

Making the most out of Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy

Individual Sessions

Preparation

- ❖ To minimize nausea and avoid interruptions to your ketamine journey, please refrain from food or drink for at least 4 hours prior to treatment start time
- ❖ Avoid alcohol, cannabis, benzodiazepines, and stimulant medications for 24 hours prior to start time and for one-three days afterward

Items to bring with you

- ❖ Wear comfortable, layered clothing
- ❖ Any items that may increase your sense of comfort and security during your session:
 - ∞ Photographs of pets or loved ones, favorite blanket, or stuffed animal, rock, or other comfort object
- ❖ An essential oil you would like to use on your journey (we also offer a small assortment of essential oils that are used in psychedelic journeying for you to choose from)
- ❖ Materials for journaling, drawing, or making art at the end of your session
- ❖ Water bottle and snack for after session
- ❖ Prepare a lightly held intention for the experience
- ❖ Sunglasses – possible light sensitivity for a short time after ketamine treatment

Items Sub Rosa Therapy will provide

- ❖ Blackout eyeshade
- ❖ Mat, sheets, knee bolster, pillow
- ❖ Noise-canceling, wired headphones and KAP playlist

Preparing for Your Session

Allow yourself to quiet your mind. Acknowledge your journey as being a time for you to be with yourself.

Practice lying down in a state of body awareness by placing your hand or hands on your chest or abdomen - place your hands where they seem to provide you the most comfort. Lie like this for 5 minutes and work up to 15 minutes while maintaining awareness of the sensations in your body.

In the days ahead of the KAP session, minimize distractions from your phone, social media, and news.

Make a list of anything that you might need to do in the future, or that is on your mind from the past. Bring your awareness to the fact that there will be a time to address these items later. You are preparing for a journey which will be your time to receive, to allow, and to accept what is.

Awareness of common side-effects

Ketamine has an extensive record of safety and has been used at much higher doses for surgical anesthesia, without respiratory depression. As with any medication, there are also some potential side-effects and risks to consider. Our setting and medical monitoring are intended to minimize ketamine's side effects as much as possible.

Effects of ketamine may include nausea, brief, transient increase in blood pressure, changes in perception and visual, tactile, and auditory processing, feeling suspended in space or floating, and/ or falling sensations. Synesthesia (a mingling of the senses) may occur. Perception of time may also be altered. Other possible adverse effects may include dizziness/lightheadedness, sedation, slurred speech, mental confusion, excitability, diminished ability to see things that are present, diminished ability to feel objects accurately (including one's own body), diminished

awareness of physical functions such as respiration, headache, anxiety, and vomiting (although rare).

Due to risk of nausea and vomiting, you should refrain from eating at least 4 hours prior to a session. Due to possible blurred and altered vision, as well as impaired balance and coordination, you will be advised to remain lying down and keep your eyes closed (as long as you are comfortable doing so) or use the eye mask provided until the main effects have worn off.

Setting an Intention

Setting an intention may increase clarity and depth in your experience while supporting your strength and ability to persevere through your journey.

It may be helpful to ask yourself:

- ❖ What am I grateful for?
- ❖ What are my fears? My worries?
- ❖ Who is an ally or support person(s) I can call on (internally) during my journey?
- ❖ What might I let go of?
- ❖ Who might I forgive?
- ❖ What dreams do I have for my life?
- ❖ What are my desires, intentions, or expectations for the experience?
- ❖ What parts of myself do I wish to know more?

You may practice setting intent by placing your hands at your navel area, breathing deeply, and imagining that you are receiving the medicine in a way that is healing for you.

How to Navigate Your Ketamine Journey

At your KAP session you will lie down on a mat and be provided with an eyeshade and headphones with a playlist that has been carefully cultivated to optimize your journey. Music is sometimes called the invisible therapist. The music is textural, layered, and has limited vocals. It is best that the music be unfamiliar to you as this will assist you with letting go of cognitive control and experiencing what this journey will be for you.

Once the ketamine is administered, you will be encouraged to use an eyeshade to facilitate and enhance the experience, and to help you maintain an internal focus. You will spend much of the session “going inside” or focusing on your internal experience. You can share more once the effect of the medicine subsides. Your therapist or sitter will take detailed notes on all that you share to support recall, insight, and integration.

Prepare for any emotional content that may arise from the subconscious mind: it may be challenging content; it may be enlightening content. These are ways the mind is processing, releasing, and healing. As you will experience a non-ordinary state of consciousness, your normal perception of reality will be altered. Whenever you feel emotional discomfort, allow yourself to let go and embrace the challenge as a learning experience rather than reacting to it.

“Trust, Let Go, Be Open,” is a commonly used mantra in psychedelic therapy:

Trust your therapist or sitter to prepare and guide you through this experience, as well as your own Inner Healing Intelligence: your inherent capacity for resilience and ability to obtain wholeness and well-being.

Let go of any expectations about what should or should not come up during your experience; open yourself up to whatever may be unfolding during your journey – positive, enlightening, difficult, or scary. Know that whatever is happening is okay, and that the experience will end.

