any questions, but try to be brief and keep time.

### **C. Scene 2: Deliberation Topic 1 -- Benefits and Drawbacks of Psilocybin (30-50 min)**

- **Setup (5 min):** The groups will be sent to breakout rooms (if needed) and assigned a Group Moderator.
- Adjust the time according to the number of players and your time constraints, but make sure all characters have had at least two chances to speak on Topic 1.

- The Group Moderator will explain, “The topic of the first phase of deliberation will be the Benefits and Drawbacks of Psilocybin. We are discussing three general areas today when reflecting on these topics: mental health/medicinal use, use in spiritual practices, and recreational use. The next round will focus on legalization and decriminalization, so please reserve in-depth comments on legality for that session if possible.
  - Each of you will have exactly 2 minutes to explain your position. I will try to give a 30 second warning, then say ‘Time’ when the time is up. You may choose to pass, but you may lose your reserved
  - time to speak.
  - You can focus on the facts, share stories about your personal experience, or express yourself in other ways. All perspectives are welcome here.
  - Remember the Rules of Engagement. **Write down any points or clarifying questions that arise during other’s shares instead of interrupting.**
  - Any questions?”
- **Initial shares (20 min):** The Group Moderator will time each share, give a 30 second warning, then say “Time” when the time is up. This can also be done using a timer on a phone, in which case the chime indicates time is up. The Group Moderator will gently step in if anyone breaks the Rules of Engagement.
- **Additional thoughts or clarifying questions (15-25 min):** After the first round of 2-minute shares, the Group Moderator will ask for additional thoughts or clarifying questions for other participants. This time, they will answer in order of hands raised. These should also be timed, a maximum of 2 minutes. Dialogue between two or more participants is okay as long as they follow the Rules of Engagement, but when possible, invite more space for others to speak rather than calling on the same person multiple times.
  - If the conversation lags, the Moderator can ask prompting questions like:
    - What benefits did you notice on the Fact Sheet or based on your own knowledge?
    - What drawbacks did you notice on the Fact Sheet or based on your own knowledge?
    - What perspectives do you think we haven’t heard yet that should be voiced for a balanced view on the topic?
    - Under no circumstances should the Moderator present their own positions, but they should reinforce the Rules of Engagement if needed.

**D. Scene 3: Deliberation Topic 2 -- Decriminalization and Legalization of Psilocybin (30-50 min)**

- **Setup (5 min):** The Group Moderator will explain, “The theme of the second deliberation session will focus on legalization and decriminalization. Decriminalization means while a substance is not fully legal, criminal charges will not be issued, for example if someone is caught selling or being under the influence of the substance. Legalization here refers to making the substance legal, usually under certain circumstances, e.g., one cannot drive while intoxicated in any way.
  - Remember we are considering three potential settings: mental health/medicinal use, use in spiritual practices, and recreational use. Any questions?”
- **Initial shares (10-20 min):** The Group Moderator will time each share, give a 30 second warning, then say “Time” when the time is up. This can also be done using a timer on a phone, in which case the chime indicates time is up. The Group Moderator will gently step in if anyone breaks the Rules of Engagement.
- **Additional thoughts or clarifying questions (15-25 min):** After the first round of 2-minute shares, the Group Moderator will ask for additional thoughts or clarifying questions for other participants. This time, they will answer in order of hands raised. These should also be timed, a maximum of 2 minutes. Dialogue between two or more participants is okay as long as they follow the Rules of Engagement, but when possible, invite more space for others to speak rather than calling on the same person multiple times.
  - If the conversation lags, the Moderator can ask prompting questions like:
    - What do you think are some potential consequences of legalization?
    - What do you think are some potential consequences of decriminalization?
    - What perspectives do you think we haven’t heard yet that should be voiced for a balanced view on the topic?

#### **E. Scene 4: Parliamentary recommendations (45 min)**

- **Decriminalization recommendations (40 min):** The Group Moderator will ask each question in turn and gather the group’s recommendations to see if consensus is possible. Do not ask all questions at the same time, as participants may confuse the recommendations.
- **Note:** If low on time, you can focus only on the recommendations that the group is more likely to agree upon, e.g., medical purposes, and skip the ones they are less likely to adopt, e.g., recreational use.
- The facilitator will say, “Ideally, we have more time to discuss recommendations, but today, we will have to be brief. Consider all the arguments presented today. We will have 20 minutes to discuss each topic and try to find one or more recommendations we can all agree upon. Consider each person’s perspective and whether or not you can accept the recommendation, even if you have reservations, and if so, under what circumstances. As usual, please raise your hand to speak.

