

Perspective Wellness

Clinical Guide To Ketamine Facilitation (RDT & IM)



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***With special thanks to my wife Allison, and all my wonderful
mentors, teachers, friends, and colleagues.***

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Facilitation Essentials

“Re-creation is spelled the same way as recreation. Just because the medicine makes you feel good doesn’t mean the medicine doesn’t make you feel better”

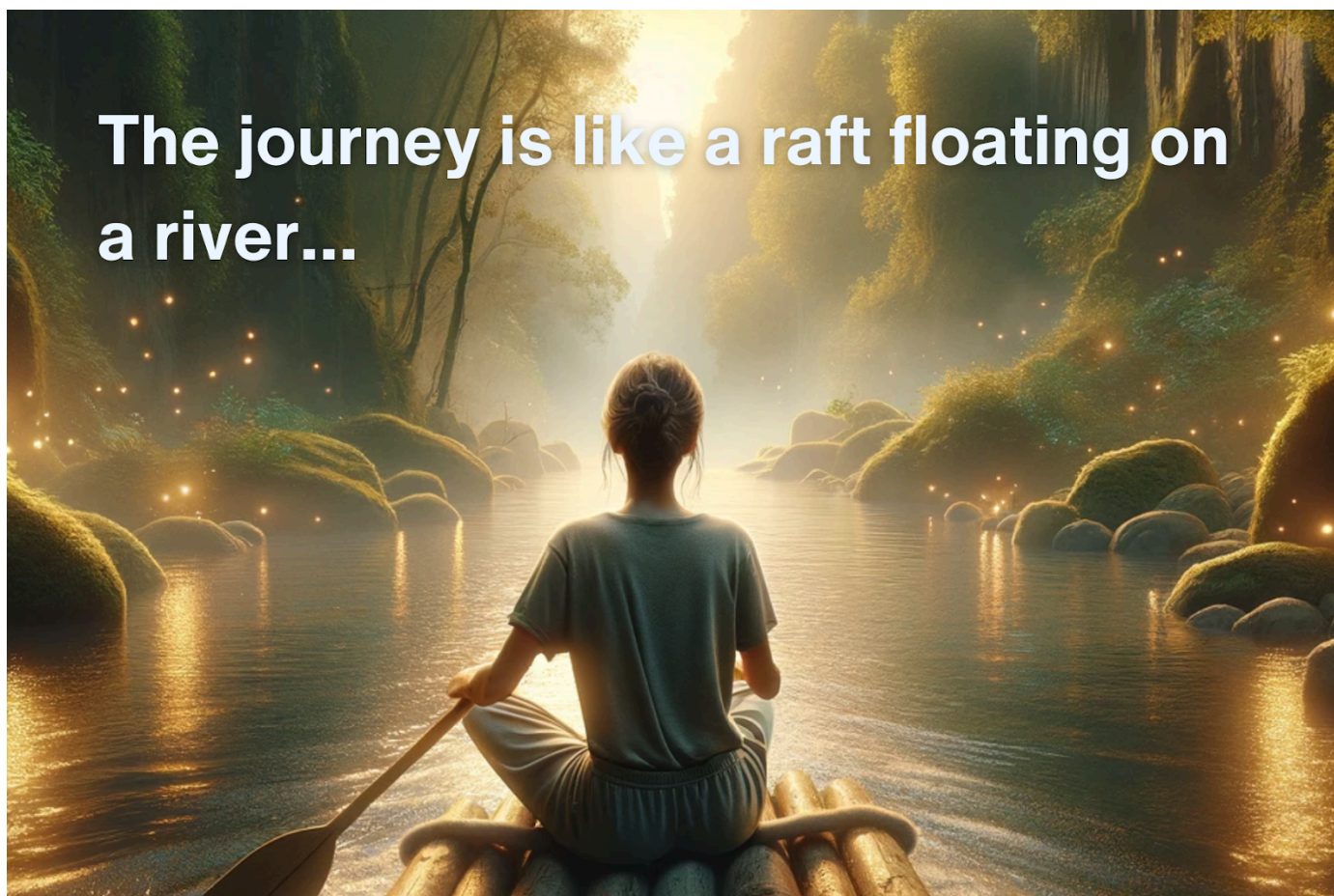
- Dr. Phil Wolfson, MD, Ketamine Training Center

Our Ethos

Our method was greatly influenced by the outlook of Dr. Phil Wolfson, who taught the importance of embracing the above-mentioned psychedelic-inspired ethos. This means that we should not forget that the purpose of the exercise is to help the client regain their ability to enjoy life again. We cannot overstate how the expression “re-creation is spelled the same way as recreation” resonates with so many clients and puts them instantly at ease. (I’ve seen this phrase make clients’ shoulders drop.)

Working Metaphors

A great way to understand what we do in facilitation is to use illustrative metaphors. Review and contemplate these as you approach this manual and KAT practice.



