

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this letter is to elaborate on physical health and mental health conditions and how psilocybin mushrooms have improved these conditions with only a few experiences. Please note, that my psilocybin “trip” experiences were not administered or monitored by any medical experts. I would like to willingly share my improvements with any committee that is willing to listen and review this testimony as evidence for potential physical and mental health benefits in hopes that’s Maryland would open the door to medical treatment for other people with similar conditions as me. I pray the Task Force will be able to help others in the world through the use of psilocybin mushrooms and a guided expert.

My name is Sean David O’Neil. I am an active-duty Marine Corps veteran and a single father. My military service has negatively affected my back creating constant back pain day and night. Some days are worse than others. I also suffer from depression and some PTSD. I refuse to talk about any depression or any PTSD regarding my military service. However, I will speak on my civilian mental health experiences.

My two young kids lost their mother, my fiancé (Nikki Renee Denlinger), in April of 2024 due to a rare form of cancer. She was diagnosed in December of 2021 right after we purchased our first home together. The financial burden of affording our new home and the weight of raising the kids while I must work a job with an unstable work schedule, was overwhelming. I was suffering from depression, stress, and physical pain due to the stress. I lost my appetite and had suicidal thoughts. I signed up for therapy through the Veterans Affairs (VA), which I was only allotted approximately 45 mins per month. They offered “in-person” visits, but it wasn’t the visit itself that was in-effective for my treatment, it was the time. I required more frequent sessions with a therapist than 45 mins per month.

I injured my back while shoveling snow and left me bedridden for 2 days. This causes more stress with missing work and losing income. Please understand, the physical limitations further compounded stress, anxiety, and depression. I had to rely on others to help me with basic duties such as watching the kids and manual labor around the house.

A friend of mine mentioned that medical experts were underway in some states for treating people with mental health and pain management through the means of psilocybin mushrooms. I was extremely hesitant because I grew up in Baltimore City, Maryland. Let me detail that it was the **INNER CITY** of Baltimore. It is not a walk in the park. I could elaborate further on how bad the city is in crime and drugs. I grew up watching family die from overdosing. I'm not going to elaborate on the details of drug use in the inner cities. However, because of my childhood and witnessing the negative effects drugs had on people, I was very hesitant on considering marijuana or psilocybin mushrooms as being beneficial in any way. And my understanding was limited to such things. I only knew them as bad, dangerous, and evil.

However, after researching online, and speaking to others who I trust closely, some with my life, how the "NATURAL" drugs can help people. This is viewed in communities around the world today as "Holistic Medicine". I love learning about cultures from around the world and ancient history. And I've heard about how other cultures and ancient cultures have benefited from psychedelics, psilocybin being of one such psychedelics. I have never been interested in drugs, and I've never smoked a cigarette in my life. However, after considering what I learned about psilocybin and its history, I decided to give it a try.

I will now elaborate on the details of my self-experimentation and self-study:

### **First experience:**

(Word "Prior" - meaning before the administered dose.)

**Prior physical condition:** Back pain and slight abdominal pain (pre-existing health condition includes diverticulitis and diverticulosis and degenerative disc disease).

**Prior mental conditions (including mindset):** Depression, Anxiety, and Stress.

**Environment/setting:** Home in the living room with close friends. Temp is approx. 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Aurora Borealis lights in the room. 70's music positive vibes.

**Dose:** Approx. 5 small Golden Teacher mushrooms.

### **Rise (Approx. 1 hr 20 mins after dose)**

Warm "fuzzy" tension in scalp and head. Anxiety, stress, and depression are replaced with curiosity, and curiosity changes to excitement. Physical functions such as walking and normal movements are normal.

### **Peak (Approx. 1 hr 45 mins)**

No back pain, "giggles", no negative mental thoughts, feeling of something deeper to reality. Challenging to focus. Time seems to move slower (time dilation). Physical functions such as walking and normal movements felt slightly weightless "floating" feeling.

### **Fall (Approx. 3 hrs)**

No back pain, focus is hazy, happy feeling, comforting feeling that everything will be alright. Physical functions such as walking and normal movements are normal.

### **After (Approx. 4 hrs 30 mins)**

Questioning what I experienced, questioning reality, feeling that everything will be alright remains, easy to focus, feeling spiritual.

## **Second Experience (approx. 3 weeks after first experience):**

**Prior physical condition:** Back pain and slight abdominal pain (pre-existing health condition includes diverticulitis and diverticulosis and degenerative disc disease).

**Prior mental conditions (including mindset):** Slight Depression, Stress.

**Environment/setting:** Home in bedroom, alone laying down in bed, early morning with daylight, Temp is approx. 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Aurora Borealis lights in the room. Meditation music with alternating tones with no voices and no musical instruments.

**Dose:** Approx. 7 medium Golden Teacher mushrooms, taken on empty stomach.

### **Rise**

Relaxing and slow breathing, open minded to whatever happens.

### **Peak**

Feeling of floating into the universe (not scared but relaxing feeling), no longer having a physical body, no physical pain, the feeling of letting go of all negative emotions and feelings, a feeling of “**Eutierria**” or “**Mystical Union**”. Spiritual connection with God and the universe.

### **Fall**

Feeling freedom from burdens, returning to self-awareness, and happiness. Standing and moving is normal. Vision appears slightly foggy due to natural light sensitivity. Described as a camera light fog due to indirect sunlight, or a smudged camera lens.

### **After**

Remaining feeling of being at peace and freedom of burdens, Vision normalizes, realization that most things in life are out of self-control.

Several more positive experiences after the previously mentioned. The feeling of being at peace, freedom from most burdens, and happiness, remain for months after the experiences. Back pain remains consistent but are relieved during the experiences and for a short time (from hours, up to 1 day) after the experiences.

**Overall impressions:**

Psilocybin has strong mental health benefits for both short-term and long-term treatments. The benefit effects are long-lasting and sometimes are not required again after a few treatments. The doses can be self-administered, but patient requires some guidance for the first couple of treatments so that the patient is aware of how to obtain the benefits. Otherwise, they may abuse the treatments by using them in improper environments (such as driving etc.) or by simply just as recreational use. "Guided" treatments should be recommended for people who are not experienced in this treatment. No addiction side effects from psilocybin treatment.