- “As a reminder, decriminalization does not mean a substance is legal, but that no criminal consequences will occur if someone is caught in possession of the substance, is selling it, or is under the influence.”
  - **“The first question is:** Should psilocybin be decriminalized if used by people who are self-medicating, meaning taking it without a prescription for medical purposes? If so, under what conditions?”
    - The moderator should take notes about what each participant says. When everyone has stated their recommendations, move to the next question for each question.
- “Legalization means the substance would be either completely legal to possess, use, or sell. Or, you could recommend only to make it legal under certain conditions.”
  - **“The second question is:** Should psilocybin be legalized for medical purposes? If so, under what conditions?”
    - The moderator should take notes about what each participant says. When everyone has stated their recommendations, move to the next question for each question.
  - **“The third question is:** Should psilocybin be decriminalized for spiritual practices? If so, under what conditions?”
  - **“The fourth question is:** Should psilocybin be legalized for spiritual practices? If so, under what conditions?”
  - **“The fifth question is:** Should psilocybin be decriminalized for recreational use? If so, under what conditions?”
  - **“The sixth question is:** Should psilocybin be legalized for recreational use? If so, under what conditions?”
- **If there a clear consensus arises between all characters on one (or multiple) recommendations (5 min):** The Group Moderator will formulate a one-sentence recommendation for each, e.g., “Psilocybin should be decriminalized for recreational use” or “Psilocybin should be legalized only in the case of medical interventions.”
  - Then, the Group Moderator will say: “Thank you for your participation in this assembly! I appreciate everyone’s willingness to share their perspective and listen to the perspectives of others, even when you disagree. I am sure these recommendations will be taken into consideration in parliament when they vote on the matter in the coming months... And that is the end of *The Assembly!*”
- **If there is no clear consensus, the Group Moderator will say:** “Thank you for your participation in this assembly! I appreciate everyone’s willingness to share their perspective and listen to the perspectives of others, even when you disagree.”

Unfortunately, I do not think we have reached a clear consensus on any one recommendation, so we will not be submitting recommendations to Parliament for this group. I do hope you found the experience valuable nonetheless... And that is the end of *The Assembly!*"

- **Break (10 min)**

## Part 3: Debrief

(30 - 1 hr)

- **Note:** If low on time, make sure the debrief is 30 minutes and instead cut from the Recommendations scene.
- **Derole (5 min):** Ask the participants to de-role from their character, by stating, for example, "My name is Tom, my pronouns are he/him, and I played Allen."
- **Debrief (25 min - 1 hr):** In groups of 4-6, the facilitator will ask the following questions. Each person should speak in turn with no interruptions:
  - What feelings arose for you or your character during the scenario?
  - **Describe your character:** We will now ask each of you to please describe any elements of your character sheet that are relevant to the opinions they shared during the Assembly.
  - **Initial question:** As players, what is your reaction when you hear about the backgrounds of the other characters?
    - **Follow-up:** Does this information change your assessment of other character's positions? If so, why?

**You may wish to let them speak more freely here and conclude the structured debrief. Or, you can choose to ask these additional questions:**

- What was the most powerful, intense, or challenging moment for you?
- Did this deliberation process remind you of any personal experiences? Why or why not?
- Do you think this sort of deliberation would be helpful to democratic processes? Why or why not?

## APPENDIX A: The Assembly Character Overview Sheet

### Right-Leaning Characters

**Name:** A \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 19

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, but only attends church for weddings and funerals

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Small town

**Content advisory:** Drunk driving, death of a parent

**Name:** B \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 45

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Education completed:** Bachelor's in \_\_\_\_\_

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Content advisory:** Alcoholism, overdose, depression, pain after surgery

**Name:** G \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Agnostic

**Education completed:** Master's in Law

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Content advisory:** drug abuse, addiction, violent behavior, criminalization

**Name:** I \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 25

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Education completed:** Bachelor's of Business Studies

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Content advisory:** drug abuse, drunk driving accident, wealth privilege

**Name:** O \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, attends church occasionally, especially around Christmas

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Content advisory:** religious restriction, criminalization

## Left-Leaning Characters

**Name:** C \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 31

**Gender:** Trans woman

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Neo-Pagan

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Content advisory:** Drug use, alternative spiritual communities, environmental harm