Be open to wherever the medicine takes you. Your journey may be centered upon your intentions, or not, and that is okay! You may not be able to make sense of what is occurring during your journey. You may have a mystical experience and gain deep insights into yourself or your way of life, or you may not. Do not be disappointed with wherever your journey leads you – you will see benefits as you progress through treatment, and your therapist or sitter is there to help you make sense of the experience as needed.

After Your Ketamine Treatment

As the effects of the medicine wear off, you will spend time discussing and integrating your experience with your therapist.

- ❖ You are encouraged to bring art supplies and a journal as you are integrating while the effects of the medicine wear off, you will have the opportunity to express through art.
 - ∞ If “making art” feels intimidating for ‘non-artists,’ imagine using nonlinear thinking or “making markings” instead of making art
- ❖ You may take any daily prescribed medications and resume normal food/liquid intake after your session
- ❖ DO NOT drive for the rest of the day following your treatment. Please plan to have a family member or close friend provide you with transportation home. You may take a taxi/Lyft/Uber if needed, however we encourage you to avoid doing so after your first KAP session.
- ❖ Please plan to take the rest of the day off after your ketamine treatment to allow you time to engage in resting, self-care, and integration. We recommend taking a bath, going for a nature walk, journaling/writing about your experience, making art, or other forms of relaxation like getting a massage or just resting.
- ❖ Feel free to go back to your normal work/activity schedule the day following your session.

Integration Period

After the KAP session, you will continue to be in an altered state of mind for the rest of the day, and your mindset may be notably shifted for 72 hours, and up to 3 weeks to varying degrees.

- ❖ As a hybrid mental health treatment, ketamine at Sub Rosa has been administered within the context of psychotherapy. In the next few days, you should have an integration session with your therapist so that you may further optimize treatment gains. Your therapist serves as a guide and facilitator of transformational space and assists in processing the experience and its impact.
- ❖ A ketamine treatment session has the potential to elicit non-ordinary states of consciousness and facilitate healing through experiences of profound transpersonal and mystical states. These sorts of peak experiences have been shown to expand one's sense of self and deepen one's understanding of existence. KAP may also enable you to access your own inner healing intelligence in a manner that leads to enduring positive life changes.
- ❖ Given the profound nature of such an experience, you should be protected by your driver (who may be a family member or a friend) from having to talk too much or having to talk about any specific subject.
- ❖ You should be protected from too much decision-making or being left alone. In other words, the plan of the day should follow a simple course of eating something, hydrating, reflecting, and being with others as desired.

Integrating Your Experience

It is important to bear in mind that KAP does not provide a one-off quick-fix mental health shortcut. It is not a “magic bullet.” It can have the effect of starting an alignment between your conscious mind and the depths of the subconscious mind, and this process may go on for days. It will not necessarily be without challenge. It may require long conversations with trusted, safe friends and family; or journaling/ other reflective activities and spending time alone.

Integration is the act of processing and reflecting on any material that arose during your journey in a non-ordinary state of consciousness (insights, feelings, somatic sensations, etc.) through self-care activities (journaling, art, yoga, conversations with your therapist or other trusted person, etc.) once you have returned to your ordinary state of mind. These steps will help you increase your understanding of the experience and support your ability to use this material to create lasting, positive change in your life. Ideally, the integration process should begin immediately after your journey to maximize your ability to positively integrate the experience.

Most individuals find journaling or sharing about the experience with a close friend or loved one to be a good way to do this. As you integrate and spend time reflecting on your experience, consider journaling or making art about:

- ❖ What did I feel emotionally during the session?
- ❖ What did I feel physically during the session?
- ❖ What did I see during the session? What did I hear?
- ❖ Do I need to talk this through with someone or ask for support?
- ❖ What is one thing that I feel grateful for after this session?
- ❖ How do I feel now after the session?
- ❖ What messages am I continuing to receive from my body & emotions?
- ❖ Which parts of myself did I become more aware of? Did these parts share any messages with me?
- ❖ What do I hope to explore in future sessions?

Further Considerations for Integration

To help protect and promote a productive KAP treatment process, managing expectations is an important consideration. We recommend defining realistic expectations and identifying achievable goals for symptom relief with your therapist:

- ❖ Working towards a greater sense of embodiment, or less dissociation
- ❖ Understanding & cultivating resilience
- ❖ Understanding & cultivating meaningful engagement & interconnectedness
- ❖ Developing heightened compassion for oneself & others
- ❖ Gaining access to a wider range of feelings (i.e., sadness, joy, grief, wonder, inspiration, anger, etc.) than previously available
- ❖ Developing cognitive & emotional flexibility
- ❖ Gaining perspective on one's identity & history
- ❖ Working through and releasing unhealthy levels of shame, guilt, & self-defeating beliefs
- ❖ Developing an appreciation of, and tolerance for, ambiguity & uncertainty
- ❖ Increasing self-awareness
- ❖ Improving interpersonal communication & relationships
- ❖ Enhancing creative problem-solving abilities
- ❖ Improving self-care & healthy habit formation
- ❖ Decreasing or discontinuing addictive & self-destructive behaviors

Although ketamine is the catalyst for change, it is the therapeutic relationship – with mindful reflection, investigation, patience, and integration – that is the vehicle of transformation. KAP is best approached with the understanding that developing “a resilient and meaningful life worth living” is an ongoing process.