



Tom Cook, M.D.

BEYOND MENTAL HEALTH

*Psychiatry, Mental Health & Wellness
1401 S. Beretania St. Suite 450
Honolulu, HI, 96814*

CONSENT FOR KETAMINE TREATMENT

Welcome to Beyond Mental Health Ketamine Treatment Services! We are proud to operate the only mental health clinic in Hawaii entirely dedicated to the rapid treatment of depression.

At Beyond Mental Health, our mission is to treat mental health conditions more rapidly, more naturally, and with treatments that empower patients to rediscover joy, adopt a purpose, and kindle hope.

It is very important to us that all patients feel welcomed, safe, supported, and respected, and we will address any concerns that might arise in this regard. Beyond Mental Health providers include physicians, psychologists, and therapists. We are governed by certain laws and regulations and by a code of ethics. The ethics code requires that we make you aware of certain office policies that may affect you. Please take time to read this document as it contains important information about our professional services and business policies. It is also highly recommended for all prospective patients to read through the information on our website and the more detailed descriptions of ketamine's potential and properties as a medication. Please feel free to ask any questions that may arise.

Our clinical methods are informed by the value we place on safety, respect, mutuality, inner-directedness, set and setting, non-judgmental awareness and listening, presence, mindfulness, and the use of non-ordinary states of consciousness in the service of personal healing and transformation. This treatment opens unexpected opportunities for insights that may foster creative problem-solving, personal and relational development and transformation.

Medical History

Psychiatrist: _____

Therapist / Psychologist: _____

Primary Care Provider: _____

Medical Conditions: (i.e. Hypertension, Diabetes, Depression/Anxiety, HIV/Hep C, etc)

Current Medications

Please list your current medications, dosage, and frequency with which you take it.

Allergies?

Any surgical history? (Procedures and Dates)

Females Only - Last menstrual cycle: _____

Any history of Substance Abuse Treatment? YES NO

Any history of Abusing Heroin or Synthetic opioids? YES NO

Any history of LSD or Hallucinogen use? YES NO

Any history of Methamphetamine use? YES NO

Please describe any other use of illicit drugs, or history of using needles:

Please describe any Psychiatric Disorders in the family:

Please describe any Serious Medical Disorders in the family:
(i.e. Heart conditions, sudden cardiac death, stroke, etc.)

Risks:

Ketamine is an FDA-approved medication used for anesthesia; however, it is used off-label for the treatment of mood disorders. Participation in this treatment may result in a number of benefits but there is no guarantee that this will occur.

Side Effects:

With ketamine given intramuscularly there is low risk of abscess, infection, muscle pain and/or soreness at site of injection.

Common side effects include but are not limited to:

- Motion sickness
- Nausea
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Arrhythmias
- Anxiety
- Dissociation

Less common side effects that may occur:

- Increased cardiac output
- Increased intracranial pressure
- Tachycardia
- Tonic-clonic movements
- Vivid dreams
- Double vision
- Injection site soreness
- Exacerbation of current liver damage and/or liver disease
- Nystagmus (blurred vision)

****Consultation and written approval by a cardiologist is required prior to first ketamine treatment if there is any history of cardiac issues.****

Due to the lack of research of ketamine during pregnancy, receiving treatment while pregnant is **not** an option. Females of childbearing age are required to take a Urine Pregnancy Test before beginning treatment with ketamine. I acknowledge that ketamine can result in birth defects, fetal death, and/or teratogenicity.

Additionally:

I agree to the following:

- I do not have a cerebral aneurysm
- I have not had a heart attack or stroke in the past 6 months
- I am not taking a MAOI (Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitor) such as: Isocarboxazid, Phenelzine, Selegiline, or Tranylcypromine

I affirm that I have provided a detailed and complete list of all medications and herbal supplements I am taking as some drugs may interact negatively with ketamine.

Examples include:

- Antibiotics (ex. Azithromycin, Clarithromycin)
- Antifungal agents (ex. Ketoconazole)
- Opioids (ex. Hydrocodone, Percocet)
- Benzodiazepines (ex. diazepam, alprazolam)
- Lamotrigine
- Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors

Treatment Guidelines

I agree to the following guidelines provided below for my pre- and post- ketamine treatment sessions. I understand that failure to abide by these guidelines can result in medical risk, postponement, or cancellation of treatment.