Neuroscience

It is very important that a facilitator understands and can explain to a layperson the fundamental theories and hypotheses behind ketamine-assisted therapy. We find clients LOVE TO HEAR the neuroscience. We live in a very material, left-brain thinking culture. When you speak about the neuroscientific underpinnings of KAT, it gives clients a reference point and confidence in their treatment process. Listed below are several theories that you should have working (and speaking) knowledge of.



- **Decrease in functional connectivity of the default mode network** - Research shows that psychedelics, including ketamine, decrease the functional connectivity of the Default Mode Network (DMN). The DMN is associated with autobiographical thinking (the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves), mental time travel (ruminations about the past, chatter/worries about the future), and judgments (ketamine puts a sock in the mouth of the self-critic!). During the journey, the DMN is temporarily taken offline, giving clients a wonderful time out from debilitating thoughts. Clients also gain experiential knowledge that much of what they believe is their “self” is actually a composite and that the deeper, “essential self” is one free from the DMN’s perseverating negative thoughts.
- **Increase in functional connectivity between the DMN and the Salience network** - The salience network is associated with novelty and creativity. In journeys, this expresses itself as feelings of awe, beauty, and wonder. Research shows that increases in connectivity between the DMN and Salient networks increase creativity.

- **Increase in functional connectivity between the DMN and the Fronto Parietal network.** The fronto-parietal network is associated with feelings of spatial awareness. In journeys, this expresses itself with a sense of vastness, or images of floating above and looking down, or being below and looking up. As clients resolve and cognitions come online, this spatial perspective shift often gets applied to cognitions as clients come to view their life challenges and stressors from a distance, which turns mountains into molehills (e.g. it's ok, what's important is this... this doesn't matter... the journey helped me "rightsize" things in terms of my priorities)
- **REBUS and recalibrating and reweighting internal working models (IWMs)** - As we grow and develop, the brain creates so-called "internal working models" that help us efficiently process incoming data from our environment. We view the world through the prism of these predictively encoded IWMs. Many people with trauma hx have IWMs that are weighed to feel unsafe or unloved. Emerging research demonstrates that psychedelics decrease the rigidity and precision weighting on IWMs, allowing for revision and reweighting during the experience and integration.

For example, many of our clients suffer from cPTSD as a result of childhood neglect and abuse. They now feel unlovable (attachment anxiety) or unsafe/closed (attachment-related avoidance). During journeys, clients have a deep-felt experience of "safety" and "connection". This experience, plus a kind and compassionate relational setting, catalyzes a revision and reweighting of their IWMs toward feeling loved and safe. Integration activities reinforce and recanalize these changes to the IWM. Consequently, clients undergo a "perspective shift" and perceive themselves and the world through their updated IWM.

- **The Michael Pollan Snow Metaphor - this is the number 1 metaphor we use to quickly explain what we are doing. We often use this during prep and at the beginning of integration**

FG: What we are doing here is not complicated. During the peak experience, we are inducing neuroplasticity, like dumping two feet of fresh powder snow. Then, right away, as you are coming down from the medicine, we are working to groove new tracks in the snow. And during integration, we're going to keep working to groove those new tracks. (That's why it's important to do your integration exercises right away. You're from Wisconsin, and as you know, two feet of snow turns into six inches of crust after a week or two, so get started right away)



Wisdom From Hebrew & Kabbalah

Wisdom From The Hebrew Language

I often connect with my ancestral roots by using metaphors and concepts based on the Hebrew language. In Hebrew, words are printed with consonants only, not vowels. The same consonants can have different meanings based on vowelization. Here are a few that resonate consistently with clients and provide generic, accessible concepts. Of course, I only talk about these things where indicated, but they are so universally helpful I use them regularly. They are especially useful to illustrate certain concepts if (and only if!) client cognitions are already in alignment.

Contentment In A World Of Uncertainty: The word *safek* (SFK - ספק) means doubt. If you change the vowels of SFK it is pronounced *sipook*, which means "deep contentment"... In Hebrew, doubt and deep contentment are two sides of the same coin (word). We expressly aim to help clients find contentment and satisfaction in a world of uncertainty. This notion cuts across all religious streams.

Revealing The Sweetness: The word *megillah* (MGLH - מגילה) means scroll. If you change the vowels of MGLH it is pronounced *megaleh*, which means to reveal. I find I am often observing a revealing of the heart like an unfurling scroll. The medicine catalyzes an opening that reveals a sweetness that reminds clients "who I am"... this unfurling process is amazing and sometimes takes a few sessions for the scroll to be uncovered (feels good), unrolled (often uncomfortable), and the words are read (sweetness).

From Fight To Play: The word *lechem* (LHM - לחם) means bread. If you change the vowels of LHM it is *lochem*, which means war. But if you read the letters backward, MHL - מחל, pronounced *machal* means to forgive, and pronounced *mochel* means to dance. And if you change the letters to HML, *chamal* (HML (חמל) it means mercy. And there's more!....

Stop Running: The word *ratz* (RZ - רץ) means to run. Spelled backward, it means *tzar* (ZR - צר), which means suffering. Take a moment to meditate on the relationship between running and suffering. We run away from suffering and suffer when we just can't run anymore. There is a wonderful verse from the 23rd Psalm, the last line: "Surely goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life". A religious client of ours once chose this verse as her contemplation. After holding space on it she declared, "How do we let goodness and kindness catch up? Slowing down and surrendering." My jaw dropped.

