

# Starks Therapy Group

## Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) Info Sheet



	Intramuscular (IM) Injection	Intravenous (IV) Infusion	Rapid Dissolving Tablet (RDT)
<b>Available for these diagnoses:</b>			
Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD)	X	X	
Suicidal Ideation	X	X	
Depression	X	X	X
Anxiety or depression	X	X	X
PTSD or other trauma-related symptoms	X	X	X
Severe Anxiety about the Ketamine Process		X	
Complex Cardiac History		X	
<b>Schedule and Cost for KAP</b>			
<b>Pre-dosing sessions:</b>			
Medical Intake Visit*	\$150	\$150	\$350
Therapy Intake Visit	\$180	\$180	\$180
Preparation Therapy 1 Visit	\$180	\$180	\$180
Preparation Therapy 2 Visit	\$180	\$180	\$180
<b>Dosing Session 1:</b>			
Dosing Day appointment	\$760	\$760	\$500
Integration Visit (occurs 24 hrs. later)	\$180	\$180	\$180
<b>Dosing Session 2:</b>			
Therapeutic Dosing Visit	\$760	\$760	\$500
Integration Visit (occurs 24 hrs. later)	\$180	\$180	\$180
<b>Dosing Session 3:</b>			
Therapeutic Dosing Visit	\$760	\$760	\$500
Integration Visit (occurs 24 hrs. later)	\$180	\$180	\$180
<b>Total</b>	\$3510	\$3510	\$2930
[SEE QUESTION #4 BELOW for how these charges may or may not interact with BCBS PPO insurance: Therapy & Integration visits can in some cases be submitted, dosing sessions cannot.]			This does not include the cost of your prescription (approx \$50 for 4 doses)
<b>Follow Up and Boosters</b>			
<i>Many people benefit from ongoing maintenance at varying intervals etc.</i>			
Prep (if we haven't seen you in 3 months or more)	\$180	\$180	\$180
Therapeutic Dosing Visit	\$760	\$760	\$500
Integration Visit (occurs 24 hrs. later)	\$180	\$180	\$180
Medical follow up maintenance appointments for refills	NA	NA	\$350

<b>Telehealth or in-person visits</b>	Medical intakes are done online All other preparation and integration can be done online and in person All dosing sessions are in person	Medical intakes are done online All other preparation and integration can be done online and in person All dosing sessions are in person	Medical intakes are done online All other preparation and integration can be done online and in person All dosing sessions are in person
<b>Therapist Location</b>	All dosing visits done in Oak Park office. Therapist remains in room for entire 2-hour visit	All dosing visits done in Oak Park office. Therapist remains in room for entire 2-hour visit	All dosing visits done in Oak Park office. Therapist remains in room for entire 2-to-3-hour visit
<b>Medical Staff**</b>	Medical Staff present for IM appointments	Medical Staff present for IV appointments	Medical Staff NOT present for RDT appointments
<b>Schedule of appointment</b>	These sessions are during our clinic hours on Mondays	These sessions are during our clinic hours on Mondays	These are scheduled according to your therapists availability

\* Medical Intake Visit is with our Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) who is our prescriber here at STG.

\*\*Medical Staff is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) or Registered Nurse (RN) overseen by our prescriber. For IM KAP, CRNA or RN administers 2 IM injections of ketamine, 15 minutes apart, and is on-site for entire dosing session. For RDT KAP, client receives dissolving tablets at home and will self-administer the tablets on-site with therapist observation.

## KAP FAQs

### 1. What is ketamine?

Ketamine is a multifaceted compound that, beyond its traditional role as an anesthetic, has emerged as a therapeutic resource to many. Its unique mechanism of action sets it apart in the field of mental health medication options. When administered in controlled settings, it is believed that ketamine targets the brain's NMDA receptors, influencing the release of various neurotransmitters, such as glutamate and serotonin. This intricate dance within the brain fosters a cascade of effects, ultimately leading to profound mood elevation, increased neuroplasticity and pain relief.

Ketamine's rapid-acting properties make it an invaluable tool for treating conditions like treatment-resistant depression, anxiety disorders, and PTSD.

*To learn more about Ketamine's theorized mechanisms of action, aka the science, see below (#18)*

### 2. How long has it been around / is it a fad?

Ketamine, a compound with a history dating back to the 1960s when it was primarily used as an anesthetic, has been at the forefront of mental health treatment since the early 2000s. While its original role was surgical, it has evolved into a promising therapy for various mental health concerns. Ketamine's efficacy in addressing conditions like treatment-resistant depression and bipolar disorder has been extensively researched, with studies highlighting its ability to provide rapid relief from depressive symptoms, especially in cases where traditional antidepressants have fallen short. Far from being a passing trend, ketamine therapy represents a

significant advancement in mental health treatment, offering renewed hope to individuals struggling with severe mood disorders. However, it should always be administered under the supervision of trained healthcare professionals in controlled clinical settings to ensure its safety and effectiveness.

