

HERBS AND MUSHROOMS FOR HARM REDUCTION



HERBS AND MUSHROOMS

FOR HARM REDUCTION

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Mission Statement: This booklet was made to teach about herbal medicine for harm reduction.

The aim is to improve the health and lives of people who use drugs (PWUD) and to provide much needed education. It will inform PWUD; health practitioners, students, and the general public; educate on and advocate for harm reduction; decrease stigmatization and discrimination towards PWUD; and build capacity of individuals and groups working towards the well being, justice, and dignity of PWUD.

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Disclaimer: The information presented in this booklet does not replace medical attention. Individual health issues and circumstances require care when using herbs and mushrooms. Consult with a healthcare practitioner prior to the use of herbal medicine. Some herbs and mushrooms are not safe to be used while pregnant, breast/chest feeding, while taking certain pharmaceuticals, in some health conditions, and individual reactions to herbs and mushrooms vary. Start with a small amount to test for allergic reaction.

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION ?



Harm Reduction is defined by The National Harm Reduction Coalition as; “a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.”

Basically, Harm Reduction means to reduce harm and increase the health of people who use drugs (PWUD). Harm Reduction is not about abstinence and it does not advocate against drug use or for cutting down on drug use. Harm Reduction meets people where they are at regardless of their substance use. Most importantly, Harm Reduction works. It saves lives and creates better health outcomes.

An important piece of Harm Reduction is opposing stigma and shame. This means not shaming and judging people based on the substances they use. This is an important Harm Reduction concept because stigma and shame are some of the main factors that negatively impact the health and safety of PWUD. They are also big factors in preventing people from seeking healing and support and for accessing services of all kinds. Stigma and shame, as well as the criminalization of drug use, have people using alone and in unsafe environments, which in turn leads to staggering numbers of drug overdoses and deaths as well as many other negative outcomes.

Stigma and shame are a recipe for loneliness - a major factor in mental health and addictions. In an increasingly popular TED Talk, Johann Hari famously concludes that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is human connection.



It is important to consider how the demonization and criminalization of PWUD and the hierarchy and moral superiority of some substances over others copies and perpetuates the current power structures of racism, sexism, classism, etc. This means that marginalized people face much greater negative impacts and consequences of substance use.

Poor people don't have the same access to housing and private space so are more likely to use outdoors and in unsafe environments. This leads to more encounters with police as well as added risks that come with being under the influence of some substances in vulnerable situations.

**WAR
ON
DRUGS** = **WAR ON**

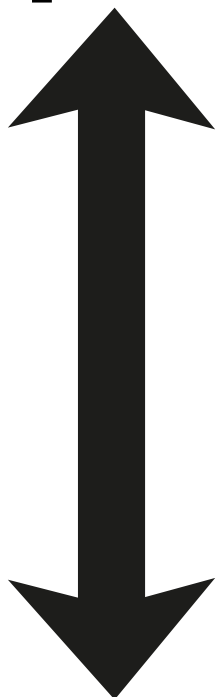
- * **People of colour**
- * **Indigenous people**
- * **Poor people**
- * **Traumatized people**

Many substances that originate from non-European nations and/or are associated with racialized communities face far more criminalization and stigma by design. This happens many ways like through colonization with the destruction and discrimination of indigenous medicines and cultural practices. This is done deliberately for power and control.

Another example is the war on drugs waged primarily on Latin America and its peoples. It has always been about imperialism, power, and control. Consequently, use of Cannabis and Cocaine/Crack are highly stigmatized, illegal, and go hand in hand with racism. In the case of Cocaine and Crack we can also see how intersecting oppression increases stigma and discrimination. Cocaine is expensive and typically more commonly used and accepted by middle and upper class people and is far more socially acceptable than Crack which is cheaper so more poor people use it.

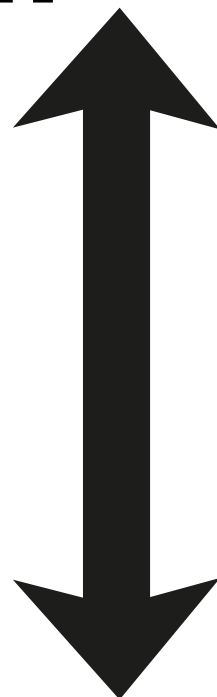
Compare the use of alcohol and prescription medications to illegal “drugs”
 - alcohol and prescription medications are more commonly used by white and middle to upper class people for a number of reasons based on privilege and access. Use of these substances are legal, safer to access, more regulated, and pretty much completely socially acceptable; even when these substances can be far more dangerous and intoxicating.

**Social and systemic
power**



Stigma

**Marginalized and
oppressed**



**Safety, access to health, and
acceptability**

Add to this the fact that trauma, social isolation, and mental/physical/spiritual health issues are far more common in oppressed populations and are the core reasons for substance abuse and you get exponentially more harm in these populations. Discrimination in health systems, lack of access to housing, lack of opportunity to live vibrant healthy lives, intergenerational trauma, and many more factors in the way society is unjustly structured compounds these issues.

Even the concept of sobriety is heavily shaped by colonialism, capitalism, and Christianity. Rugged individualism and notions of purity are glorified. Depending on or needing anyone or anything is looked down upon and considered weak when in reality we all are interdependent and need each other and substances to survive and thrive.

From “The Revolution Will Not Be Sober”, by Zoe Dodd and Alexander McClelland; “As radicals and writers working on issues of criminalization and drug liberation, we believe that altering the relationships we have with our minds and bodies through substance use is a form of resistance and emancipation. For us, drug liberation is the emancipation of drugs deemed illegal and the people who use them from the control of the state and social structures. In our experience, drug use can facilitate authentic, compassionate, and emotionally bonded social relationships that are not possible otherwise. Drug use can be therapeutic and provide autonomy outside of the pathologizing system of western medicine for coping with trauma and difficult life experiences. Within an economic system that relies on our bodies as a tool of production under a capitalist rationality, getting high can be a tactic for survival, a therapeutic practice, and an active refusal to engage with capitalism.



Maximizing our own pleasure by getting high can be a political imperative when we live in a society that is organized around viewing our bodies and minds as a form of capital. Under a capitalist logic, pleasure as an end unto itself is often viewed as dangerous, selfish, problematic, and destructive. But for thousands of years people have been using all kinds of drugs and substances to alter their relationships with their minds, bodies, with each other, and with their physical environments. Drugs were (and still are) used for ceremonial purposes to expand people’s relationship to land, expand worldviews, and as forms of healing medicine. Drugs have been widely used for years within communities of self-proclaimed queers, dykes, fags, gender radicals, freaks, skids, and punks to fuck with the ways in which society understands how we are supposed to act and be in the world. It is via practices of colonization, the introduction of capitalism, liberal legal frameworks, and the proliferation of western medicine that certain kinds of drug use have been arbitrarily pathologized and highly regulated, producing moralistic notions of illicit drugs, “addiction”, and the “addict”.