Pre-Ketamine Session

- No alcohol 48 hours prior to treatment
- No food 8 hours prior to treatment
- No coffee, tea, or caffeinated beverages 2 hours prior to treatment
- Drink lots of hydrating fluids the day before treatment
 - ** Hydration is necessary for both the IV that will be started prior to treatment, as well as the urine sample for drug screening
- All medications taken 72 hours prior to treatment MUST be discussed and cleared with the administering physician
- Read Dr. Cook's "Tip for Success" to arrive to mentally prepared for treatment

Post-Ketamine Session

- No alcohol 48 hours after treatment
- All medication taken 72 hours after treatment MUST be discussed and cleared with physician
- Arrange a ride home; No driving or operating heavy machinery for at least 12 hours after treatment
- Relax and rest for the remainder of the day

Fee Schedule

Ketamine treatment is an investment in myself, my relationships, and my life. The fee schedule below is reflective of the combination of education, knowledge, experience, expertise and time that will be given to me during the course of my treatment.

Out-of-Pocket Fee

\$395 per treatment

I understand that the above out-of-pocket fee is for off-label ketamine administration, the ambient dissociative therapy room that my treatment will take place in, as well as the monitoring and management services during my treatment. If I choose to utilize a talk-therapist, that service will be billed to my insurance. I understand that if my insurance does not pay the full amount that was billed, I then am responsible for that payment. All payments are due upon arrival.

I am aware that my physician reserves the right to adjust my fees and that I will be notified at least 2 weeks prior if any changes are being made.

Monitoring

Video

I am fully aware, and have been informed that, for my physical safety, my ketamine session may be monitored on video camera, and that this is required by the clinic. I fully consent to this recording. I am aware, and have been informed, that my ketamine treatment is neither an urgent, nor an acute care, nor an emergency treatment, but is instead intended to treat a chronically depressed mood and/or other chronic longstanding psychiatric issues, and that all real emergency psychiatric treatments are available at nearby emergency rooms and hospitals. I am aware, and have been informed, that Dr. Tom Cook's clinic, Beyond Mental Health, is not intended to be an urgent care clinic, but is instead an outpatient clinic open on weekdays, during daylight hours only, and providing an off-label treatment, and I fully consent to this voluntary, elective arrangement. I acknowledge that there is no guarantee that ketamine will help my symptoms.

Optional : Psychedelic Guide

I acknowledge that Beyond Mental Health has explained to me that a supportive psychedelic guide may be offered to sit with me during my treatment, and that this guide has no licensure or official training in psychotherapy, and is there for comfort, consolation, coordination of care, and monitoring purposes only. They are not there to provide any counseling, talk therapy or any other billable clinical services whatsoever. I am fully aware, and have been informed, that if in my case, this clinic is only providing ketamine, but not comprehensive psychiatric care, and that if my primary psychiatrist exists elsewhere, then this clinic in no way replaces my primary psychiatrist, who is still the doctor responsible for my overall care and stability.

Cancellation / No Show Policy:

If I am unable to attend my scheduled appointment on time, I know that unless I call to reschedule 48 hours prior, I will be charged the out-of-pocket fee based off of my treatment selection. I acknowledge that the appointment will be considered cancelled if I arrive more than 15 minutes after my scheduled appointment time. I understand that I will be asked to keep a credit card on file and will be charged for missed appointments without prior notice or approval.

Pregnancy:

I understand that if I am pregnant, if I become pregnant, or if I intend to become pregnant while a patient of Dr. Cook's Office, I must disclose this information to Dr. Cook's Office. Failure to do so will result in a termination of this contract and the doctor-patient relationship.

Termination of Treatment:

I acknowledge that I have the right to end treatment at any time without any moral, legal or financial obligation other than those already accrued. I, too, understand that my physician reserves the right to terminate treatment at any time without my consent.

Acknowledgement:

By signing below I am acknowledging that I understand and have read the entirety of this Ketamine Packet, have had my questions answered and concerns addressed to my satisfaction regarding the ketamine services offered. I have reviewed and fully understand the terms and conditions of this agreement. I agree to hold Beyond Mental Health free and harmless from any claims, demands or suits for damages from any injury or complications whatsoever, except for gross negligence or willful misconduct that may result from such treatment.

