

# Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy – Preparation and Treatment

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### 1. Introduction:

- a. Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) is a form of treatment that utilizes ketamine to support a deeper engagement with psychotherapy. In some circumstances it can be used to enhance the ability to engage in interactive psychotherapy, and in other circumstances it can be used to facilitate an inner-directed experience.
- b. Depending upon the clinical circumstances KAP is usually undertaken in a series of sessions. At least one, and sometimes several, preparation sessions are utilized prior to your first ketamine session. Then, between each ketamine session one or more integration sessions are implemented to consolidate gains and attend to any issues that have emerged.

### 2. Preparatory Sessions (prior to ketamine treatment):

- a. Ketamine is a novel treatment and preparation is needed for both the medical and psychological aspects of this treatment modality. Please also read the information sheet that addresses medical issues and consent for treatment. A review of the medical aspects of treatment will be done during preparatory sessions.
- b. It is important to establish a sense of confidence in this form of treatment. Preparatory sessions are used to familiarize you with the process. There are a wide range of experiences possible in a ketamine session. Some experiences are very uplifting and others more challenging. The general rule is to trust in the intelligence of the process and allow it to naturally unfold. I will be present throughout your session to provide whatever support is needed.
- c. Another important part of preparation is becoming clear on the focus for the ketamine session. During preparation sessions we will establish a clear sense of intention for the session and implement practical methods to ground and practice your intention.

### 3. On the day of your ketamine session:

- a. Make ample room in your life for this treatment. Don't schedule anything immediately after the session. Leave room for reflection and processing of the experience.
- b. Arrange for someone to drop you off and pick you up. You should not drive for the rest of the day after your session.
- c. Do not eat or drink for 4 hours prior to the session. Prior to this time make sure you are adequately hydrated. Avoid excess caffeine on the day of the session.
- d. Wear comfortable clothes and use the restroom just prior to your session.

### 4. The ketamine session:

- a. Ketamine can cause some increase in blood pressure. This is usually not problematic if your blood pressure is normal at baseline. Your blood pressure will be taken and monitored as needed during the session.
- a. Your KAP session will take one of two forms: During an interactive session psychotherapy is conducted in a conventional "talking therapy" manner. Typically, ketamine allows greater access to relevant issues and supports engagement with greater ease. A second type of session is inner-directed. In this type of session you will recline in a comfortable position, wear eye shades, and listen to supportive music. These measures are designed to support engagement with your inner experience. During these sessions talking is usually minimal with discussion deferred until after the medication effects subside.

- b. We will generally begin the session by recalling and engaging the intention you set for the session. Then it is best to let go of any expectations and engage the experience with openness, curiosity, and trust that the session will unfold in an intelligent way.
- c. On occasion symptoms such as sedation, dizziness or nausea arise as the medicine begins to take effect. These symptoms usually wear off quickly.
- d. As the medicine wears off it may be difficult to maneuver your body for a brief time. This is normal and will resolve shortly. If you need to stand or walk prior to the physical effects of the medicine wearing off (to use the restroom for instance), you will be aided in walking.
- e. The effects of ketamine will usually last about 45 to 75 minutes depending on how quickly your body metabolizes the medicine. A complete session will typically last 2 - 3 hours. This allows time for preparation, for the medicine to take effect, for the ketamine experience itself, and time to recover after the medication wears off. It also affords time for some preliminary debriefing and discussion about your experience.

5. Post- session:

After your session spend time in activities that continue a focus on the ketamine experience and the things that unfold after the session. Activities such as journaling, artwork, walking in nature, meditation, and playing or listening to music are possible examples. Recording dreams that arise in the nights after your session can be very helpful and may inform our work in integration sessions.

6. Integration sessions:

Typically, we will have a follow up/integration meeting soon after your ketamine session. The session(s) will be used to discuss your experience and begin the process of integrating your ketamine experience into new learning. Additional follow up sessions will be planned as needed.