Humans are a social species and so our health is collective. It is often portrayed as an individual's fault if they are not healthy and their individual responsibility to be healthy. Addiction is framed as a person's moral and personality flaw rather than a reflection of the culture as a whole. This is a false narrative that erases systemic oppression and physical lived realities. If you are living in a toxic environment and everyone around you is sick - you will not be healthy. Some individuals are more sensitive and/or experience more oppression and so they face more side effects of living in unhealthy societies and environments. It doesn't mean it's their fault. It is everyone's responsibility to take care of each other and in doing so we are taking care of ourselves by extension.

The difference in how a substance is classified and treated often depends on who is the dealer; meaning who is profiting and who has the power/control. We can see this in Canada with the government controlling and profiting off of Cannabis and Alcohol. It is ok because the government is the dealer.

Another example of this is in the social services world. I worked for a housing organization that had a housing facility for "sober" people. I dispensed medications to the residents such as Methadone, Lithium, and other mood altering and sedating substances. Residents could be highly medicated, chain smoking cigarettes, and eating junk food full of chemicals 24/7 but if they smoked Cannabis they would get kicked out of their housing. Clearly, this wasn't about individuals not being under the influence of substances. As long as the residents used the right dealer their housing was secure. This was used to control their behavior.



Defining sobriety is inherently biased and often arbitrary. Many of the terms further stigmatize and judge PWUD while positioning the “sober” individual as being morally superior when in fact it is most often privilege that makes it possible to stop the use of any particular substances. Saying you are “clean” implies that others are dirty. It reinforces discrimination against PWUD and is based on false narratives. No one is “free” of substances. Even substances that are mood altering. We all use and need different substances in different ways and no one is better than the other because of this.

The Oxford dictionary defines drugs as follows; “a medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body.” According to this definition, water and food are drugs as they are substances that are ingested that alter your physiology. Even air is technically a drug. There are many ways of breathing that can get you high and treat things like pain, trauma, mental health, etc. like breath work, or breathing techniques for childbirth.



Not being able to function without coffee is socially acceptable as is needing a junk food “fix”. The acceptability of coffee dependance illustrates the ways that if a substance doesn’t interfere with being a productive worker under capitalism - then it’s acceptable. We can see how capitalism is dictating the legality and acceptability of certain substances with alcohol vs. psychedelics. Most people who drink will go to work the next day and are numbing the effects of a toxic society so they are less likely to take action against those power structures. Psychedelics on the other hand, are more likely to get people to question their job and society and increase sensitivity and awareness. Therefore they are stigmatized and criminalized. Increased awareness is not in the interest of those in power.

The important things to keep in mind when applying Harm Reduction are systemic factors in substance use, refusing care and services based on substance use furthers discrimination and causes negative health outcomes including death, and the fact that stopping or decreasing substance use is often not possible or even desirable. Harm Reduction makes it so that people are not turned away from services because of the substances they use. Harm reduction seeks to improve the health of PWUD by breaking down stigma, challenging criminalization, and providing health care with respect and dignity. The point is to reduce harm.

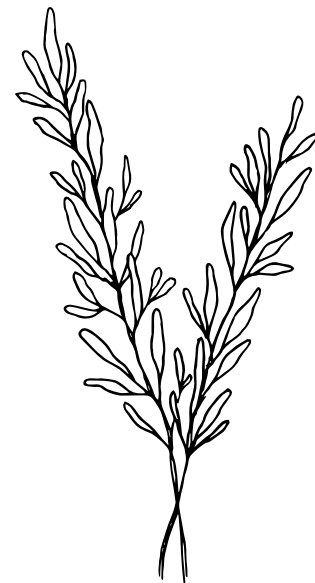
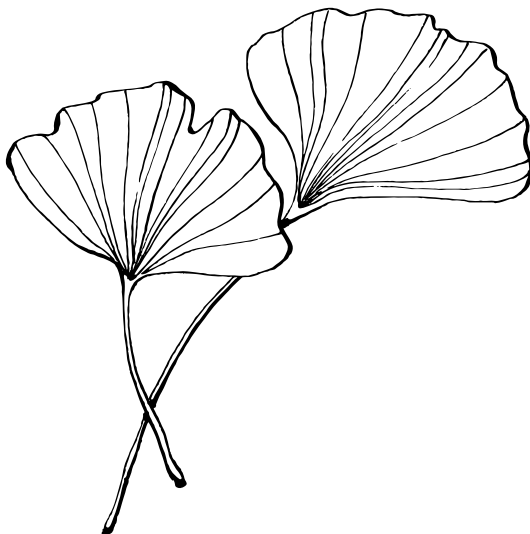
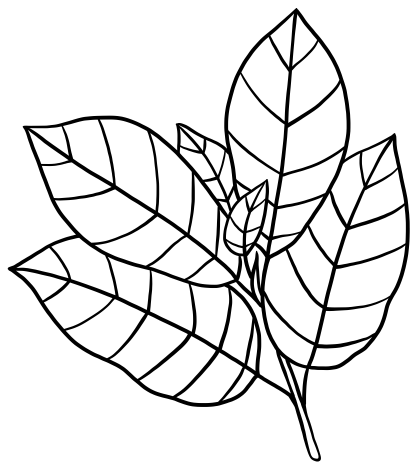
It is proven that Harm Reduction works. Abstinence might work for some but the all or nothing approach is not accessible for all nor does it work for everyone. Services being dependent on or pushing for abstinence cause untold amounts of harm. Harm Reduction acknowledges that for a variety of valid reasons - some people will continue to use substances and there are ways that health can be increased and risks decreased regardless of the substances they use.

Harm Reduction is being increasingly applied to a wide range of services. Safe injection sites, free distributed harm reduction supplies like needles and pipes, drug testing, and services that don't require "sobriety" to access have been proven not only to work but to be crucially needed to save lives and improve health - both individually and collectively.



**HARM REDUCTION
SAVES LIVES**

WHAT IS HERBALISM AND HOW CAN IT SUPPORT HARM REDUCTION?



Herbal medicine is a folk medicine that primarily uses plants as medicine for healing and to live an optimal life. It is one of the oldest and longest running forms of medicine and is still the most commonly used forms of medicine around the world. Even most prescription medicines are still derived from plants. Central to herbal medicine is its accessibility and affordability. It's designed to be of use by everyone with ease. Recipes are simple and ideally you use herbs that grow close to home.