My signature indicates that I have either received a copy of this agreement in person or by email, or have waived the right to receive a copy at my own insistence.

Patient's Printed Name

Patient's Signature

Date

Physician's Printed Name

Physician's Signature

Date



Date: _____

Name: _____ Marital Status: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Occupation: _____ Education: _____

Instructions: This questionnaire consists of 21 groups of statements. Please read each group of statements carefully, and then pick out the **one statement** in each group that best describes the way you have been feeling during the **past two weeks, including today**. Circle the number beside the statement you have picked. If several statements in the group seem to apply equally well, circle the highest number for that group. Be sure that you do not choose more than one statement for any group, including Item 16 (Changes in Sleeping Pattern) or Item 18 (Changes in Appetite).

1. Sadness

- 0 I do not feel sad.
- 1 I feel sad much of the time.
- 2 I am sad all the time.
- 3 I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it.

2. Pessimism

- 0 I am not discouraged about my future.
- 1 I feel more discouraged about my future than I used to be.
- 2 I do not expect things to work out for me.
- 3 I feel my future is hopeless and will only get worse.

3. Past Failure

- 0 I do not feel like a failure.
- 1 I have failed more than I should have.
- 2 As I look back, I see a lot of failures.
- 3 I feel I am a total failure as a person.

4. Loss of Pleasure

- 0 I get as much pleasure as I ever did from the things I enjoy.
- 1 I don't enjoy things as much as I used to.
- 2 I get very little pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.
- 3 I can't get any pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.

5. Guilty Feelings

- 0 I don't feel particularly guilty.
- 1 I feel guilty over many things I have done or should have done.
- 2 I feel quite guilty most of the time.
- 3 I feel guilty all of the time.

6. Punishment Feelings

- 0 I don't feel I am being punished.
- 1 I feel I may be punished.
- 2 I expect to be punished.
- 3 I feel I am being punished.

7. Self-Dislike

- 0 I feel the same about myself as ever.
- 1 I have lost confidence in myself.
- 2 I am disappointed in myself.
- 3 I dislike myself.

8. Self-Criticalness

- 0 I don't criticize or blame myself more than usual.
- 1 I am more critical of myself than I used to be.
- 2 I criticize myself for all of my faults.
- 3 I blame myself for everything bad that happens.

9. Suicidal Thoughts or Wishes

- 0 I don't have any thoughts of killing myself.
- 1 I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out.
- 2 I would like to kill myself.
- 3 I would kill myself if I had the chance.

10. Crying

- 0 I don't cry anymore than I used to.
- 1 I cry more than I used to.
- 2 I cry over every little thing.
- 3 I feel like crying, but I can't.



11. Agitation

- 0 I am no more restless or wound up than usual.
- 1 I feel more restless or wound up than usual.
- 2 I am so restless or agitated that it's hard to stay still.
- 3 I am so restless or agitated that I have to keep moving or doing something.

12. Loss of Interest

- 0 I have not lost interest in other people or activities.
- 1 I am less interested in other people or things than before.
- 2 I have lost most of my interest in other people or things.
- 3 It's hard to get interested in anything.

13. Indecisiveness

- 0 I make decisions about as well as ever.
- 1 I find it more difficult to make decisions than usual.
- 2 I have much greater difficulty in making decisions than I used to.
- 3 I have trouble making any decisions.

14. Worthlessness

- 0 I do not feel I am worthless.
- 1 I don't consider myself as worthwhile and useful as I used to.
- 2 I feel more worthless as compared to other people.
- 3 I feel utterly worthless.

15. Loss of Energy

- 0 I have as much energy as ever.
- 1 I have less energy than I used to have.
- 2 I don't have enough energy to do very much.
- 3 I don't have enough energy to do anything.

16. Changes in Sleeping Pattern

- 0 I have not experienced any change in my sleeping pattern.

- 1a I sleep somewhat more than usual.
- 1b I sleep somewhat less than usual.

- 2a I sleep a lot more than usual.
- 2b I sleep a lot less than usual.

- 3a I sleep most of the day.
- 3b I wake up 1-2 hours early and can't get back to sleep.