**Name:** D \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 28

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Spiritually seeking

**Education completed:** Master's

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Content advisory:** anti-religious views

**Name:** H \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 25

**Gender:** Agender

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Hindu

**Education completed:** Bachelor of Fine Arts

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Content advisory:** Radical freedom, fear of death, anxiety attacks

**Name:** K \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 28

**Gender:** Trans man

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Buddhist

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Content advisory:** mental health challenges, governmental restrictions

**Name:** M\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Non-binary

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Spiritual, but not religious

**Education completed:** Bachelor's

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (Countryside)

**Content advisory:** visitations from spirits

## Centrist-Leaning Characters

**Name:** E \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 52

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Muslim

**Education completed:** Ph.D. in Health Sciences

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Content advisory:** addiction, depression, criminalization

**Name:** F \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, believes in God but does not go to church

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural

**Content advisory:** organized religion, robbery, PTSD

**Name:** J \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 55

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Alternative spirituality

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Content advisory:** drug use

**Name:** L \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 48

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Agnostic, does not really care

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Content advisory:** sports injury, body shaming

**Name:** N\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Evangelical christian, regular church-goer

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Small town

**Content advisory:** organized religion, sexual shame, criminalization

**Name:** P\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Education completed:** Bachelor's in Accounting

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Content advisory:** hallucinations

## APPENDIX B: Hot Seat Question List

- What drew you to participate in this assembly?
- What interests you most about the topic?
- What fears do you have about what might happen today?
- Describe a time when you were most proud of yourself.
  - What was happening? Who was there?

## APPENDIX C: Rules of Engagement

- This deliberation session will be facilitated by a moderator, who will keep time and help direct the conversation. You will treat the moderator and other participants with respect, even if you disagree with them.
- Please feel emboldened to share alternative perspectives. We are not hoping for agreement here, but respectful engagement from multiple points of view.
- Always allow others to speak for their allotted time and try to listen deeply. You will have time to voice your own thoughts in turn. Instead, if you have a point related to another person's share or a clarifying question to ask, please note it down for your turn. We may invite less vocal people to speak instead if someone has shared multiple times.
- Focus on the facts given and the perspectives each of you have, not on the other participants themselves. The goal is to provide as many diverse perspectives on the issue as possible. Avoid any sort of confrontational or accusatory language toward others. We are all here to learn.
- We all agree that the facts provided to you leading up to the event are true. You may discuss other facts or perspectives not listed, but please do not dispute the fact sheet.
- When we create our recommendations, we will likely still have different opinions. We are not aiming for consensus on the issue here, but rather recommendations the group can all agree to include, if possible.
- Additional rules recommended by the group:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: Psilocybin Fact Sheet (Sweden)

### Legality

According to [Läkemedelsverkets](#), psilocybin is considered a Schedule 1 Narcotic. Possession, sale, and transport of psilocybin are illegal in Sweden. In terms of cultivation, spores (and grow kits) are legal. It is legal to grow mycelium but not fruit bodies.

However, fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) is a psychedelic mushroom that does not contain psilocybin and is legal, but under investigation for potential restrictions. While some believe it is used currently in spiritual ceremonies by indigenous people, the amount of use for this purpose is debated.

### Excerpts from the Act on Penal Law on Narcotics (1968:64)

#### **Section 1:** “Any person who unlawfully

1. transfers narcotics,
2. manufactures narcotics intended for misuse,
3. acquires narcotics for the purpose of transfer,
4. procures, processes, packages, transports, keeps or in some other similar way handles narcotics which are not intended for personal use,
5. offers narcotics for sale, keeps or conveys payment for narcotics, mediates contacts between seller and purchaser or takes any other such measure, if the procedure is designed to promote narcotics traffic, or
6. possesses, uses or otherwise handles narcotics shall, if he has acted wilfully, be sentenced for a narcotic drug offence to imprisonment for not more than three years.”

**Section 3:** “If the offence under Section 1 is judged to be grave, the sentence for a grave narcotics offence shall be imprisonment for at least two years and at most ten years.”

[Drugsmart.se](#), run by the Central Association for Alcohol and Drug Information, states, “In Sweden, it is illegal to use narcotics and to have narcotics on you. Drug testing can be used as part of investigating drug offences. . . For young people under the age of 15, the police contact their guardians and make a report to the social services. . . Anyone under the age of 15 cannot be convicted in court. . . the police are obliged to investigate crimes quickly when the suspect is under 18 years of age. Children and young people (up to 21 years of age) who have committed crimes must be treated differently both in terms of punishment and when the police and prosecutors investigate the crimes. It is the social services that should primarily offer interventions.”

