MIND FOUNDATION

Insights into the inaugural year of APT

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> "Right now, psychedelic therapy is very drug-focused," said Dr. Henrik Jungaberle, the Executive Director of MIND Foundation and an APT faculty member. "We wanted to introduce another model into the field: psychotherapy. Meaning, working with the content of the sessions to create a lasting impact for people, so that they don't have to redo dosing, dosing, dosing."

Last November, on a rainy Thursday in Berlin, two dozen healthcare providers from around the world gathered in a studio to experience immersive breathing – a method closely related to holotropic breathwork. It was their second day at the MIND Foundation's Augmented Psychotherapy Training (APT), a two-year professional development program that teaches the skills one needs to practice psychedelic therapy.

The candidates—comprised of psychotherapists, psychiatrists, a surgeon, and an anesthesiologist—were paired off and assigned a mattress and blanket on the floor. One partner laid down on it and put on an eye mask. The other sat next to them, tissue box at the ready. As the breathwork instruction commenced, deep, percussive music started to rumble throughout the room. A few minutes passed. Then, the first cry pierced the air.

Around the studio, the candidates undergoing the 90-minute breathwork session erupted with energy. Some laughed while others screamed; some danced while others coiled. Afterwards, people reported experiencing perception shifts, evocative memories, psychedelic visuals, newly opened emotional spaces, and so on. How to integrate these seemingly ineffable "Aha!" moments into material of psychotherapeutic value would be the focus of the next year's study. For now, though, the APT candidates had just completed one of the program's first self-experiences with an altered state of consciousness.

The magnitude of the non-pharmacological method surprised many. "The breathwork session blew everyone's socks off," said Kira Regan, an APT candidate and psychotherapist from Canada. "That was the catalytic

event that formed our group cohesion. The veneer of professionalism that I think people can adopt in these development spaces was stripped away into authentic human connection." Eugen Secar , a psychotherapist from Romania, said, "It was *amazing*. I didn't think you could have such a similar experience to a psychedelic state. I was fascinated."

Night had fallen and APT's second day came to a close. From here, Regan and Secar were about to begin two years of training to become certified psychedelic therapists. They were part of APT's inaugural cohort. Combining four on-site intensive trainings in Berlin, and continuous remote learning sessions every week, APT consists of 400 hours of instruction. To date, it is likely the most comprehensive curriculum for psychedelic therapy in the world.