



The Center For
Healing Journeys

Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy and Treatments

Preparation for First Sessions

Prep Checklist

Set

The mindset you bring to your first ketamine session is important. It is best to approach your sessions with a conscientious, calm, clear intention. To help you with this, we recommend you consider the following questions:

- 1) What thoughts, feeling, and behavior patterns would you like to shift/change in your life?
- 2) What qualities would you like to invite into your life?
- 3) What are you hoping your life can look like as a result of this treatment? Try to imagine what you want as vividly as possible. Be specific.
- 4) Imagine over the next few weeks, you will have a unique opportunity to make significant changes and improvements in your life. Are there specific actions you could take that would help you develop some of the new patterns you want to establish that you mentioned in #1 above? Please make a list of specific, do-able, action steps that will begin the shift.

Prepare for your session the prior day and night. Refrain from alcohol, marijuana, and any other mood altering drugs other than those essential/prescribed. Eat lightly, thoughtfully, and only healthy food. If you are already familiar with practices such as meditation, yoga, or breath work, these can be a valuable way of creating an open posture to your upcoming ketamine session. Of course, some anxiety is normal leading into your sessions because this will be a new experience for you. Remember, these worries typically dissipate with subsequent sessions because the effects of the medicine will be familiar and more comfortable for you.

On the day of the session, please try to remember that even though you've spent some time creating an intention for your ketamine work, during the sessions it's important not to be too attached to the outcome. There is no need to try to control the experience. Be open to whatever arises in each session. The experience of 'letting go' will stay with you for days to come. Important words to guide you through your sessions:

“Stay Open”

“Let go!”

“Be Curious!”

Setting

Our treatment rooms are designed to be comfortable places for you to relax, away from any stimulating external inputs, to provide you with a sense of privacy and space to connect as you need to with your CHJ therapist. Each treatment room has an adjustable recliner, eye shades to facilitate an inward, reflective focus, and a sound system with options for ambient sound or headphones, as you prefer. We have chosen playlists specifically designed for ketamine treatment sessions. Even though it is tempting to bring your own playlists or orchestrate the music for each session, it's actually best for your session to simply 'go along' with what is provided perhaps providing some feedback after the session so the therapist can find a playlist that best fits your taste.

If you are chilly or simply would like to feel the coziness of a blanket, we provide you with a weighted blanket for you to use during your session. Feel free to bring your own if you prefer.

While our treatment rooms are quite private, vague background sounds from within the building (i.e. footsteps, distant muffled voices, sounds outside the building such as cars, etc...) can be heard. The reality is that we are located in an 'in-town office building' and we therefore, have to live with a certain amount of ambient noise as evidence of others nearby. With this in mind, please know that your sense of privacy is very important to us, and we therefore have taken precautions, particularly with the placement of sound machines and waiting room music to insure that even in hearing voices from other rooms, both your own and others conversations are not discernible other than as perhaps muffled/distant background noise. Please let us know if you have any concerns in this regard.

Important Note: You will always **have** a clinician in attendance with you during your session with the medicine. While some clinics feel comfortable leaving the room during the course of ketamine administration, that is not our practice at The Center for Healing Journeys. We believe your comfort and safety is critical to your growth with this medicine. We believe it is important to have an experienced clinician by your side to offer a soothing, grounding presence given the likelihood you may enter an unusual, 'non-ordinary' state of consciousness for a short period of time during the ketamine journey. While we always seek to insure dosing is appropriate to your comfort and experience with the medicine, we know on occasion, it can feel disconcerting and intense. You should therefore be reassured we are here with you by your side during the whole process of ketamine administration.

Body

IMPORTANT: Regarding your medications: **No stimulants or Tranquilizers (adderal, xanax, etc...) on the day of your ketamine session.** These may be taken afterwards, if necessary, with our guidance. Check with us after your session about which meds to re-start and how soon.

Empty Stomach: No Food or drink for 4 hours prior to taking the medication. You should begin the session with an empty stomach.

Empty Bladder: Be sure to have used the bathroom (emptied your bladder) prior to the session so that you'll have no need to get up for the next 90mins or so. We will try to remind you to 'empty the tank' just before we begin.

Nausea prevention & Zofran: If you have been given an anti-nausea medication (Zofran), take this about ½ hour prior to the scheduled start time of the session.