### Crime statistics

According to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention ([Bra.se](#)), “Crimes against the Narcotics Drugs Act constitute the most common offence type for which someone is convicted in

2024 and were the principal offence in 27 percent of all convictions. ...compared with 2023, the number of suspects increased for crimes against persons, drug offenses and fraud.” The majority of these cases relate to drug possession. The statistics do not specify the amount of crimes associated with psilocybin.

## Effects of criminalization

According to a report (2023) by Estrada, Stenström, and Thamthe from the Expert Group on Public Economics research organization, since the 1960s, policy has aimed toward a “drug-free Sweden,” with progressively harsher criminalization laws issued in subsequent years than for users in the other Nordic countries. Despite these laws, availability remains high, the street price has decreased significantly, and mortality due to overdose has increased. The researchers state, “Police control of drug use takes up large resources. The sharp increase in police interventions and coercive testing results in increased prosecutions for drug offenses, especially minor offenses . . . For users, consumption has led to a criminal record, and the criminalization is claimed by many to contribute to stigmatization and marginalization.”

## Medical use

In Sweden, the medical use of psilocybin has been or is currently being studied for the following conditions:

- [Anorexia-nervosa](#) (current study, Lund University)
- [End of life patients](#) with terminal conditions (current study, Uppsala University)
- [Major depressive disorder](#) (previous study, Karolinska Institute)
- [Depression in cancer patients](#) (current study, Karolinska Institute and University of Gothenburg)
- [Psychotherapy in general](#) (research network, hosted by Karolinska Institute and Region Stockholm)

## Symptoms of high doses of psilocybin-containing mushrooms

According to the [Swedish Poisons Information Center](#), “The most common hallucinogenic fungus in Sweden is the [] common mushroom that often grows among grasses in pastures, by roadsides, etc. It thrives best in well-fertilized places.”

The following symptoms can occur within 20-60 minutes, are at their height after 2 hours, usually concluded after 4-6 hours:

- Severe agitation
- Hallucinations
- Euphoria
- Altered perceptions of time and space
- A sense of unreality

- Dizziness
- Anxiety
- Headache
- Mydriasis
- Tachycardia
- Flush
- Fever
- Nausea

“Sometimes more protracted and flashbacks can appear after days or months. Repeated flashbacks can lead to schizophrenia-like conditions.”

## Addiction Potential

According to a [literature review conducted by Johnson et al.](#) (2018) in the journal *Neuropharmacology*: “Animal and human studies indicate low abuse and no physical dependence potential. Major national surveys indicate low rates of abuse, treatment-seeking and harm.”

Additionally, the authors dispute its Schedule I category, which compares it to opioids like heroin, stating, “Analysis supports the scheduling of psilocybin no more restrictively than Schedule IV.”

Maria Beckman, a [Swedish researcher from Karolinska](#) states, “Recent studies show that the substance is neither addictive nor toxic in clinically-relevant doses.” Use in clinical settings is often overseen by a mental health professional.

An increasingly common practice used for improvements in mental health is *microdosing* -- taking small doses of the substance over time that are not potent enough to cause serious side effects. While this treatment is sometimes prescribed in countries where psilocybin has been legalized for medical use, some users self-prescribe and engage in microdosing independently of medical guidance.

## Adolescent usage in Sweden

According to Sjöström et al. (2025), “A cross-sectional study using data from the latest 2024 Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN) school survey was conducted (N = 10,288 in 9th and 11th grades; response rate: 79%). Psychedelic use was measured along with mental health (General Anxiety, GAD-7, Daily dysfunction, and Satisfaction with Life) and personality traits (Big Five; TIPI).”

The results showed an association between “adolescent psychedelic use in Sweden [and] with poorer mental health, i.e., increased anxiety. Personality traits, particularly neuroticism, play a significant role, emphasizing the importance of individual differences in understanding adolescent psychedelic use.” However, correlation is not causation; more research is needed to understand the relationship between psychedelics and mental health in terms of risks and benefits.

## Religious / spiritual purposes

According to Johnson et al. (2018), "Psilocybin mushrooms have been used for millennia for spiritual and medical purposes," documenting mushroom-related art in cave paintings since 7000 BCE-5000 BCE. Citing Schultes (1969) and Schultes et al. (2001), the authors discuss how in 1600, "Spanish colonizers documented religious mushroom use by indigenous people in Mexico, considered it devil worship, and persecuted its use. Sacramental use was driven underground for the next 400 years."

