

INTEGRATION TIPS

The ketamine journey itself is powerful, but some practices following the medicine can allow us to derive greatest benefit from the experience and make it part of who *we are*, rather than something we *did*.

The power of this experience is not limited to the small amount of time in which you are under the influence of the medicine. This is a process that naturally unfolds over the subsequent days and weeks after the treatment, and it is often later reflection that provides key perspectives on your work.

Integration refers to the process of weaving the insights received from your journey back into your sense of self and applying them to your life. All of this information requires digesting, and if you plunge back into your daily routine without this period of reflection, you may miss out on some valuable lessons from the medicine.

Here are some suggestions for this practice, but remember to trust your intuition, choose what you feel will serve you best, and be gentle with yourself throughout the process.

Taking Time for Yourself

Most importantly, **make time and space** for this process to unfold by intentionally dedicating time after your journey to rest, reflect, and engage in new habits.

Our busy lives often tempt us with multiple distractions; counter this tendency by carving out space in your schedule after your experience. Spending time in nature and away from our devices can cultivate a reflective state of mind, allowing us to connect to our deeper selves and our personal healing process.

Capturing Your Experience

You will receive our Post Session Survey with reflection questions following your session, which we ask that you complete within 24 hours of your session, and preferably on the same evening. We have found that this immediate sharing can help you recall your experiences with richer detail, and can be useful in bringing these insights into your daily life.

A routine of regular journaling can later provide valuable perspective on the trajectory of your change process, and also clarify internal thoughts and feelings. (Our daily mood monitoring survey emails may help you nurture this practice.)

You might find that nonverbal forms of expression (painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, movement, or dance) works better for you than words, and we encourage you to explore whichever modality feels intuitively right for you. These practices may also assist those who tend towards highly rational and intellectual modes of processing to broaden their repertoire.

Even if you do not preserve the experience externally, your task is to create a storage place in your mind and heart, so that these valuable experiences stay alive inside you.

Working with a Professional

Ketamine itself is not a standalone treatment, and is best applied as part of a comprehensive therapeutic plan. Discussing your experience in integration therapy sessions will help you maximize the gains made in this process.

If you are not working with one of the clinicians in our practice, we recommend full collaboration between us and your therapist; we are happy to share whatever information might help them understand your experience.

It can be helpful to bring your post-experience expressions (journaling, art, etc.) into your subsequent sessions as a way to incorporate them into the narrative of your therapy.

Connecting with Others

It can also be helpful to have someone in your life with whom you can openly share what you experienced, and your evolving thoughts about your healing.

Consider asking a close friend to listen to you deeply, with compassion and setting any judgments or concerns aside. Simply being able to express yourself openly and authentically can help with emotional processing.

Being in community with others who have had these type of experiences is also tremendously supportive. One local organization that hosts regular peer-led Integration Circles can be found here: <https://www.meetup.com/erievision/>

Meditation

Cultivating a meditation or other mindfulness practice may reconnect you to key insights obtained in this work, and helps train the mind to slip out of its typical depressive or ruminative ruts more easily. There are many different forms of meditation, so choose a practice that resonates with you. If you are brand new to

meditation, consider taking baby steps and gradually scaling up, as this is much more sustainable in the long run.

We offer a [series of brief guided meditations](#) embedded in our daily mood monitoring survey emails to assist you in building a practice. These start at under 3 minutes, gradually working up to over 24 minutes in length over a 5-week period, and are drawn from a variety of different traditions. (You may download these directly from the survey to use at a later time, and also access them all [here](#).)

A favorite book of ours, [The Monkey is the Messenger](#), artfully integrates parts work with meditation techniques to destigmatize the distracting thoughts we all struggle with when trying to meditate. The audiobook format includes many recorded guided meditations. You can also find many of the author's meditations and class recordings for free [here](#).

If you find that meditating by yourself is a difficult habit to start, try joining a local meditation group, as social support can bolster our newest habits. Please ask us if you would like referrals to such groups.

Taking Good Care of Your Body

Paying attention to the needs of our embodied existence is integral to recovery and well-being, and maximizes the benefits of a ketamine treatment. The integration phase is a good time to hit the reset button on less desired habits.

Self-care and health looks a little different for everyone, so we encourage you to work with your medical professionals to get advice tailored to your unique physiology. In general, adequate physical activity, restorative sleep, a nourishing diet, and avoiding alcohol/abused substances go a long way to enhance mood and well-being.

Exploring New Possibilities

Ketamine treatment often provides a transient energy boost, which makes it an optimal time to try on new behaviors or activities you have always been curious about, or reconnect with old passions that have been obstructed by mental health issues.

Others have experimented with myriad healing modalities (e.g. acupuncture, yoga, flotation tanks, support groups, tai chi, saunas, bodywork, painting, dance, performance, and so on) during this integration phase, but the most important factor is that it sparks curiosity and potential for change in *you*.

Releasing Old Patterns

Making space for the new often requires examining the status quo, and addressing how that shows up *materially* in your life.

Some respond to this process with “tidying” behaviors (e.g. [decluttering](#) the home and sorting through personal effects that no longer bring joy, facing a backlog of mail or emails, having difficult or long-avoided conversations, making amends or speaking truth to loved ones) that symbolize a fresh start.

You are in no way required to clean your room after a ketamine treatment, if this method does not speak to you; the general idea is to let go of what no longer serves you in order to make space for new connections and ways of living. Let your intuition guide you on this path.

A note of caution here: we advise you to not make any unplanned major and consequential life changes (e.g. starting or ending a significant relationship, signing a binding contract, quitting your job, making a large purchase, leaving the country) for the first week or so after your journey.

Allow yourself to explore these desires with trusted advisors and professionals who can help you see them in context of your life’s overall trajectory. This experience might have indeed planted seeds for lasting change, but they need time and support to germinate and flower.

Above all, remember that the ketamine molecule works best in concert with your intentional actions, and that an integrated, multifaceted plan of recovery holds the most power for sustainable and satisfying change. **Be well and let us know if you have questions at any time during this process!**