

# WHAT TO EXPECT (AND EXPLORE) DURING KETAMINE TREATMENT

MIND-BODY PREPARATION FOR A CALM, SUPPORTED EXPERIENCE



## HOW TO APPROACH THE EXPERIENCE

Ketamine treatment isn't something you need to "get right." However, the way you prepare, both mentally and physically, can help shape how it feels and what you take from it.

Many people find it helpful to go in with a soft intention. This could be something like:

- Exploring what life might feel like with less depression or anxiety
- Letting go of painful memories or inner tension
- Simply being present with whatever shows up



Your intention is not a goal to achieve. It is more like a lighthouse, something to return to if you feel lost or disoriented.

There is no need to force focus or chase deep insights. Some sessions feel rich and emotional. Others may be blank, strange, or scattered. All of these are valid.

## DURING YOUR SESSION: WHAT CAN HELP

You can support yourself during the experience by trying some of these mental strategies:



- **Anchor with gratitude**

Recall a moment that made you feel safe, loved, or connected.

- **Picture your healing**

Imagine what it might feel like to live with more peace, energy, or clarity.





- **Let thoughts come and go**

Do not chase or control the experience. Let it unfold naturally.

- **Be curious, not critical**

Notice thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment.



- **Use a grounding phrase**

Try repeating something simple, like "Let go" or "This will pass."

If that does not feel safe, use a phrase like "I'm safe here" or "I can pause if I need to."

- **Create a safe inner space**

Visualize a calm place. Add music, colors, or textures that feel comforting.



- **Allow emotion to rise**

Ketamine can soften emotional defenses for some people, making it easier to explore memories or feelings with less overwhelm. If hard feelings surface, try to observe them gently. You do not need to fix or solve anything in the moment.

- **If you're neurodivergent or have sensory sensitivities**

Talk to your provider about options like lying on your side, wearing an eye mask, using earplugs or headphones, or minimizing light and sound.



## BEFORE YOUR SESSION: MIND + BODY PREP

Your mindset and physical state work together. Supporting both can improve your experience and recovery.

### Mental Preparation:

- Journal your hopes, worries, or questions.
- Set a soft intention. Choose something you would like to explore or feel.
- Practice deep breathing, guided meditation, or mindfulness.
- Avoid media or stressful conversations the day before.
- Remind yourself that it is okay not to control what happens. Just observe.



### Physical Preparation:

- Get good rest the night before.
- Eat a light, nutritious meal if advised.
- Stay hydrated. Avoid alcohol, cannabis, and recreational substances for at least 24 hours.
- Wear soft, comfortable clothing. Bring a blanket or eye mask if helpful.
- Avoid caffeine and overstimulation before your session.







#### Quick Prep Checklist:

- ✓ Rest well the night before
- ✓ Eat light, hydrate
- ✓ Set a soft intention
- ✓ Bring comfort items
- ✓ Avoid stressors and overstimulation
- ✓ Talk to your provider about sensory needs

### AFTER YOUR SESSION: REFLECT AND INTEGRATE

Once the effects wear off, it may help to:

- Journal anything that stood out (thoughts, visuals, feelings)
- Talk to a therapist or support person about what came up
- Rest, hydrate, and give yourself time to recover
- Avoid intense demands or overstimulating environments
- Notice how you feel in the hours and days after. Sometimes insights arrive gradually.



## WHY TRUSTING YOUR CARE TEAM MATTERS


Ketamine can open the door to unfamiliar sensations or emotional states. That can feel freeing, or it can feel unsettling.

Having a care team you trust makes a big difference. It provides:

- A sense of safety, so you feel secure enough to let go
- Support if strong feelings show up
- A space to speak up if something feels off
- Help in making meaning from your experience

The goal is not just symptom relief. It includes safety, dignity, and growth. Your provider is there to hold that space with you.



 This handout was developed by Paperflower Psychiatry to help clients prepare for ketamine treatment with care and self-compassion. For questions or support, talk with your clinical team.

[paperflowerinstitute.com](https://www.paperflowerinstitute.com)