The use of psilocybin for spiritual purposes has become more prevalent in recent decades. Some therapists in Sweden, such as the organization [Länka](#), offer retreats and sessions focused on psilocybin use.

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## APPENDIX E: The Assembly Full Character Sheets

**Content advisory:** Drunk driving, death of a parent

**Name:** A\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 19

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, but only attends church for weddings and funerals

**Political leanings:** Right

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Small town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** Your mother was killed by a drunk driver 10 years ago on her way home from working the night shift as a nurse. You remember finding out about her death like it was yesterday. You knew something was wrong when your mother didn't help you get ready for school that day. In the afternoon, your grandfather pulled you out of school to explain what happened. Your faith in God became deeper after this incident and you believe your mother is in heaven watching over you. You are strongly against the use of any alcohol or drugs and believe users are morally compromised.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you believed all substances were basically the same.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you're unsure if you believe psilocybin can have any positive effects and are suspicious of the motivations of researchers who claim otherwise.

**Strength of your conviction on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Content advisory:** Alcoholism, overdose, depression, pain after surgery

**Name:** B \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 45

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Political leanings:** Right

**Education completed:** Bachelor's in \_\_\_\_\_

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You have always struggled with depression. When you were younger, life felt meaningless and almost unbearable. You drank alcohol throughout your life to numb these feelings, mostly at home alone, and always considered yourself “functional.” About five years ago after undergoing back surgery, you mixed alcohol with pain killers and ended up in the hospital. This incident led you to seek recovery and you have been sober ever since. You don’t know anyone who has done psychedelics and you have sworn not to touch a drug of any kind yourself. Some people at the recovery center mentioned psychedelic use as a non-addictive way to find spiritual meaning and regulate depression symptoms, but you are highly skeptical of this practice.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you were skeptical about the benefits of psychedelics.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are curious if such a substance might help you, but are afraid to admit that out loud.

**Strength of your conviction on the topic:** Unsure

**Content advisory:** Drug use, alternative spiritual communities, environmental harm

**Name:** C \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 31

**Gender:** Trans woman

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Neo-Pagan

**Political leanings:** Left

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You have been involved in neo-pagan spiritual communities since your late teens. You believe that all aspects of nature are imbued with spirit that modern society and mainstream religions have forgotten, much to the devastation of the environment. This belief is grounded in the rituals you perform with your spiritual community, which honor the elements, communing with the gods and goddesses of nature. While these rituals usually occur sober, you have occasionally taken psilocybin and other psychedelics to help you connect with the spiritual realm. From your perspective, you have never abused these substances or behaved irresponsibly while under their influence. You do not drink or take other drugs. You resent any law or authority member that tells you what you can and cannot do with your own body.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you strongly believed that psychedelics should be legalized, especially substances like psilocybin that are found in nature.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are surprised how many researchers in the medical establishment are starting to acknowledge the positive benefits of psilocybin.

**Strength of your conviction on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Name:** D \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 28

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Spiritually seeking

**Political leanings:** Left

**Education completed:** Master's

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You were raised in an atheist family who privately ridiculed religion when you were growing up. You resisted this mentality, and instead studied different world religions, obtaining a Master's at university. While you have no interest in joining a church, you have always been curious about spirituality and ecstatic experiences. You have experimented with different types of meditation and yoga enough to know that different states of consciousness are possible in the right conditions. You have always been curious to try psychedelics, as you know from your studies that spiritual leaders have taken them in many cultures to expand their minds. You have a friend who had a spiritual awakening on mushrooms; they said they felt connected to everything in the universe and temporarily forgot they were a separate human being. However, you've also known someone who did LSD at a university party surrounded by strangers and was terrified for several hours. While you would never break the law, you have considered going to a more tolerant country like the Netherlands to try psychedelics yourself, but were too afraid you might have a bad experience.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you were curious about psilocybin as a natural means to achieve an expanded state of consciousness.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you feel a bit sad that a drug with such benefits has been illegal for so long. Shouldn't everyone have the opportunity to open their mind?