Freshly Brushed: In order to optimize absorption of the medicine, be sure to brush your mouth (teeth, gums, inside cheeks, under tongue) well. Also, do not have any candy, milk, food that may coat the inside of your mouth in a such a way as to reduce absorption. Particularly stay away from any butterfat, oily foods.

With Sub-lingual Lozenges – The Session

1. We will set our timer for 15 minutes so you'll know when its OK to spit out or swallow your saliva. We will decide this together prior to the session. There are varying reasons to one vs. the other which we will go over.
2. Place the prescribed number of lozenges in your mouth and let them dissolve.
3. A substantial amount of saliva can be expected. Try your best not to swallow the saliva, since the medication is absorbed through the mucosa, the membrane inside your mouth. It's not a problem if some is accidentally swallowed. Just do your best.
4. It is best if the saliva settles beneath your tongue, swirling intermittently. This is the most absorbent part of the mouth. Swirling the saliva around also helps the lozenges dissolve completely. Usually this will occur within the first 5 minutes but, sometimes we need to help it along.
5. You may swallow or spit out the saliva after the 15 minute lozenge holding period after which we can adjust your chair and eyeshades to find a comfortable position for the remainder of the session.

Important Considerations regarding your Ketamine Session

Duration of the Medicine: The medication tends to be active in your system for approximately 45-90 minutes. Do not try to get up and move around during this time as you will likely be quite unsteady on your feet. Rather, you should lay back and relax for the entire session. You can expect the session to include a preliminary conversation, to set intentions and clarify reasonable expectations. We often will help you complete the preparation process by leading a

Movement & Noise: You are asked to remain in the recliner or on your mat until the session as determined by your therapist, is finished. You are welcome to ask for the angle to be adjusted, and to move arms and legs from your position on the mat or recliner. If any strong movements seem so rigorous as to possibly cause harm or injury to you or anyone else, we will direct you to contain them enough to diminish concern. Also, we recognize that making sounds, exclamations, talking, etc... during your session is natural, your therapist is also cognizant of our offices being within the context of ongoing sessions in other rooms and your therapist may remind you to bring sounds back within a range that is considered reasonable for the space. Your therapist values your expression and will always attempt to provide for this as much as is reasonably possible within the safe container of our offices here at the Center for Healing Journeys.

Touch: We do not permit any sexual touch in our work with patients. The only touch that we may do is always at your initiative and discretion, and is solely for the purpose of providing deepened sense of our support, care, and connection with you and your process. It is generally limited to your arm, below the elbow. You and your therapist will discuss this with you before the first medicine session to establish a mutual understanding of what you might prefer.

As the medicine wears off... Integrating 'the Ketamine Experience' : The heart of KAP is the period of integration work (post medicine conversation) that occurs as the medicine's main effect begins to subside. In conversation with your attending clinician, you may have various insights that occurred during your journey. There are commonly ways in which the strange, 'non-ordinary' aspects of the experience have surprising relevance to your treatment goals. We will explore the potential relevance of the experience, as well as determine possible emotional, cognitive, or behavioral 'homework' you might do between sessions. While you may feel inclined to explore this immediately following the medicine's effect, sometimes people prefer to do this work a day later, or with their 'outside' (non- CHJ) therapist.

The End of the Session: We will determine when the session is over. This is variable and depends on a number of factors which indicate whether you are fully 'back' to full functioning. You should no longer feel dizzy or disoriented. You should be verbally responsive and coherent, balanced, steady, and ambulatory. You will be

asked to confirm your readiness to leave with someone who is safe to take you home at the end of the session.

Bathroom: On occasion, even if you may have used the bathroom just before the session began, some people need to use the bathroom near the end of the session but, while also still hazy/under the influence of the medication. Your therapist will help you get up and make your way to the bathroom. Until you get to the bathroom, they may have you stand behind them, placing your hands on their shoulders to steady yourself (like the caboose on a train) or they may simply follow closely behind you as you walk if you seem to be walking OK on your own but, still being nearby just as a precaution. Your therapist will wait outside the bathroom for you and help you return to your place in the treatment room until the session is considered safely completed.

Nausea: On very rare occasions people feel nauseous during the session. This is not a problem nor dangerous, though we want to make sure that if you begin to feel nauseous, that you let us know as soon as possible because we want to make sure you are sitting up and that we can provide you with a container in case you actually throw up.

Driving: You should not attempt to drive a motor vehicle after a session for at least 6 hours following the time when you are clear and steady enough to leave the clinic. All signs of the medicine's activity must have fully subsided. This usually means, not until the next day.