

Expert Opinion Project: A Pilot Study

Glossary

Basic functioning | The capacity to perform essential daily activities including self-care (dressing, feeding, sleeping) and to maintain work responsibilities, sustain relationships, and meet basic needs (e.g., safety, shelter, nutrition) without significant impairment or risk to self or others. This definition distinguishes between impaired capacity and intentional choices to temporarily modify these patterns for spiritual practice or intentional emergent experiences.

Basic health screening | Depending on the medical setting, patient age, and individual context, specific tests can vary, but they tend to include: complete blood count (CBC), basic metabolic panel (BMP), liver function tests, thyroid panel, vitamin B12 test, and potentially a urine drug screen or alcohol level test. The key is to have a standard set of basic tests to rule out underlying medical conditions.

Consensus reality | The generally agreed-upon version of reality within a community or society, shaped by shared experiences and understandings. Key warning signs that consensus reality testing is intact include: (1) recognizing what consensus reality expects, (2) applying consensual norms in socially appropriate contexts when needed (even if the person doesn't personally believe in them), or (3) maintaining basic functional capacity.

Cultural humility | Cultural humility is an approach to understanding and respecting the cultural identities of individuals and communities. Unlike cultural competence, which often implies a mastery of knowledge about different cultures, cultural humility focuses on a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique. It encourages individuals to recognise their own biases, power dynamics, and the limitations of their cultural knowledge while fostering open and respectful relationships with people from diverse backgrounds.

Emergent phenomena | Experiences that are often interpreted or labelled as spiritual, mystical, energetic, psychedelic, or magical in nature, and that may lead to transformative outcomes. These experiences include but are not limited to: deep unitive or absorption states, energy-like somatic experiences and involuntary movements, shifts to body schema, heightened basic wakefulness, endogenous light perceptions, visionary experiences, entity encounters, profound altered states resulting in emotional, behavioural, existential, ontological and paradigmatic shifts, such as deep changes to sense of self and one's connection to the universe, and profound vocational and life-trajectory impacts. These phenomena may be simultaneously beneficial and disturbing, transformative and/or discombobulating.

Emergent practice | Activities, modalities, or circumstances that increase the likelihood of emergent phenomena occurring, regardless of whether the individual intentionally seeks such experiences. This

encompasses both deliberate contemplative and non-contemplative practices (such as meditation, yoga, prayer or breathwork) and unintentional contexts where emergent phenomena may spontaneously arise (such as recreational psychedelic use, extreme physical exertion, trauma, or more subtle practices such as exposure to certain kinds of media or narratives). The defining characteristic is the increased probability of emergent experiences, not the practitioner's awareness of or intention to cultivate such phenomena.

Grounding | Techniques and capacities that help individuals maintain connection to consensus reality, physical sensations, connection to the body, and social norms, including both external anchoring methods (touching objects, sensory awareness) and internal abilities to navigate between different states of consciousness appropriately, such as the ability to focus on the present moment or to maintain awareness of one's immediate environmental context.

Imminent risk to self or others | An immediate and impending threat of substantial physical harm or death occurring within a short timeframe (e.g., few hours up to few days) that requires urgent intervention to prevent serious injury or loss of life. This includes:

Risk to self: 1) Active suicidal ideation with specific plan, means, and intent to die by suicide, **2)** Self-injurious behaviors with escalating severity or lethality, **3)** Inability to meet essential needs for food, shelter, clothing, or health care to a degree that threatens physical survival.

Risk to others: 1) Immediate and impending threat of causing substantial physical injury to others, **2)** Specific threats or plans to harm identifiable individuals, **3)** Behaviors indicating potential for violence that require immediate intervention.

Integration | Integration refers to a multidimensional positively transformative process that transcends initial stabilization and intellectual understanding to incorporate insights into one's relationship to self and others, ultimately manifesting as enhanced capacity for presence, equanimity, and authentic engagement with life's full spectrum of experience. Supporting integration operates across multiple dimensions (e.g., psychological, somatic, social, etc.), involving both conceptual frameworks to facilitate meaning-making and direct experiential practices to cultivate embodied knowing.

Preserved insight | In the context of emergent phenomena, preserved insight refers to the ability to recognize the non-normative nature of one's experiences and maintain the ability to hold multiple perspectives (e.g., willingness to consider alternative explanations, and to examine and reflect on the experiences rather than being fused with them or holding rigid beliefs about their meaning). It encompasses both cognitive flexibility in understanding one's experiences and functional integration of insights into daily life, relationships, and personal growth.

Severe distress | Intense subjective suffering that significantly disrupts basic functioning and creates substantial concern from the perspective of either care practitioner or significant others, going beyond transient discomfort to a level that interferes with coping abilities and daily life.

Severe functional impairment | A state where an individual cannot adequately maintain basic functioning* to the degree that they require clinical intervention or support to meet basic needs (e.g., safety, shelter, nutrition) and ensure safety so that there is no risk to self or others.