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Unsure

**Content advisory:** addiction, depression, criminalization

**Name:** E\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 52

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Muslim

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** Ph.D. in Health Sciences

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** While you have never taken psychedelics, your area of research is related to health and you enjoy staying updated on the latest research. When you attended university, the curriculum stressed the potential for psychedelics to trigger psychosis. However, you have recently read about the positive benefits of microdosing psilocybin to treat depression and other mental health challenges. You were surprised to learn that some countries have legalized its use even for recreational purposes. You are not sure if widespread use is advisable, as any substance can be abused or become an obsession for an addictive mind. On the other hand, you disagree with the criminalization of drug users and wonder if a middle-ground approach might work best.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you had not heard anyone outside of university contexts speaking about legalization of psilocybin near where you live.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you feel more convinced that the substance should be legalized for medical purposes, but are still undecided about legalization for recreational use.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Open to new perspectives

**Content advisory:** organized religion, robbery, PTSD

**Name:** F \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, believes in God but does not go to church

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You try to listen to all sides of an issue before making a decision. However, when it comes to drugs, you draw the line. You were mugged once at a train station in the city and are convinced the young man stole your purse to purchase more drugs. You wish you never had to encounter drug addicts in public places and you get anxious every time you have to go back to the city to see your family. While you know that many drug addicts come from hard situations and may have needed to resort to crime to survive, you don't see an excuse for using hard drugs. You have been living with chronic migraines for decades, but have never asked for medication from a doctor. You even avoid using over-the-counter pain relievers because you're afraid you will get hooked. You have come to accept pain as your lot in life and believe other people just need to toughen up.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you thought all drugs were basically the same and highly addictive, even "safe drugs" from the pharmacy.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are extremely confused to read that psilocybin is not highly addictive, but you're not sure you understood all the terms on the fact sheet either, many of which you had never heard before.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Content advisory:** drug abuse, addiction, violent behavior, criminalization

**Name:** G \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Agnostic

**Political leanings:** Right

**Education completed:** Master's in Law

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You believe that people are by nature unruly and chaotic. Left to their own devices, they will engage in selfish behavior. Adding any kind of drugs to this basic chaotic nature only increases the likelihood that people will hurt each other and the fabric of society will crumble. On a personal level, you watched one of your favorite uncles fall prey to drug addiction and ruin his life. You can still recall how he would come to knock on your parents door begging for money, how you had to hide your valuables from him. He would become angry and break dishes, making you afraid for your family. That is why you believe the government should be uncompromising in criminalizing drug use; most people cannot be trusted to use them responsibly.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you were against all drugs, even prescription drugs. You believe people should always be in control of themselves, even if they have to suffer chronic pain or mental instability.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are a bit less certain that psilocybin should be classified legally as a narcotic. Admittedly, you did not know much about psilocybin before, and assumed all drugs were basically the same.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Somewhat convicted

**Content advisory:** Radical freedom, fear of death, anxiety attacks

**Name:** H\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 25

**Gender:** Agender

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Hindu

**Political leanings:** Left

**Education completed:** Bachelor of Fine Arts

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You have always considered yourself a bit of a rebel, especially against laws and practices you believe are unjust. People should have the right to do whatever they want to their own body without social shame, such as getting tattoos, piercings, dying one's hair or other ways to express oneself. Your close friends are strongly individualistic anarchists. Drug use is normal to you and you consider it a personal choice, not a matter of legislation. You think people should be able to take drugs without consequences as long as they aren't hurting someone else. That being said, you are personally a bit scared of psilocybin; you tried it once at a party and were convinced you were dying, then had a massive anxiety attack. However, you have read that such drugs have been used to understand the mysteries of consciousness, in ancient Vedic texts and other traditions that focus on enlightenment. Maybe you had just let the fear win in that situation. Either way, you're not sure you ever want to try it again.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you believed strongly in an individual's right to choose what they do with their own body.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you have become curious about the benefits of taking it in a supervised manner with a mental health professional. Would your experience have gone differently?

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Content advisory:** drug abuse, drunk driving accident, wealth privilege

**Name:** I \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 25

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Upper

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Political leanings:** Right

**Education completed:** Bachelor's of Business Studies

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You were born into money and your path in life was always clear. You were intended to follow in your father's footsteps and inherit the family business, just as your father did before you. Your parents gave you everything you wanted, including a healthy allowance every week to spend how you wished. They never asked for receipts, and you kept your private life to yourself. The party life was just part of being wealthy and all the top nightclubs let you skip to the front of the line. To be honest, you never understood why people made such a big deal about drugs. Of course you do drugs, just like your friends, especially cocaine, which makes you feel on top of the world. Sure, you've done hallucinogens before, mostly synthetic. They made you feel strange and see colors, but other than that, they never had any strong effect. You've had worse side effects from binge drinking than any hallucinogen. For instance, you never told your parents what really happened that night when your drunk friend drove you home, got stuck in a ditch, and you had to order a tow truck. Now it's a funny story, but it was scary at the time.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you didn't see what the big deal was regarding drugs and thought they should be legal.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you were surprised by the number of side effects of psilocybin, but are not surprised to find out it is less addictive than other drugs. You don't crave it at all.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Unsure