### 3. What if I don't see my diagnosis? Can KAP still help me?

If you do not see your diagnosis here, please talk with us at Starks Therapy Group to see if KAP is right for you. KAP has been shown to help clients with other mental health issues, but we would want to determine on a case-by-case basis if it is right for you.

### 4. Will my insurance cover these costs?

We do have therapists available who accept BCBS PPO. Insurance usually covers the cost of the assessment, preparation and integration sessions as these are 55-60 minute therapy sessions. At this time, insurance will not cover the costs of your dosing days \$760.00 for IV/IM and \$500.00 for RDT.

If you don't have BCBS PPO, Starks Therapy Group is happy to provide you with a "Superbill" that you can submit to your insurance company to see if they will apply it to your out-of-network benefits or deductible.

Autumn Starks is 100% out of network for all insurance companies. If you would like to work with Autumn the fees are out of pocket and you will be given a Superbill should you desire to seek reimbursement.

### 5. How long does the entire treatment process take?

For IM and IV KAP, the entire process is around 6 weeks. For RDT KAP, sessions can be a little farther apart, so the treatment process can go anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months.

### 6. What happens at the integration session?

This session gives the client an opportunity to reconnect with their ketamine experience and integrate anything challenging that might have occurred during the session. The therapist might walk through their notes of what they witnessed during your experience so you can both process the session. This time can also be used to explore changes you are noticing outside of the ketamine experiences themselves. This can support you in taking advantage of the neuroflexible window created by the ketamine. Integration sessions can also look like typical therapy. Participants often report that addressing challenging therapeutic content is easier while in this window of KAP treatment.

### 7. Will I have the same therapist for each dosing and non-dosing session?

Yes. We believe in continuity of care and want this to be a positive, safe, and trusting environment and experience for you.

## 8. How long do each of the non-dosing visits take?

Medical intakes and follow ups last about 30 minutes. All other non-dosing visits take 50-55 minutes.

## 9. Why am I on-site longer for an RDT vs. IM and IV KAP session?

An intramuscular injection or IV of ketamine is more quickly metabolized than a sublingual (under the tongue), dissolving tablet, so the ketamine will “kick in” more quickly when administered IM or IV. Therefore, the experience will likely wrap up earlier than a sublingual administration of ketamine.

## 10. I'm torn between IM, IV and RTD. What should I do?

Candidly, we recommend starting with IM if you are unsure and it's medically appropriate for you. The dosing is more straightforward than RDT as the individual's digestive tract and metabolism rate are less of a factor. We can more easily dial in your ideal dose. There is also a medical provider on site which can help folks feel more comfortable and safe if they are unfamiliar with the ketamine experience. We often use RTD for ongoing maintenance. IV is another great option if you are more comfortable with receiving this medicine in this way, extremely anxious about the experience or have a complex cardiac history.

## 11. You said you typically encourage folks start with IM. When is IV right for me?

IV is a better fit for folks who:

- 1) Are more comfortable with an IV than an injections
- 2) Have a history of complex cardiac symptoms. This is because in IV sessions we have an IV established. Ketamine can be stopped and we can immediately access the IV to give other medications in case of an emergency.
- 3) Are extremely anxious about the Ketamine experience itself. Stepping into an unknown experience is often nerve wracking. This is a normal feeling before a first dosing session. But if you are very anxious about the experience, have a history of panic attacks or distressing psychedelic experiences, you may benefit from the control factor of an IV. If someone is having a very challenging experience we can slow or turn off the IV. This is rarely necessary but knowing it is an option helps some folks. Once we turn off the IV the experience will slowly begin to fade. This doesn't happen immediately but can end the experience early.

## 12. Why can't I receive RDT for my treatment-resistant depression or suicidal ideation?

At this time, there is stronger clinical research showing that IM or IV is more efficacious for treatment-resistant depression and suicidal ideation.

## 13. Why is preparation and integration important?

Preparation and integration are crucial to the success of the KAP model. We see higher rates of efficacy when ketamine treatment is accompanied by skillful therapy targeted toward setting intentions, preparing for the

experience, building a trusted team and making the most of the neuroplastic window in integration. We are able to take the number of dosing sessions from 4-6 (typical for ketamine-only treatment providers) down to 3 and see powerful and long lasting results.