It is something that almost anyone can do and this is also central to herbalism - you don't need a specialist or a doctor who just tells you what to do for every aspect of your health....through herbalism, you are empowered to know and care for your own health (and that of your community) as you are the expert of your own health.

This is a major fundamental difference from what is called allopathic medicine. Allopathic means modern clinical western medicine that is characterized by a slash and burn approach using mostly isolated concentrated substances and surgeries.

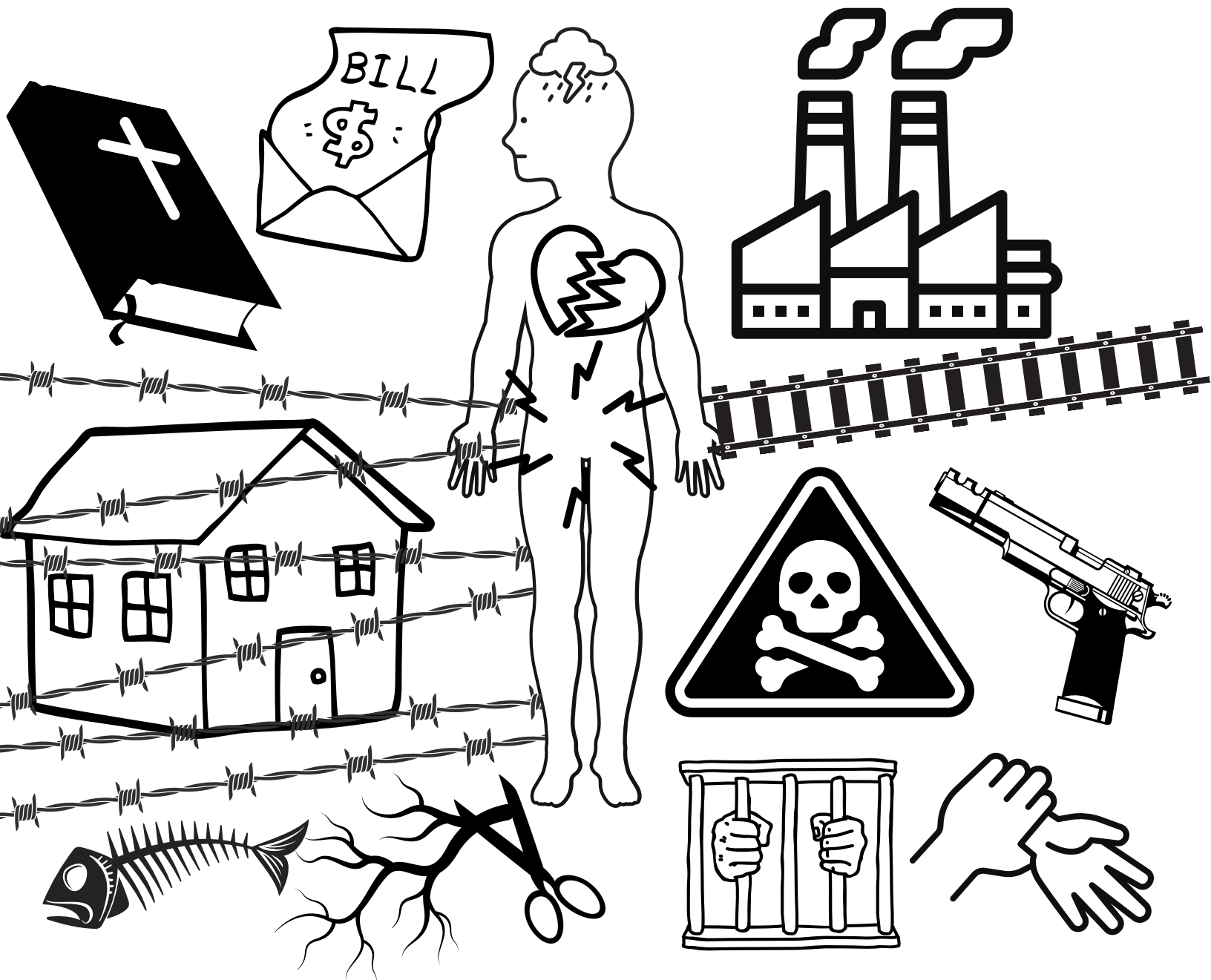
It is commonly referred to as western medicine but that is not accurate because indigenous western medicine is nothing like this and calling allopathic medicine “western medicine” erases western indigenous medicine. It is also a medicine that is used all over the world.

It was developed in the western world though, and it is very much tied to profit and power. If you can't care for yourself and your community cannot care for you, then you must pay an expert to help you. This is a large part of what the witch hunts were about. The witches hat comes from a time when herbalists would wear pointy hats at the market so you would know how to find them to get your herbal medicines. At that time, only males could be doctors and herbal medicine was demonized. This has led to most people now having no idea how to use medicines that grow right outside their front door and instead pay for doctors and medications that often come with harmful side effects and don't address the underlying causes of disease. This is a way to have power over the people as we rely on these systems for our health and our lives.



In contrast to allopathic medicine which typically tries to stop a symptom and focuses almost exclusively on that, herbalism takes a holistic approach. This means the whole body and who the person is as an individual is taken into account when addressing any issue. The main goal is to restore balance and support the body in healing itself. Different temperaments and body types often need different treatments and that works well in herbalism. Symptoms are treated as signs of deeper issues and herbalism addresses the root causes rather than turning off the body's alarm system (symptoms).

A holistic approach is key for Harm Reduction as it gets at the why behind substance use, addresses individual needs in relationship to substances, and takes factors like trauma, culture, and environment into account for overall health. Many people are self medicating with harmful substances because they have not found adequate treatment that treats their whole selves.