17. Irritability

- 0 I am no more irritable than usual.
- 1 I am more irritable than usual.
- 2 I am much more irritable than usual.
- 3 I am irritable all the time.

18. Changes in Appetite

- 0 I have not experienced any change in my appetite.

- 1a My appetite is somewhat less than usual.
- 1b My appetite is somewhat greater than usual.

- 2a My appetite is much less than before.
- 2b My appetite is much greater than usual.

- 3a I have no appetite at all.
- 3b I crave food all the time.

19. Concentration Difficulty

- 0 I can concentrate as well as ever.
- 1 I can't concentrate as well as usual.
- 2 It's hard to keep my mind on anything for very long.
- 3 I find I can't concentrate on anything.

20. Tiredness or Fatigue

- 0 I am no more tired or fatigued than usual.
- 1 I get more tired or fatigued more easily than usual.
- 2 I am too tired or fatigued to do a lot of the things I used to do.
- 3 I am too tired or fatigued to do most of the things I used to do.

21. Loss of Interest in Sex

- 0 I have not noticed any recent change in my interest in sex.
- 1 I am less interested in sex than I used to be.
- 2 I am much less interested in sex now.
- 3 I have lost interest in sex completely.

Subtotal Page 2
 Subtotal Page 1
 Total Score

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 A B C D E



Tom Cook, M.D.

BEYOND MENTAL HEALTH

*Psychiatry, Mental Health & Wellness
1401 S. Beretania St. Suite 450
Honolulu, HI, 96814*

KETAMINE TREATMENT INFORMATION

What is Ketamine Treatment?

Ketamine is a relatively new and innovative psychiatric/psychological treatment approach, involving ketamine administration in a safe and supportive setting.

The exact nature of the treatment process varies depending on the particular problems being treated and the specific individual's needs and goals. Initial sessions will involve an evaluation of a patient's: current problems, concerns, and needs; prior history and review of current or ongoing treatment; overall health/medical condition; and an assessment of the potential suitability and viability of this type of treatment for that patient. By the end of the evaluation period, we will offer our clinical impressions and a recommended approach to treatment. These goals will be reviewed during the course of the treatment in order to assess and/or modify them according to changing needs, perspectives, and progress.

Why ketamine?

Current treatments for depression including medication usually have a 40% success rate. To make matters worse these medications do not reduce suicidal thoughts. They must be taken daily, and cause unwanted weight gain and other ongoing side effects. This is a time consuming and frustrating process for depressed patients. By contrast, ketamine treatment can reduce or eliminate suicidal thoughts, often immediately. It treats depression rapidly, with no ongoing side effects.

With ketamine, the effects are more robust than with medications. Ketamine is about 70% effective, it also helps patients with more than just their mood and depression, it seems to help them start over, and reconnect with who they are.

What does science say is happening to my brain?

The neuroscience on ketamine is fascinating. Unlike most antidepressants, it does not appear to work by serotonin or dopamine. Its mechanism is through a different neurotransmitter called *glutamate*.

Glutamate is everywhere in our brain and it handles learning, attention, and novelty seeking. The novelty seeking part is the most important. Ketamine seems to help our brain rid itself of old patterns, and try new ones. This appears to be essential to having a good mood. People with good moods are usually trying new things, whether recipes, books, parks, hobbies, or making new friends. Depressed people usually lose these abilities. After ketamine infusions, people often break old patterns and try new ones, which is amazing to see.

What does ketamine feel like?

Ketamine, in low doses, reduces the amount of control we have over the direction of our own thoughts.

Think of your mind as a river. Every day we are met by a fresh supply of tastes, sounds, smells, and interactions with people, and we react to this supply with fresh perceptions, thoughts, and decisions of our own. Each day, the water in a river is different water, even though the shape of the river does not change much.

Now, imagine a pond, or a backwater, unreached by any fresh current. The water is always the same, and it becomes stagnant. Like a swamp. In depression, having a bad mood is a lot like that. People with depression have a mind that doesn't change much from day to day. It becomes stuck on a few stagnant negative thoughts and emotions. Like an eddy in a river, where the water begins to swirl around, without moving downstream, depression leaves people stuck in a whirlpool of repetition and negativity. To heal, they must let go, surrender and release repetitive thoughts, and allow into their minds a fresh stream of experience. Ketamine works by taking away the degree of control you have over your thoughts.