We look at our work with ketamine as in line with other psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy research being done at this time. “Set and setting” have long been recognized as crucial factors in altered state experiences. When we spend time on mindset (both of the client and treatment team) and the trust and safety of the environment, we are more likely to facilitate powerful healing experiences with fewer needlessly challenging settings. In our experience the more you put into your prep and integration work, the more you are likely to get out of the ketamine experience and the window of change it facilitates.

## 14. What if I want more than 3 ketamine sessions?

We schedule additional KAP sessions on an individual basis. We require all dosing sessions be followed by an integration session. These are done at the same rate as above. If it's been over 3 months since your previous dosing session we require the completion of at least one preparation session to get settled before dosing. Preparation sessions are billed at the same rate as above.

## 15. What's the whole process look like?

- Reach out to STG using the CONTACT form on [www.starkstherapygroup.com/contact](http://www.starkstherapygroup.com/contact).
- Someone on our team will reach out to you, hear about what you are looking for and answer any initial questions.
- If you decide to proceed we will have you complete our intake documents and you will be assigned to a KAP therapist.
- Prior to your first dosing session you will have a medical intake with our prescriber, a mental health intake with your therapist and 2 preparation sessions with your therapist.
- Then you are ready for your first dosing session! You will have a 2-hour dosing session with your therapist and the medical staff.
- The following day you have integration with your therapist.
- This combo of dosing session followed by a next day integration session happens 3 times.

## 16. What to look for in a prescriber aka how to trust them?

To find a trustworthy Ketamine prescriber, decide whether you plan to do KAP or Ketamine only treatment (no therapy). Next, seek referrals from your healthcare providers, psychiatrists or therapist. Check their credentials and ask them about their experience. There are independent certifications available but these are not well regulated. It is more important to ask any questions you have and learn more about their background and experience working with Ketamine. Ask about their approach, preparation process, integration support and any other considerations you have. Make sure they are clear about the cost of their program and insurance options. It's ok to consult with multiple providers until you find one you trust.

Prioritize safety and a strong therapeutic relationship when selecting a KAP provider for your mental health journey.

## 17. Why won't my insurance cover my treatment?

Despite its significant evidence base, ketamine-assisted psychotherapy is utilizing ketamine in a way that the FDA considers "off label." (Many medications are safely used in this way.) This status allows insurance companies to not reimburse for these services. We do, however, see a high rate of success of services being allowed by out-of-network benefits, especially for intakes, preparation and integration sessions, and will submit these sessions for you if you have a BCBS PPO plan. [More info, see Question #4.]

## 18. How does Ketamine create its antidepressant effects in the brain?

While the exact mechanisms underlying Ketamine's antidepressant action are still being studied, several theories have been proposed:

1. **Glutamate Modulation:** Ketamine primarily works by antagonizing the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor, which is a type of glutamate receptor in the brain. This leads to a transient decrease in glutamate signaling, causing a disruption of glutamatergic neurotransmission. This disruption may trigger a cascade of molecular and cellular events that ultimately contribute to its antidepressant effects.
2. **Synaptic Plasticity:** Ketamine's inhibition of the NMDA receptor leads to a release of neurotransmitters, including glutamate, in the brain. This, in turn, can stimulate the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and other neuroplasticity-related molecules. BDNF plays a crucial role in synaptic plasticity, promoting the growth and maintenance of new neurons and synapses, which may help in repairing neural circuits disrupted in depression.
3. **Increased AMPA Receptor Activity:** Ketamine has been shown to enhance the activity of alpha-amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-4-isoxazolepropionic acid (AMPA) receptors, another type of glutamate receptor. This increased AMPA receptor activity may contribute to synaptic plasticity and the strengthening of neural connections.
4. **Anti-inflammatory Effects:** Some studies suggest that ketamine may have anti-inflammatory properties, which could be relevant to depression, as inflammation has been implicated in the pathophysiology of mood disorders. By reducing inflammation, ketamine may indirectly improve mood.
5. **GABAergic System Modulation:** Ketamine also affects the gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) system in the brain. It increases the release of GABA, which is an inhibitory neurotransmitter. This GABAergic modulation may help balance neural excitation and inhibition in a way that contributes to its antidepressant effects.
6. **Activation of mTOR Pathway:** Ketamine has been shown to activate the mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR) pathway, which is involved in cell growth and synaptic plasticity. This activation may be another mechanism through which ketamine exerts its antidepressant effects.

As Ketamine continues to be researched, it is likely that several of these factors are working synergistically to create these effects in the brain and body.