STRATEGIES

Here are some ways to use herbs for harm reduction:

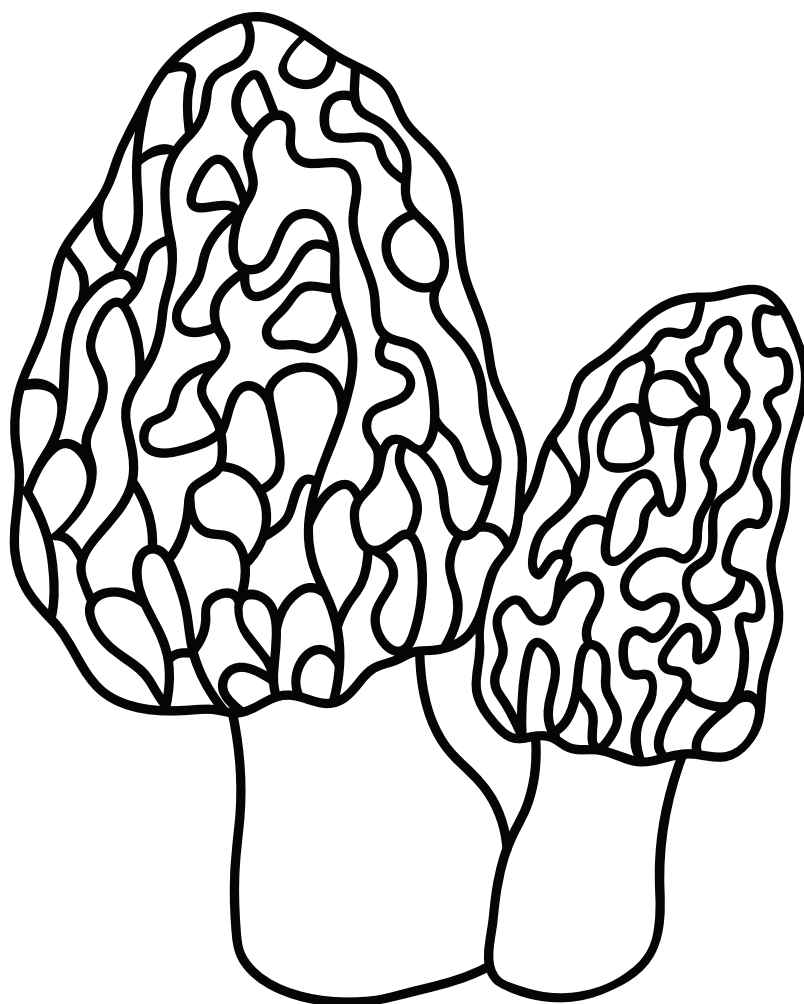
1. ****Hangover Prevention/Recovery:**** After consuming alcohol, you can use herbs like ginger or milk thistle to help alleviate nausea and support liver function.
2. ****Smoking Cessation:**** Herbal smoking blends containing herbs like lobelia, mullein, or passionflower can be used as a substitute for tobacco to reduce nicotine dependence and lower cravings.
3. ****Stress and Anxiety Management:**** Herbs and mushrooms like chamomile, reishi, valerian root, or kava kava can help manage stress and anxiety, potentially reducing the reliance on harmful coping mechanisms.
4. ****Withdrawal:**** Certain herbs like kratom, willow bark, and kava kava can be used to manage withdrawal symptoms.
5. ****Sleep Aid:**** Instead of relying on sedative medications, herbal remedies like valerian root, lavender, or passionflower can promote better sleep and reduce the need for pharmaceutical sleep aids.
6. ****Pain Management:**** Herbs such as turmeric, ginger, or willow bark have natural anti-inflammatory properties and can be used to reduce pain without the need for prescription painkillers.
7. ****Digestive Health:**** Peppermint, ginger, red belted conk mushroom, and fennel can be used to soothe digestive discomfort and reduce the need for antacids or other digestive medications. Mushrooms are great at balancing and supporting digestion.
8. ****Substance Dependency Support:**** Herbs and mushrooms can be used to reduce cravings and unwanted side-effects.
9. ****Detoxification:**** Herbs and mushrooms like dandelion root, burdock root, and chaga mushroom support the body's natural detoxification processes. This helps reduce withdrawal and cravings while supporting overall health.

10. ****Mood Enhancement:**** St. John's Wort and reishi mushroom help elevate mood, heal PTSD, and improve mental health. This is helpful for treating underlying issues of substance abuse and negative impacts on mood caused by substance use.

11. ****Lower dose of harmful substances:**** Using herbs and mushrooms alongside substance use that have a similar effect can lower the amount of the more harmful substance you need to take to get the desired effect. This lowers side effects. Supplementing like this is also a great way to wean off substances.

10. ****Identifying and treating root causes of substance use**** Most often, substance use is a form of self-medication. When you can identify what the roots of substance abuse are, you can treat those root causes with herbs and mushrooms; this in turn lowers the need to use harsher substances.

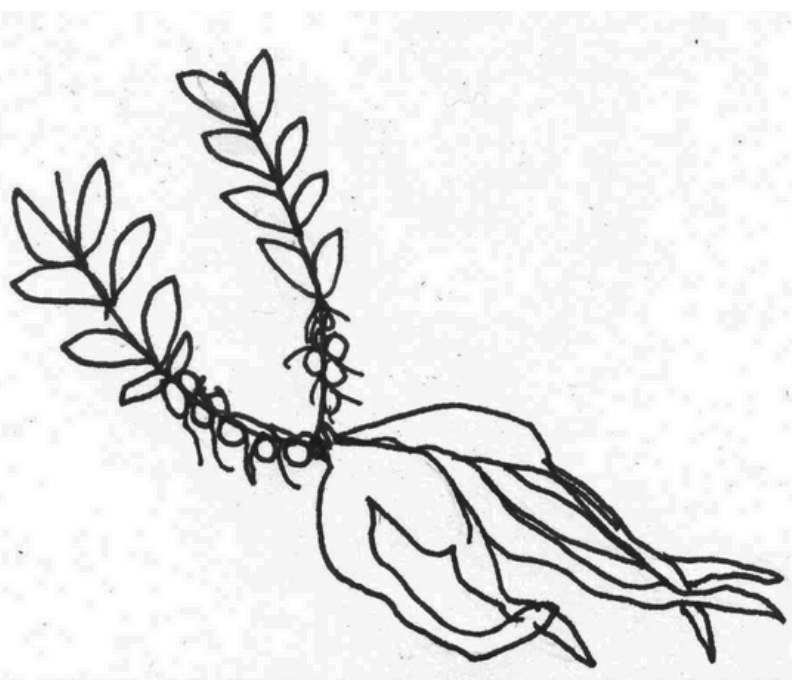
10. ****Lower cravings**** Herbs and mushrooms can help lower cravings by removing substances from the body and supporting mental and emotional health.