Many people report being swept away by water during their ketamine treatment. Emotions that are stuck, will be released, and you may rediscover within yourself a new valuable perspective on life.

When we are depressed, we control our mental contents, but we cannot control our mood. Our mood is like the smell of stagnant water in a pond. We cannot keep it fresh. Whereas, when we are floating downstream, say, on an inner tube, we cannot grab onto anything. We cannot control what scenes pass by on the riverbank. But we are detached enough to control our perspective towards what we see. This is the reason ketamine will allow you to rediscover a healthy perspective on your life, and in turn, will elevate your mood.

Does ketamine cause hallucinations?

Most people undergoing ketamine infusions do not report hallucinations. However many people report distortions in the size and shape of their body. For example, some feel as if their hands, or lips, have increased in size. Some also experience synesthesia, which is the unique experience of seeing a sound, or hearing a color. Many also report that time does not seem to pass normally. It will dilate, or contract, such that the entire hour may seem like ten minutes, and vice versa.

During your ketamine treatment, if you close your eyes, you may experience a variety of visions, memories, emotions, and thoughts that you can't control, and these are usually pleasant. However these visions are not hallucinations. We encourage patients to 'go inside' during their infusion, and to try to keep their eyes closed, since, if the eyes are opened, the experience may be suddenly interrupted.

What happens the day of?

Patients who have the best experience fast after midnight the night before, come in on an empty stomach, and try to arrive with a sense of peace. Patients who worry a lot about whether the treatment will work, during the infusion itself, do not get optimal effects. You should do your best in trusting the clinic, the process, and in the inevitability of getting some relief.

After arriving, you will sign in, report your symptoms on a questionnaire, sit down on a recliner, and a nurse will start a small intravenous line in your arm or hand. You will have a blood pressure cuff on your arm as well as a couple EKG leads stuck on your body, and an oxygen monitor on you forefinger. The nurse will tell you, if you need her for anything, you simply remove that thing from your forefinger and she will come in.

The ketamine will be administered and you will be closely monitored by our medical staff. You cannot drive after an infusion, and must arrange your own ride home.

What are the side effects?

The side effects that occur are during the ketamine treatment session, as there are no side effects after the fact. The drug is already being eliminated from your body.

During the ketamine treatment, by far the most common side effect is nausea and motion-sickness. Even though you will be reclined in a comfortable chair, with your eyes closed, you nevertheless may feel motion sickness.

Keep in mind that side effects vary per patient, some may experience them and some will not. However there are a few things that can be done to minimize or eliminate those side effects. The most important thing to remember is to come into the clinic on an empty

stomach. Just like being on a fishing boat, or rollercoaster, eating food beforehand is not a good idea. We can give Zofran or other nausea medications if necessary before the ketamine treatment begins to make you as comfortable as possible.

In some, blood pressure increases, it will be managed, however it usually goes unnoticed by the patient.

There are reports of bladder issues in the literature, but this is almost always in people abusing ketamine daily at a high dose, and has not been observed in patients getting occasional ketamine treatments. Again, if bladder problems were a common issue with ketamine, it would not be considered the safest and one of the most utilized anesthetics in the world.

The second most important side effect, is intense anxiety from dissociation, although very rare. The vast majority do not experience this at all. In the few that do, the feeling is that 'something isn't right' or that the mind is slipping away from the room or from the body. When this happens, we eliminate the feeling almost immediately, by giving a fast-acting anxiety medication and the patient is comfortable again, literally in a matter of seconds.

Despite the scare, this rare feeling of intense anxiety is subjective, and it isn't really a danger to the patient.

Some other less common side effects of ketamine include increased cardiac output, increased intracranial pressure, tachycardia, tonic-clonic movements, vivid dreams, double vision, injection site soreness, exacerbation of current liver damage and/or liver disease, and nystagmus (blurred vision). Patients should consult with their cardiologist prior to seeking ketamine treatment if there is any history of cardiac issues.



Tom Cook, M.D.

BEYOND MENTAL HEALTH

*Psychiatry, Mental Health & Wellness
1401 S. Beretania St. Suite 450
Honolulu, HI, 96814*

TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH KETAMINE TREATMENT: A HEALING MINDSET

By Thomas Cook, M.D.