**Name:** J \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 55

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Alternative spirituality

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** Your entire life, you have been questioning, testing boundaries, and seeking the truth. You strongly distrust authorities and believe they have a vested interest in keeping people “asleep,” when you have always wanted to continue awakening into your true potential. You would rather die than wear a suit and work a 9-5 job. You have no confidence that traditional institutions have your best interests at heart, whether healthcare, political parties, or educational systems. Instead, you have lived a bohemian lifestyle, surrounded by people with similar values, mostly renouncing material things and seeking spiritual transcendence through alternative practices. You are very familiar with psychedelics like psilocybin and wish the whole world could take them and see how everything is connected beyond their limited egos. However, you think such substances are one of many methods to experience transcendence and a bit of a crutch for people who do not learn to meditate properly.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you refused to engage with any information coming from the medical or governmental establishment.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are surprised that scientists are taking psychedelic research so seriously, but you worry about the establishment’s motives.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Content advisory:** mental health challenges, governmental restrictions

**Name:** K\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 28

**Gender:** Trans man

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Buddhist

**Political leanings:** Left

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** City

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** As a teenager and young adult, you struggled with mental health. You have never taken drugs recreationally, but you rely on prescription medications for your own psychological and physical well-being. You would never begrudge someone taking drugs or drinking alcohol to change their mental state, especially when our default state as humans tends to be an experience of suffering. If a drug can help someone see beyond the illusion of suffering, why wouldn't such a thing be helpful? From what you understand, psychedelics are not addictive in the same way other drugs are. Personally, you hope to achieve a state of enlightenment some day in which simple meditation leads to mental balance, but if drugs can help people get there faster, why restrict access to them? You are wary of more conservative members of the government making decisions that will make life harder and limit the freedoms of people like you and your friends.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you have been very concerned about any laws restricting access to drugs that can improve mental well-being, and the criminalization of free-thinking people in general.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are more convinced that the government has been suppressing substances that could dramatically benefit people's lives.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Open to new perspectives

**Content advisory:** sport injury, body shaming

**Name:** L\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 48

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Agnostic, does not really care

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** In high school, your whole life was sports. You thought you were going to become a professional footballer until your injury in college. You went through a brief depression as you tried to reorient your direction in life. You became extremely focused on health, to the point where it became the main thing you think about. You never want your body to fail you again and so you spend your free time physically training, eating well, and making sure you get plenty of water and sleep. If your injury taught you one thing, it's that life is a gift and no one should take it for granted. You intend to live to 100, which would be the best accomplishment you can imagine. It's horrible to you that some people disrespect their body by putting harmful substances in them. In your opinion, people shouldn't eat processed foods, much less do drugs, even antidepressants prescribed by a doctor. Willpower, discipline, and prudence are what most people need to have a healthy life.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you were a hardliner, avoiding anything that might compromise your health, and thinking poorly of people who don't take care of themselves.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you think this psilocybin stuff is just another substance Big Pharma is likely trying to capitalize on.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Name:** M\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Non-binary

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Spiritual, but not religious

**Political leanings:** Left

**Education completed:** Bachelor's

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (Countryside)

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You have always been attuned to the unseen world in a way that you were not able to describe growing up, so you learned to keep quiet about it. When you were little, spirits would communicate with you, such as ghosts of dead relatives. These experiences were scary at first, until you found a guide in your 20s who helped you understand these visitations, communicate safely, and set boundaries with the spirit world. This guide used psychedelics in spiritual rituals to communicate with spirits and receive insight from nature, but you have avoided trying it. He told you such practices were often performed in Indigenous rituals, but you are not sure how true that is, because your guide was not Indigenous. You also watched friends at university become addicted to drugs such as cocaine and heroin, so you never wanted to try anything like mushrooms. The last thing you need is a weaker boundary between this world and the one beyond. You worry about people who have no experience or training falling into chronic or permanent psychosis if they take psilocybin.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you thought people should only use psychedelic substances under the guidance of a spiritual leader.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you're fascinated to hear that psychedelics are used to treat mental challenges, but you are unsure if Western doctors and therapists have adequate spiritual training to guide patients through experiences with these substances.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Unsure