HERBAL AND MUSHROOM

ALLIES FOR HARM REDUCTION

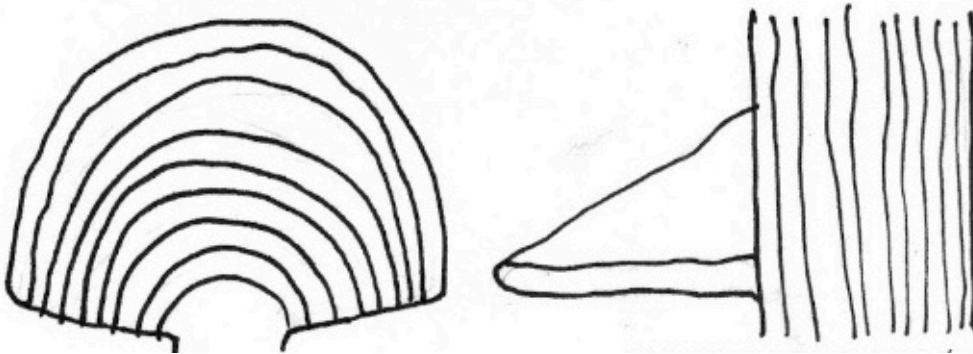
ASHWAGANDHA



An Ayurvedic herb traditionally used to build strength and stamina, for insomnia, stress, hormone balancing, and pain. In a Harm Reduction context, Ashwagandha greatly benefits the liver; the organ responsible for processing substances and detoxifying. This makes it a helpful herb to take during comedowns, hangovers, and withdrawal. Given its pain killing, mental health promoting, and sedating properties; Ashwagandha is especially helpful for many reasons people use substances so can be used to reduce, support during use or stop use of stronger synthetic "drugs".

Ashwagandha helps to adapt to stress and to heal the effects of long term stress and conditions like PTSD. It lowers stress hormones that accumulate in the body and supports healthy adrenal glands. Adrenal glands produce hormones that support the immune system, metabolism, blood pressure, and response to stress; all of which are negatively impacted by trauma and stress- two very common factors in substance use.

ARTIST'S CONK



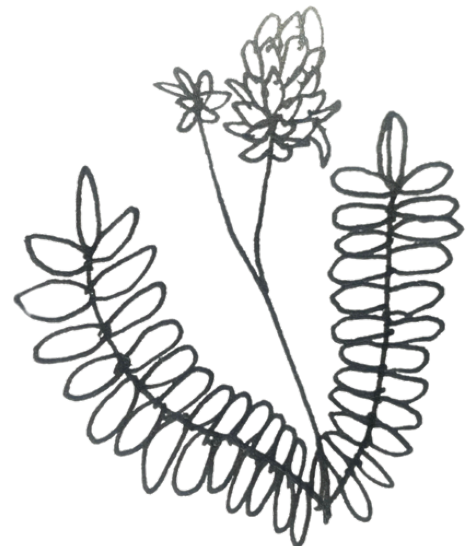
Artist's Conk is a mushroom that is the cousin of the famous reishi mushroom. It is used to regulate digestion and the immune system, anti-cancer and tumor, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-diabetic, and lowers cholesterol. It lowers stress, cleanses toxins from the body, supports the liver, and improves overall health.

This mushroom lowers the negative effects of substance use, prevents and relieves side effects, lowers cravings, repairs damage from substance use, and is a great ally to anyone using substances.

ASTRAGALUS

Traditionally used to reduce stress, improve immune function, lower inflammation, anti-viral, and as a skin and respiratory tonic.

This herb is great for repairing damage from substances, clearing up skin issues and infections that are a result of lack of sleep and chronic substance use, and to detoxify.



CALENDULA

Calendula is used for any skin issues, wound healing, digestion, anti-inflammatory, muscle relaxer, astringent, anti-fungal, and to encourage menstruation.

This makes it helpful to lower side effects and cravings, for withdrawal, and as an alternative and addition to harder substances used for pain. Many substances used chronically or excessively can cause skin issues and lower wound healing so regularly using a herb like Calendula is a great support, especially if substance use is impacting sleep.



CATNIP

Catnip is a friendly and gentle herb used to prevent and treat nausea and stomach upset associated with substance use.

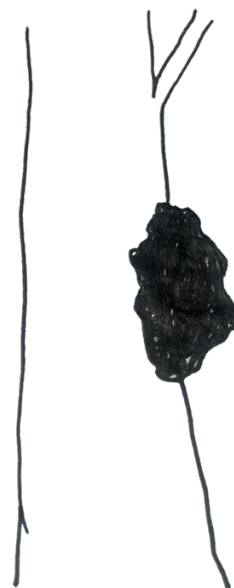
Catnip is a mild sedative which can help with come downs, cravings, withdrawal, and as an alternative or addition to sedative "drugs".



CHAGA

Chaga is a fungus that is great for overall health. It is used as an anti-inflammatory, pain killer, to increase energy, regulate the immune system, anti-microbial, anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-cancer, to balance blood sugar, lower stress, improve mood, heal PTSD, promote mental health, as a wound healer, to initiate menstruation, for diabetes, to support digestion and relieve stomach and digestion issues.

This is another great ally that can be taken regularly to improve the overall health of PWUD, to lower side effects, and to aid with come-downs and withdrawal.



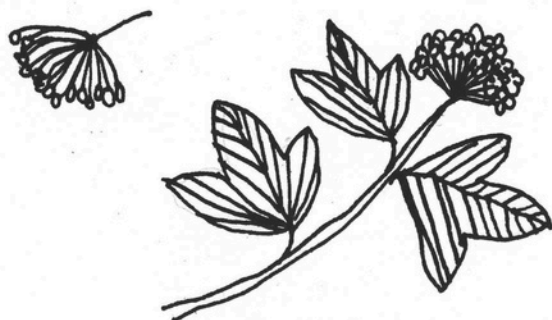
CHAMOMILE



Chamomile is used as an anti-inflammatory, pain killer, mild sedative, anti-microbial, anti-fungal, wound healer, to initiate menstruation, for diabetes, to support digestion and relieve stomach issues.

Helpful for cravings, withdrawal, to lower side effects, and as an alternative and addition to harder sedating substances.

CRAMP BARK



Cramp Bark is used for muscle cramping and spasms and is a muscle relaxant and toner. This herb is useful for withdrawal symptoms and for pain management.

Using Cramp bark regularly (3 times a day) will tone and strengthen muscles.

DAMIANA



Traditionally used for anxiety, stress, nerve pain, depression, to boost libido, for constipation, to increase circulation, for headaches/migraines, and mood uplifting.

Helpful for cravings, withdrawal, and as an alternative/additive to harder substances.

DANDELION

Dandelion is used to support the liver and kidneys - both of which are responsible for detoxifying and filtering substances in the body. It is highly nutritious and supports overall health and energy.



GINGER

Ginger is used for digestion, nausea, stomach issues, to increase circulation, for flavour, cold/flu, migraines, arthritis, hypertension, and to boost the immune system.

Prevents and treats side effects related to the stomach and digestion, lowers cravings, and supports withdrawal.



HAWTHORN

Traditionally used for heart problems, to lower cholesterol, stress, and blood pressure, and to improve circulation.

Protects against and treats heart and blood pressure issues that result from some substance use (typically caused by stimulants).

Helpful in treating emotional/mental issues that are at the root of substance abuse.