When we swallow a vitamin C tablet, it doesn't seem to matter much what's on our mind while we do. We may even believe that vitamin C is a waste of our time, and yet our body will see a benefit.

Other things seem to be more dependent on our state of mind. Suppose, while you are sitting down to eat, you are thinking of a loved one who is very upset with you. The stress may affect your digestion. Your mind may literally spoil the process of ingesting and digesting your food. Italian culture is therefore wise to have a tradition of setting big meals apart, and of pairing meals with uplifting conversation, and of transforming some meals into a kind of slow ritual.

Likewise, in some sports such as baseball or golf, players go through complex rituals before a pitch or a swing. These are past-times in which a player's mindset matters at least as much, if not more than anything else.

Finally, there are some things that hinge almost entirely on one's state of mind. Psychedelics are an example of this. Ketamine therapy is so much like this that some people have reported that every ketamine session is an entirely new experience.

Worry and doubt seem to spoil the infusion experience, and reduce its effectiveness for depression. For patients who can't let go, and who attempt to control the experience, and fight against the effects, there is unnecessary anxiety created, and any effectiveness is lost. With ketamine therapy, unlike with most other treatments, it is important to trust, to let go, and to surrender to the experience.

An example of the wrong mindset, would be a patient who asks a nurse every five minutes "Am I doing it right?" or who tells us frequently "I just feel like I'm doing it all wrong." This sort of patient is full of worry, doubt, and thinks that in order to heal, they have to do something. Instead they should approach the experience in a passive state, like drifting down a river on an inner tube.

We want you to get the most out of your treatment with ketamine. Some people find it difficult to settle into the proper mindset.

If you are one of those people, this handout will help get you there.

We have found three things to be of prime importance:

1. Have faith: in the medicine, in us, and in yourself
2. Let go
3. Make your mind a sacred place

We will discuss each of these, one at a time.

1. *Have faith: in the medicine, in us, and in yourself*

First, it is important to have faith in the medicine.

For most people this can be accomplished simply by talking to Dr. Cook or reading about ketamine's effectiveness and safety profile.

There is another, more important element to having faith in this unique medicine.

People often get a mild placebo (i.e. a feel-good) effect from a brand name drug due to its catchy or slick advertising. This is one form of placing one's faith in a drug. We can put concerns of consumerism aside and see that this is indeed a faith which can greatly enhance a response to a drug. In our culture we have a tremendous fear of addiction, we are suspicious of loving any drug too much, and our culture has an unfortunate idea that only brand new medicines are good.

Suspicion of controlled medications may not be helpful at all. It may not even help stop addictions. Consider that Italians especially love and praise wine, but their rates of alcoholism are low. A famous journalist G.K. Chesterton once said, "I thank God for beer and burgundy by not having too much of them." This is the proper mindset toward alcohol. Likewise, it is important to be free from any suspicion towards ketamine. Consider that when we harbor mixed feelings, or fears and doubts about medicines, we render them incapable of helping us. It sounds like Peter Pan or Disney more than it sounds like science or medicine, but it is nevertheless very true that for anything to heal our minds, we must have positive thoughts and feelings towards it. A proper perspective towards ketamine is to hold it in profound respect. Do not be afraid of it. Remember that it helped rescue twelve boys from a cave in Thailand, and it may likewise help to rescue you from a labyrinth in which you are trapped.

Second, have faith in us.

You are safe, and you are in good hands. We think about your safety more than you do, so that you don't have to. We know what we are doing, otherwise we wouldn't be doing it. We are like ground control at the airport. We take care of your body, so that your mind can drift, relax, let go, and give itself permission to surrender to its own healing journey.

If you have doubt about us, or our clinic, express it. Ask us questions. Do not go into an infusion with concern that has gone unaddressed.

Lastly, have faith in yourself.

You possess an inner healing wisdom. Which is to say, you already know the changes needed for you to heal from depression. You may not be aware of this information, but this healing capacity is within you already. It is very common for people to have epiphanies, or shining realizations, right after their ketamine infusions.

