

Trip Sitter vs. PAT Facilitator

Comparison Guide

Entheogen Institute

AT A GLANCE

	Trip Sitter	PAT Facilitator
Preparation	Minimal or none. Brief intention check if planned. No clinical screening.	2-3 prep sessions. Psilocybin-specific screening. Builds therapeutic alliance and orients client toward healing arc.
Primary role	Ground control. Harm reduction. Keeps client safe and grounded.	Sea anchor. Holds the full arc. Non-directive regulated presence.
During experience	De-escalation. Calming. May step in mid-experience without prior relationship.	Abiding witness presence. Non-directive. Co-regulation. Allows all emotion. Breathes through discomfort rather than stopping the process.
Integration	Often not included. Brief check-in at most. No structured follow-up.	2-3 integration sessions. First follow-up within days. Non-directive meaning-making. Integration orientation begins in prep.
Training	16-hour weekend training. Entheogen-specific. Harm reduction focus. Three documented client experiences for full certification.	150-hour comprehensive training. Co-regulation, trauma-informed care, somatic techniques, pharmacology, full therapeutic arc.
Scope	No clinical guidance. No dosage or medication advice.	Psilocybin-specific dosage and protocols. Medication screening. Touch agreements. Contraindication assessment.
Outcome focus	Safe experience. Getting through it okay.	Lasting transformation. Nervous system shifts. Embodied change that shows up in daily life.

PREPARATION

Trip Sitter

- Often no preparation at all
- Brief intention check-in in planned settings
- No clinical screening or medication review
- Client sources their own medicine
- No dosage or contraindication guidance

PAT Facilitator

- 2–3 structured prep sessions
- Psilocybin-specific screening and medication review
- Builds therapeutic alliance – the relationship is part of the medicine
- Client begins turning inward before the experience
- Integration orientation begins here, not after

THE EXPERIENCE

Trip Sitter

- Ground control – brings client back to safety
- Often meets client mid-experience
- No prior therapeutic relationship
- De-escalation and calming skills
- Instinct is to soothe and comfort

PAT Facilitator

- Sea anchor – regulated presence, not ground control
- Non-directive – does not steer the experience
- Co-regulation – regulated nervous system creates safety
- Allows all emotion and expression
- Breathes through own discomfort to hold the process

INTEGRATION

Trip Sitter

- Often not part of the role at all
- May offer brief check-in if planned
- Basic self-care guidance at most
- No structured follow-up or timeline
- May never see client again

PAT Facilitator

- 2–3 integration sessions
- First follow-up within days of session
- Integration orientation begins in prep, not after
- Holds space for meaning to emerge – never imposes it
- Refers out when deeper support is needed

TRAINING

Trip Sitter

- 16-hour weekend training
- Entheogen-specific protocols
- De-escalation and harm reduction focus
- Defined scope of practice
- Three documented client experiences required for full certification

PAT Facilitator

- 150-hour comprehensive training
- Co-regulation and trauma-informed care
- Somatic techniques and polyvagal theory
- Psilocybin pharmacology and protocols
- Full therapeutic arc – prep through integration

An important distinction: A license does not automatically mean a PAT therapeutic approach. Some licensed facilitators practice closer to a trip sitter model – one prep session, the experience, optional integration. A PAT facilitator holds the full arc. When choosing a facilitator or a training program, ask how they approach preparation, what happens when a client moves into intensity during a session, and what their integration process actually looks like in practice.

Feeling the pull toward either path?

Book a free discovery call with Entheogen Institute.

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