HOPS

Hops are used as a sedative, pain killer, and for the nervous system. Increases estrogen, soothes the stomach, as a muscle relaxer, anti-microbial, and diuretic.

Lowers cravings, supports withdrawal, helps in comedowns, and as an additive or alternative to harder substances.



KAVA KAVA

Kava Kava is traditionally used ceremoniously, to elevate mood, well being, and contentment, increases sociability, and produce a feeling of relaxation. Useful for anxiety, insomnia, and to support and heal the nervous system.

Lowers cravings, supports withdrawal, and as an additive or alternative to sedatives and opiates.



KRATOM

Kratom is used to treat opiate withdrawal, for pain, and anxiety. Kratom can be habit forming but has much milder withdrawal symptoms than opiates making it helpful to use for a short period of time to transition off opiates and pain killers.



In small doses it is a stimulant and in large doses it is a sedative making it useful as an alternative or additive to harder substances.



LAVENDER

Lavender is used for pain, headaches/migraines, nervous exhaustion, anxiety, insomnia, anti-fungal, anti-microbial, lowers blood pressure, for burns, and any skin issues.

Lowers cravings and side effects, supports withdrawal, and to treat mental and emotional issues at the root of substance abuse.

LEMONBALM

Traditionally used for pain, headaches/migraines, mood uplifting, to support the nervous system, digestion, to increase circulation, anti-viral, anti-microbial, and good for the skin.

Lowers cravings, supports withdrawal, and treats root causes of substance abuse.



LINDEN

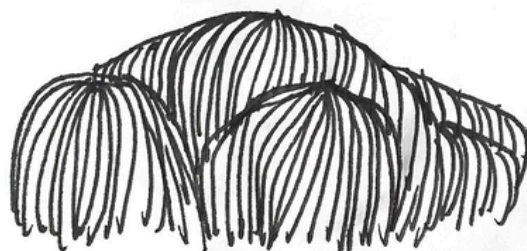


Linden is used for depression, mood uplifting, to support the nervous system, as a sedative, to lower fever, for cough/cold, to support digestion, and cardiovascular health.

Helpful to treat root causes of substance abuse.

LION'S MANE MUSHROOM

Lion's Mane is used to improve cognitive function, increase focus, treat A.D.H.D. and Alzheimers, to improve mood, lower stress and anxiety, boost immune system, repair nerve damage, improve digestion, and is highly nutritious.



Lion's Mane is a very supportive ally for any substance use and is especially helpful at balancing brain chemistry that can negatively effected by the use of some substances.

MARSHMALLOW ROOT



Marshmallow soothes the lungs, digestion, and mucous membranes, for diarrhea, ulcers, constipation, urinary tract inflammation, and skin irritation.

Decreases side effects that impact the lungs, digestion, and mucous membranes.

MILK THISTLE

Traditionally used for digestion, as an appetizer, to support and protect the liver, supports brain health, balances blood sugar, calms stomach, lowers cholesterol, for skin health, to support immune function, and increase milk production for breast/chest feeding.



Especially helpful to protect the liver during substance use when taken daily.

MOTHERWORT



Traditionally used to balance hormones, ease post-partum, for heart conditions, anxiety, nerve pain, gas, to ease tension and irritability, highly nutritious, to boost mood, lower stress, helpful for pms and menopause, increase fertility, support digestion, and kidneys.

Lowers cravings and side effects, and to treat root causes of substance abuse.

MUGWORT

Traditionally used for pain, as a sedative, mild laxative, lowers blood pressure, digestion, to initiate menstruation, and regulate hormonal cycles.

Works well as an alternative to Cannabis, lowers side effects and cravings, helpful during comedowns, and to treat root causes of substance abuse.





MULLEIN

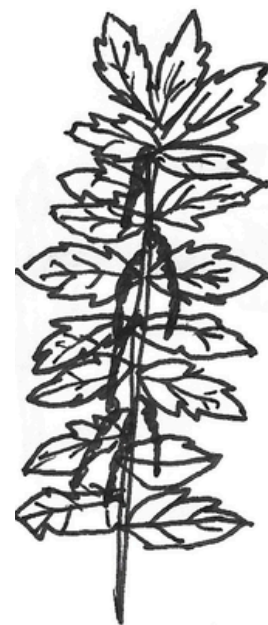
Traditionally used for cough/cold, respiratory system, digestion, anti-inflammation, and soothing to mucous membranes.

Mullein is an excellent herb for people who are injecting substances by smoking them. It cleans and supports lung health.

NETTLE

Nettles are used to support the kidneys and liver (both of which are impacted with substance use), highly nutritious, as a blood cleanser, anti-inflammation, to support lungs, as a pain killer, to balance hormones, boost iron, for healthy skin, and antihistamine.

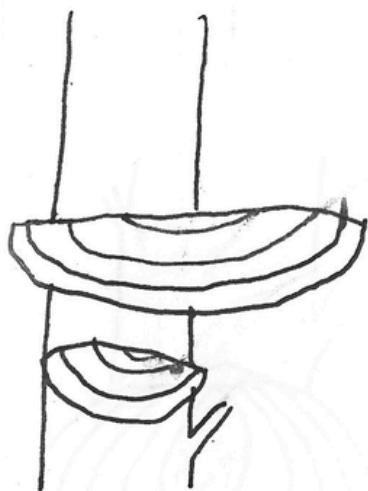
Given the highly nutritious nature of Nettles, they are helpful for people who have difficulty eating healthy. This herb is a great daily tonic to support overall health and wellness. Supports withdrawal and lowers cravings by removing substances from the body.



REISHI MUSHROOM

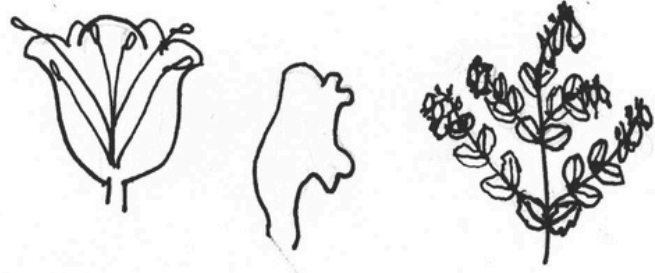
Traditionally used as a tonic, adaptogen, lowers stress and anxiety, balances immune system, improves cognitive function, regulates mood, calm allergies, balance hormones, regulate blood pressure, and cardiovascular health.

A great support of overall health and wellness. Lowers cravings and side effects and treats root causes of substance abuse.