Some people expect their healing to have always an upward trajectory, and when it doesn't, they lose confidence in themselves. Ketamine has a way of removing layers and layers of negativity from the personality, and this means that sometimes people get worse before they get better. They may feel worse after the first ketamine session, and yet, they leave with an intuition that healing is right around the corner. Again, have faith in yourself, that whatever comes up during your session is exactly what needs to come up. As layers and patterns of negativity are lifted from the personality, the mind returns to childhood so to speak, or its original state. This state of mind is naturally happy, curious, and spontaneous.

For those that have experienced trauma during early childhood, ketamine may cause a feeling of vulnerability which is difficult to tolerate. If you choose to work with a therapist, they will be there to help you maintain hope and confidence during the process so that your sessions are well tolerated.

Though a therapist may be of great assistance, ultimately you must remember that your confidence to heal cannot be acquired outside yourself, but can only be re-discovered within yourself. It was already there within you in the beginning, before it was lost, forgotten, or unlearned. Other people can remind that you have what it takes, and encourage you when you are not feeling it, but no other person can provide you with it.

You don't need to have the answers. Our only concern here is to just relax. And to banish from our minds certain ideas, e.g. that you can't do it right, that you are cursed, or that you are a hopeless case. Often, depressed people feel as if their sufferings are so rare, so special, or so unique that healing is impossible. These are the fears we are addressing here, which block healing, and which stand in opposition to a simple faith in your own healing wisdom.

This is all happening in the realm of mental and spiritual warfare, which is totally outside the realm of medicine, science, and progress. Consider that the technologically advanced countries today have the highest rates of depression. Consider likewise that the highest suicide rates occur in countries with a very high standard of living, and outstanding medical care.

2. Let go

In our day and age, it is unusual to hear 'surrender' used in a positive way.

Ketamine is most effective for those persons who surrender to the effects, and who let go during the experience. Ketamine puts people into a mild hypnosis, or trance state, in which the mind's control valves are released. Any strong resistance to this process will cause anxiety.

Remember that most people are able to let go, and do just fine at this. This is not an achievement you are going to need to work at. In fact, the more we think of relaxation as an achievement, the harder it is to get there. Similarly, "*Whatever you do, do not think of a pink elephant.*" It is impossible... so long as that is the goal. Again you are not here to 'do' anything during your ketamine treatment, but merely let go, trust, and follow the experience. Most of the thoughts, memories, and feelings which come up will be coming from your own inner healing wisdom. By worrying about what you must 'do', or what you must focus on, you will only interfere with the experience.

Releasing control is difficult for some, but not because they aren't trying hard enough. Oddly enough, they may be trying too hard. John Lennon said in a Beatles song, "Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream." That is good advice. When people try too hard to meditate, they are not actually meditating, but are instead merely thinking about themselves meditating. This gets in the way of meditation.

It is important to remember that we live in a culture of hyper-reflection. It is one of the reasons we have so much depression. We have a compulsive need to think, and to think about ourselves thinking, and to think about that, ad nauseam. For example, when we are confronted by a thing that may lead us out of that hyper-reflective whirlpool, our first impulse is to reach for a camera. For instance, stepping on a ride at Disneyland might lead us out of our self-conscious thoughts, but we have an impulse to get out a camera. Entering an old darkened cathedral might do so as well, but as tourist we reach for a camera. A photograph allows us to control the experience, and to turn it against itself.

Luckily, dreams cannot be photographed, and it is difficult to analyze a dream. This is perhaps one of the purposes of dreaming: to relieve prolonged sadness by leading us out of a mind that we control. Dreamland is a place in which we must relinquish control, and in dreams it is as if we are observers, even of our own senseless actions. But it is this helplessness and vulnerability which make sleep so restorative. Again, to fall asleep is to let go, and ketamine is no different than that, except that you are not asleep.

3. *Make your mind a sacred place*

Most people would not store diamonds and pearls or other precious jewelry together in a bin with paperclips, scotch tape, and a can opener. We all feel instinctively the need to set things of great worth apart, so that they aren't mixed in with things of lesser worth.

Consider for a moment that your soul, mind, and spirit are things of great worth. Yet, our minds are assaulted nearly everyday by advertising, social media, and other worthless stuff. Sooner or later, it fills up our soul, and there is no room for anything else. We may begin to feel that we ourselves are items of low worth.

