

Fieldnotes v9.0

Calibration as a Knowledge Practice

Psychedelics, Systems, and the Loss of Knowledge

The problem is not simply that knowledge is ignored.

The deeper problem is that knowledge is often damaged while being translated.

A person lives something.

They try to explain it.

A worker hears part of it.

A record captures less of it.

A system categorises it.

A service responds to the category.

A policy later measures the response.

By the time the original knowledge has travelled through the route, it may no longer resemble the conditions that produced it.

This is one of the central losses.

Not only loss of information.

Loss of sequence.

Loss of body-state.

Loss of fear.

Loss of timing.

Loss of uncertainty.

Loss of relation.

Loss of meaning.

Loss of the conditions that made the knowledge true.

Psychedelic experience makes this hard to ignore because knowledge does not arrive as clean content. It is shaped by body, setting, expectation, memory, trust, language, fear, culture, and what happens afterwards.

The experience cannot be understood honestly if those conditions are stripped away.

But this is not only true of psychedelics.

It is true of trauma.

It is true of recovery.

It is true of parenting.

It is true of poverty.

It is true of addiction.

It is true of services.

It is true of lived experience.

It is true of academic knowledge too.

Knowledge does not become trustworthy simply because it is personal, clinical, academic, spiritual, measured, published, or professionally held.

It becomes more trustworthy when it is calibrated.

Calibrated to the person.

Calibrated to the body-state.

Calibrated to the conditions.

Calibrated to the language available.

Calibrated to the route the knowledge has travelled.

Calibrated to the power relation.

Calibrated to the timing.

Calibrated to the feedback allowed.

Calibrated to the effect it has when applied.

Without calibration, even accurate knowledge can become harmful.

A true account can become a misleading record.

A useful insight can become pressure.

A research finding can become policy failure.

A lived experience can become raw material.

A clinical concern can become exclusion.

A safeguarding process can lose sight of the child.

A public debate can flatten complexity into teams.

A service can ask for honesty while creating conditions where honesty becomes risky.

This is why the false question keeps failing us.

It is not simply:

Is this evidence or anecdote?

Is this objective or subjective?

Is this professional or personal?

Is this academic or lived?

Is this clinical or experiential?

Is this scientific or spiritual?

The better question is:

What conditions produced this knowledge?

What sequence carried it?

What was lost in translation?

Who had the power to name it?

What feedback was allowed?

What pressure shaped the account?

What happened to the person once the knowledge entered the system?

And what happens when this knowledge is applied in real life?

That is the work of calibration.

Calibration does not reject science.

It does not romanticise lived experience.

It does not dismiss professional judgement.

It does not treat personal insight as automatically complete.

It does not treat academic evidence as automatically whole.

It asks knowledge to remain answerable to the conditions through which it became known, and to the effects it creates when used.

This is where systems often lose knowledge.

Not because everyone involved is careless.

Often because the route itself is careless.

The form is too narrow.

The meeting is too pressured.

The category arrives too early.

The policy is too far from implementation.

The research frame is already set.

The service pathway assumes conditions the person does not have.

The record captures behaviour but not the field around it.

The debate format forces a side before reality has been understood.

Good intentions still land somewhere.

Calibration follows where they land.

It asks whether knowledge has become care, pressure, extraction, distortion, recognition, repair, or performance.

And it asks what would make the route more ethical, more precise, and more human.

The task is not to choose between lived knowledge and formal knowledge.

The task is to stop both being damaged by immature routes.

This matters for public services.

It matters for research.

It matters for clinical practice.

It matters for social care.

It matters for politics.

It matters for artificial intelligence.

It matters for any field where human reality is converted into language, evidence, assessment, decision, or policy.

A mature knowledge practice cannot only ask whether something is true.

It must also ask what happens to that truth when it travels.

Does the route preserve its conditions?

Does the system understand its limits?

Does the record keep the person visible?

Does the theory remain answerable to practice?

Does the evidence survive contact with life?

Does the lived account become knowledge, or merely material?

Does the professional judgement create understanding, or only authority?

Does the institution learn, or only defend its existing shape?

Psychedelics, systems, and the loss of knowledge meet here:

where inner experience becomes language,

where language meets power,

where power creates records,

where records shape lives,

and where knowledge either remains alive enough to guide repair,

or becomes another flattened truth that someone else has to survive.

Fieldnotes v9.0 begins from this point:

knowledge is not only something to collect, validate, publish, record, or manage.

Knowledge is something that must be carried well.

And carrying knowledge well requires calibration.

Conditions before outcomes.

Sequence before judgement.

Effect before self-image.

No knowledge route is neutral if it changes what can be known, who can speak, what can be heard, and what happens next.