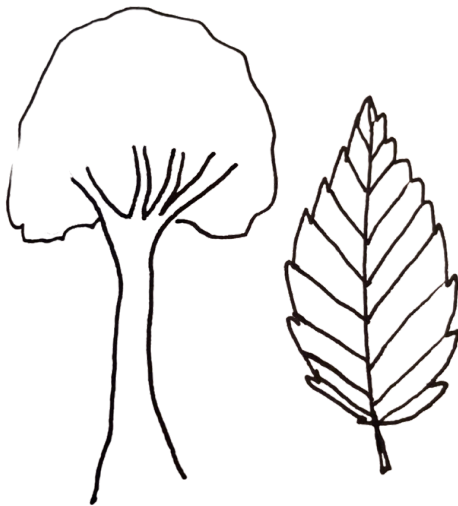
SKULLCAP

Skullcap is one of the most powerful herbal sedatives. It is used to reduce stress/anxiety, nerve pain, neurological conditions, insomnia, for nerve regeneration, to increase circulation, calm digestion, anti-inflammation, anti-cancer, to lower fever, remove toxins, support heart health, and manage diabetes.



Especially helpful for withdrawal from opiates.

SLIPPERY ELM

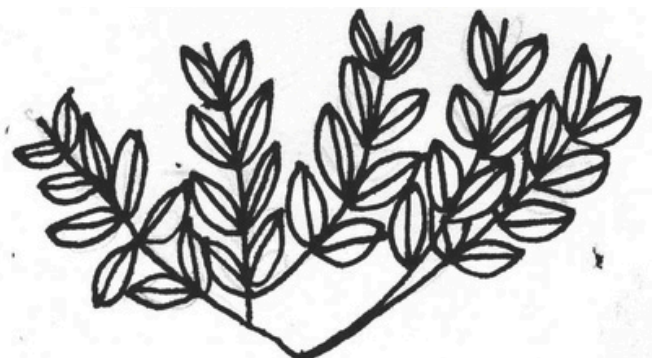


Traditionally used to support digestion, for irritable bowel syndrome, healthy skin, sore throat, mucous membranes, heals wounds, ulcers, cough/cold, diarrhea, and to lower blood pressure, high in fiber, and for stomach problems.

Lowers side effects and supports health and wellness during substance use.

TULSI/HOLY BASIL

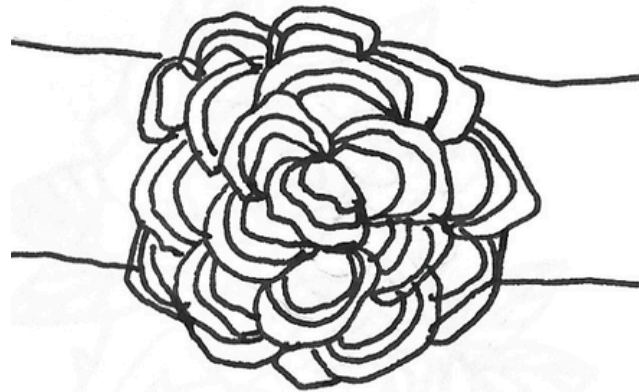
Tulsi is used as an adaptogen (increases adaptability and lowers effects of stress), to uplift mood, lower stress, increase focus, anti-diabetic, supports the immune system, protects the nervous system, liver and the heart, anti-microbial, anti-fungal, digestion, cough/cold, increase circulation, normalize blood pressure, lower fever, support drug and alcohol withdrawal



TURKEY TAIL MUSHROOM

Traditionally used as an adaptogen (lowers effects of stress and increases adaptability), to support the immune system, digestion, detoxifying, hormone balancing, highly nutritious, anti-cancer, ito increase energy, support liver, lung and spleen function.

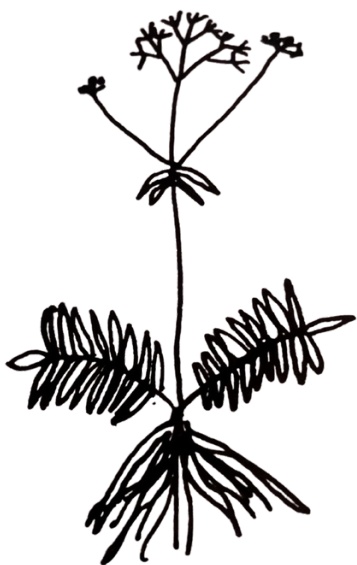
Turkey Tail is excellent for cleansing after toxic substance use and as an overall boost to health and wellness of PWUD.



VALERIAN ROOT

A powerful pain killer, sedative, for nerve problems, anxiety, and insomnia.

Lowers cravings, supports withdrawal, and as an alternative or additive to harder sedatives, opiates, and pain killers.



WILLOW BARK

Willow is used as a pain killer, anti-inflammatory, astringent, to lower fever, relieves stress, to prevent heart attack, anti-microbial and good for the skin.

Supports withdrawals especially off Opiates.



PREPERATION METHODS AND DOSAGE

Preparing herbal medicine can vary depending on the specific herbs and their intended use. Here are some general methods for preparing herbal remedies:

1. ****Infusion:**** This involves steeping dried or fresh herbs in hot water to make a tea. It's the most common method for using herbal medicine. Pour boiled water onto a 1 teaspoon of herbs per cup. Steep 5-10 minutes and then strain. Use 1 cup as needed or 3 cups a day for more chronic issues.
2. ****Decoction:**** For tougher plant materials like roots or bark, simmer them in water for a minimum 10 minutes to extract the active compounds. Use 1 tsp of herbs to 1 cup of water.
3. ****Tincture:**** Mix herbs with alcohol or glycerin to create a concentrated liquid extract. Tinctures have a longer shelf life and can be more potent than teas. Tincture doses vary but generally use 1/2 tsp. per dose up to 3 times daily.
4. ****Capsules:**** Ground dried herbs can be encapsulated for convenient consumption. This is especially useful for herbs with strong or bitter tastes.
5. ****Salve or Ointment:**** Combine herbs with a carrier oil and beeswax to create a topical herbal remedy.
6. ****Poultice:**** Crush fresh or dried herbs and apply them directly to the skin, often wrapped in a cloth.
7. ****Essential Oils:**** Distill herbs to extract their essential oils, which can be used in aromatherapy or diluted for topical application.
8. ****Powder:**** Herbs can be dried and ground into a fine powder. This can be used in capsules, as a seasoning, or mixed with other ingredients for various applications.
9. ****Syrup:**** Combine herbs with honey or sugar and water to create a sweet syrup, often used for coughs and sore throats. Use 1/2 to 1 tsp. as needed up to 3 times a day.
10. ****Herbal Bath:**** Use a strong infusion or decoction of herbs and mushrooms into a warm bath for relaxation, pain, or to treat skin conditions.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Your Using herbs and mushrooms in conjunction with pharmaceutical medications and other substances can have potential interactions, some of which may be contraindicated meaning they can be harmful when used together or they can reduce the intended effect. Here are some common contraindications and interactions:

1. ****Blood Thinners:**** Herbs like ginkgo biloba, garlic, and ginger can also have blood-thinning properties. Combining them with warfarin may increase the risk of bleeding. It is also not advised to take blood thinning herbs right before and after surgery.
2. ****High Blood Pressure Medications (Antihypertensives):**** Herbs like hawthorn, licorice, and yohimbe affect blood pressure. Use of these herbs with antihypertensive drugs can lead to irregular blood pressure levels.
3. ****Antiplatelet Medications:**** Herbs with blood-thinning properties, such as ginkgo biloba or turmeric, may increase the risk of bleeding when used alongside antiplatelet drugs like aspirin.
4. ****Anticoagulants:**** Herbs like chamomile and ginger, which have natural anticoagulant effects, can interact with medications like heparin, leading to increased bleeding risk.
5. ****Diabetes Medications:**** Herbs such as bitter melon, fenugreek, or cinnamon lower blood sugar levels. Combining them with diabetes medications can result in hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).
6. ****Sedatives or Sleep Medications:**** Herbs like valerian root or kava kava have sedative properties. Using them with sedative medications can enhance the sedative effect, leading to excessive drowsiness.
7. ****Psychiatric Medications:**** St. John's Wort, often used for depression, can interact with various psychiatric medications, including SSRIs, MAOIs, and antipsychotic drugs, potentially leading to serotonin syndrome or reduced drug effectiveness. It is not recommended to use St. John's Wort while using any pharmaceutical medications as it lowers the effects of those medications.

8. ****Immunosuppressants:**** Herbs like echinacea or astragalus boost the immune system. When taken with immunosuppressant drugs, they can interfere with the medication's intended effects.

9. ****Hormonal Medications (Birth Control or Hormone Replacement Therapy):**** Certain herbs, like chasteberry or black cohosh, can affect hormone levels. This might interfere with the effectiveness of hormonal medications or hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

10. ****Liver-Metabolized Drugs:**** Some herbs, like milk thistle, can affect liver enzymes involved in drug metabolism. This may impact the effectiveness or toxicity of medications processed by the liver.

11. ****Kidney-Metabolized Drugs:**** Herbs like cranberry may influence the excretion of certain medications through the kidneys, potentially altering their effectiveness.

12. ****Cardiac Medications:**** Herbs such as foxglove (digitalis) and hawthorn can affect heart function. Combining them with cardiac medications can lead to irregular heart rhythms.

These are just examples, and many other herb-drug interactions can occur. Always disclose your herbal usage to your healthcare provider, and inform them of any prescribed medications you are taking. They can provide guidance on potential contraindications, adjust dosages, text



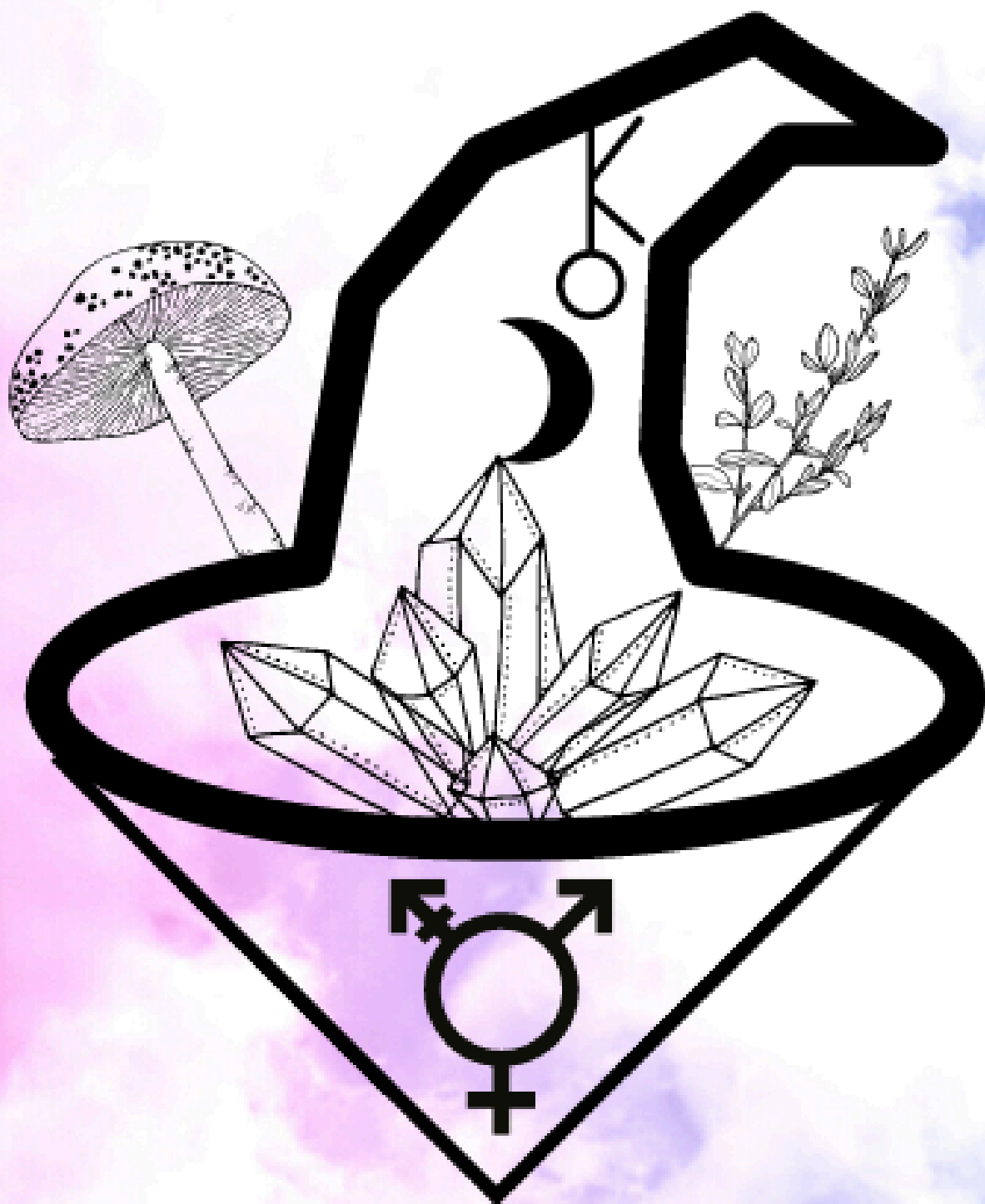
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