There are two first steps to making your mind a sacred place. One is decluttering, and the other is banishing toxic thoughts.

Decluttering is the first step.

This is nothing more than to value your soul highly enough to refuse to allow anything into it that is a cheap distraction. The goal isn't to worry about cleaning your mind constantly, and to let nothing in. The motivation is not an empty and meaningless duty, but instead, a simple difference in value. Stuff will inevitably come in. We have five senses, after all, and our minds are in constant contact with the practical everyday needs of the world. We cannot all live as Tibetan monks, and sometimes, you do just need a paperclip, and sometimes you do need to check your email and do your laundry. Our minds will be constantly assaulted by trifling things, and the goal is not to avoid them, but to make sure they pass through our minds briefly, but not for long. The goal is to prevent any minor concern from taking up residence in our minds. For example, many of us check our smartphones or email inboxes way too many times per day. A person with obsessive compulsive disorder allows his precious mind to be oppressed by concerns about germs. To declutter, you simply must affirm that your mind is of far greater value than these things. For instance, the person with OCD might decide they'd rather actually get an infection once in a while, in exchange for setting their precious mind free from oppressive worry.

Imagine how in a musical, there are sudden transitions between dialogue and song. There are few things more exciting than the moment a character bursts into a song. It is a wonderful shift because dialogue represents the everyday. Song represents the sacred. Perhaps this is why music is so helpful for anxiety, because it declutters our mind automatically. At any rate, please consider the transition from dialogue to song as a good model.

To prepare for ketamine, and to make your mind a sacred place, we do not recommend always having a song in your head. Instead, imagine it is your job to keep your mind ready to fall into a song, at all times of the day! Again, it is to hold your mind, ready to be captured by a song, at any moment.

Banishing toxic thoughts is the second step.

This step takes a bit more practice, and to many of us, does not come naturally. The problem lies in the fact that we identify too much with our thoughts. We 'side' with our thoughts, so to speak, even when they may be hurting us.

Consider that many of our thoughts are automatic, and pop into our head unannounced. Your mind is like a living room, and your thoughts are the furniture. Make your mind a comfortable place. Who would put a horsehair couch or a bed of nails in their living room? Likewise, protect your mind from irritating, alienating, or uncomfortable thoughts.

Toxic thoughts may also be imagined as unwelcome visitors. For example, "I can't make friends" is a rude thought, who waltzes into your mind and tosses himself, all sweaty, on your favorite recliner. Later he invites the thought "it's no use" to come over, who eats out of your fridge. Finally the thought "my life is not worthwhile" comes in, and stamps muddy shoes all over your rug.

In depressed people, there is a tendency to give very high worth to thoughts, and to be attached to thoughts. Even when they are harming us. Pardon me for saying but the proper perspective towards our thoughts is to regard most of them as a burp or a fart. They often make no sense, and like a burp or a fart, they are unwelcome and unannounced.

To make our mind a sacred place is to set it apart from the profane, from the everyday.

Profane doesn't mean bad or unholy, even in its religious context. It is not a moral term at all. It just means ordinary, everyday, common. Toxic thoughts are obviously 'bad', since they devalue our worth, and they must be banished. Yet, much of the work of making our mind a sacred place is not moral at all. You should not think of this work as a duty or as something to beat yourself up over. You are merely protecting your mind from being flooded by everyday concerns.

Because ultimately, you yourself are not an everyday concern. You are of great worth, but perhaps not in the way you have imagined.

Many people with depression have placed enormous pressure on themselves, and are heavily disappointed in themselves, and what they most need to heal is to re-imagine themselves and to rediscover their worth.

Ketamine is very helpful in this process.

But in order to get the most out of its effects, it is necessary to anticipate, cooperate, and to prepare for its effects. Try to apply the above recommendations and put yourself in a healing mindset for a full week prior to your first infusion.

For example, imagine being at a carnival, riding a carousel and eating cotton candy, and then suddenly being whisked off to a funeral. Even if the funeral was for a stranger, and you knew nobody there, yet it could be stressful to transition your mind so suddenly.

This analogy, as well as the analogy of holding your mind ready at all times for a song, are helpful to understand what it looks like to prepare yourself properly for ketamine.

Remember finally that we are there for you, and we have great confidence in your ability to heal.