**Content advisory:** organized religion, sexual shame, criminalization

**Name:** N\_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Evangelical christian, regular church-goer

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** High school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** None, from Sweden

**Population density where you grew up:** Small town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** While you consider yourself a tolerant person, you have become increasingly concerned with the normalization of drug and alcohol use among young people. You believe that altered states of mind make people more likely to engage in sinful acts that destabilize society, such as premarital sex and infidelity. While as a natural substance, you concede that God created psilocybin, you believe people's job in life is to determine right versus wrong, and such substances serve only as a form of temptation. At the same time, you are not sure it's the government's job to enforce God's will and worry that criminalization might negatively impact the lives of young people. Instead, you think the Church should be responsible for rehabilitation.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you believed people should abstain from all drugs, regardless of their properties, and should have no more than one glass of alcohol a day.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you were shocked to find out medical practitioners are recommending taking drugs that are known to make people lose touch with reality.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Content advisory:** religious restriction, conservatism, criminalization

**Name:** O \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 61

**Gender:** Cis man

**Class:** Lower

**Religious / spiritual background:** Christian, attends church occasionally, especially around Christmas

**Political leanings:** Right

**Education completed:** Did not graduate high school/gymnasium

**Foreign background:** Choose: \_\_\_\_\_ outside Europe \_\_\_\_\_ within Europe

**Population density where you grew up:** Town

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You believe that every moment is a choice between good and evil thoughts and actions. The world will always tempt people to stray from the righteous path and you must be vigilant to make sure you do not fall for temptation. Any kind of drug is a form of temptation and alcohol dulls the senses. You are especially wary of claims that a drug can help a person have spiritual experiences; allowing your mind to fall prey to such forms of seduction leaves you vulnerable to evil thoughts and actions. Your town has become increasingly plagued by an increase of drug use, which you believe always leads to crime and degradation. You are shocked that medical experts are recommending such a thing as taking psilocybin, even in small doses. Our institutions clearly require reform.

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you believed in a zero tolerance policy regarding the criminalization of drugs, no matter the type of drug or context.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are unsure if you believe these so-called facts. Prayer and discipline are the best ways to have a clear head, not illicit substances.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Strongly convicted

**Name:** P \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** 37

**Gender:** Cis woman

**Class:** Middle

**Religious / spiritual background:** Atheist

**Political leanings:** Centrist

**Education completed:** Bachelor's in Accounting

**Foreign background:** Another Nordic country

**Population density where you grew up:** Rural (countryside)

**Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background related to the topic:** You are coming to understand you have lived a bit of a sheltered life. In university, you kept to yourself and focused on your studies. You never had drugs offered to you by anyone but a doctor. Most of what you know about drugs you learned from watching television or reading the news. All you know about psilocybin is that it's sometimes called "magic mushrooms" and people hallucinate when taking them. You would never personally try something like that. In truth, you have experienced hallucinations occasionally since you were 12, especially when awakening from sleep, but you never told anyone because you were afraid they might institutionalize you. You've always known the hallucinations aren't real, but they are still disconcerting when they happen. You are afraid of your teenage children trying drugs. What if your condition is genetic and a drug like psilocybin triggers more debilitating hallucinations in them?

**Before you joined the Assembly,** you had no idea that psilocybin had spiritual or psychological benefits.

**After reading the fact sheet,** you are unsure whether it should be illegal for medical use when other drugs are not, like opiates for pain relief.

**Strength of conviction of your position on the topic:** Unsure

## APPENDIX F: The Assembly Localization Recommendations

We recognize that you may want to run The Assembly in a different cultural context. If so, you may want to consider different demographic categories as befits your context, e.g., race/ethnicity, immigration status, etc. We recommend also adapting the fact sheet if possible, finding sources relevant to that context. You may also choose a different topic more relevant to the politics of that area.

**For example, you could add immigration status:**

- Not considered an immigrant
- Moved with your family to this country 10 years ago
- Parents immigrated to this country 50 years ago, you were born here
- Indigenous, family has lived on this land for many generations
- Parents immigrated 60 years ago; you were born here
- One parent immigrated to this country 40 years ago; the other parent was born here, as were you
- Moved with family to this country 20 years ago at 5 years old
- Born in this country to non-citizens from another country
- Parents immigrated 60 years ago, you were not born in this country