I Am / Nothing: The word *ani* (ANI - אני) means "I. For example, you would say "I want", *ani rotzeh*. If you change the letters of *ani* around, it spells *ain* (AIN - אין⁹), which means "nothingness". In kabbalistic literature, *ain* refers to the connection point between the infinite and the finite, a mystical experience of vast nothingness, expansiveness, calmness, tranquility, and safety. In Buddhist thought, the point of the exercise is discovering that the *ani*, the perceived sense of self, is also *ain*, empty yet ineffably alive. Curiously, clients often have experiences resonant with "non-self" during their journeys. Just last week we had several clients who reported beneficial experiences of VAST NOTHINGNESS during the apex of their journey. This is likely a consequence of the DMN - the sense of ordinary self - being downregulated by the medicine. (And also, possibly a consequence of increased connectivity between the DMN and the parietal lobe, which regulates how we perceive ourselves in space.)

Give To Love: The word "love" in Hebrew is *ahava* (אהבה). The root of the word *ahavah* is *hav* (הב), which means "to give". In Jewish spiritual philosophy, a person doesn't love because they receive, but because they give. This is why a parent loves a child so much more than the child loves the parent; the parent has given so much more to the child than vice versa. Many clients struggle with "self-love" simply because they don't have a cogent definition of what love is. The give-to-love dynamic is easy to understand and makes intuitive and logical sense. Many clients have benefited from introducing this into their therapeutic process, coming to understand that acts of self-care, in and of themselves, can lead to a tangible increase in self-love.

Beauty In Suffering: The ancient tradition of kabbalah posits that three metaphysical pillars underly creation. Each pillar is populated by energy centers called *sefirot* (think Jewish chakras). In this system, the left arm represents *gevurah* (pain and suffering), the right arm is *hesed* (loving-kindness), and the middle, the heart, represents *tiferet* (beauty). Conceptually, beauty is the place where loving-kindness meets and mediates pain and suffering. We often observe clients experience *tiferet* (beauty) in their journeys, as clients experience the deeply emotional and healing place where loving-kindness - from G-d, themselves, or others - mitigates, relieves, and releases the client's existential pain and suffering in a powerful, cathartic, beatific cry. (Fortunately, the MindFold masks we use in the clinic are sponge-like for just these moments!)

⁹ Note that in Hebrew, some consonants change their shape when at the end of a word. Here, the same letter, *nun* has a different shape (ן or נ).

THE "AIN" STATE

AIN (אין) - Nothingness

Non-Ordinary Mind > Transformational / Psychedelic

simple self / ego-dissolution



ANI (אני) - Self

Non-Ordinary Mind > Trance / Psycholytic

Authentic Self / DMN reduction



YNI (עני) - Poor Person

Ordinary "Poverty" Mind

THE "AIN" STATE



What is AIN (אין) (*ain*)?

In Hebrew, AIN means "nothing" or "**nothingness**". In modern Hebrew, to say, "I don't have anything" one would say, "AIN li (לי אין) - there is nothing to me". In classical Jewish mysticism, AIN, nothingness, is the "name of G-d" associated with the point of interface between the Creator and the Created World. It is considered the highest point of realization anything other than G-d itself can achieve.

What is ANI (אני) (*ah-ni*)?

The Hebrew word ANI means "I" or "**Self**". For example, to say "I want" in modern Hebrew, a person would say, "ANI *rotzeh* (אני רוצה)". According to classical Jewish mysticism, words comprised of the same letters in different orders have an intrinsic, meaningful relationship. **Incredibly, the letters for self, ANI, and nothingness, AIN, are exactly the same; the only difference is that the order of the I (yud - י) and N (nun - נ) are swapped.** (note that some Hebrew letters change their shape depending on whether they are in the middle or end of a word, so that's why the nun has two shapes, נ and ן)

What is YNI (עני) (*aw-ni*)?

The Hebrew word YNI means "poor person". In classical Hebrew, the letters aleph (א) and ayin (ע) are considered interchangeable and indicate a relationship between the words.

Putting These Relationships Together

In ketamine-assisted therapy (KAT) practice, these terms can be understood as presenting a framework that provides a context or "relationship roadmap" for the transformations of consciousness that occur during KAT sessions.

- First is the starting point - the **YNI (poverty) state**, which is typical ordinary mind. In meditation or KAT, this is where a person is at when they first sit to receive treatment, with the mind unsettled, ruminating, anxious, or dysphoric.
- Next comes the **ANI (Self) state**, a state of non-ordinary mind where there is relief from obsessions, anxieties, and depressive concerns. This state is to be found in low-dose KAT psycholytic or trance states. The Self is still there; this is not ego dissolution, but the DMN is downregulated and a person can access difficult states of mind with less fear. In the ANI (Self) state, a person is consciously aware and able to communicate.
- Finally, there is the **AIN (Nothingness) state**, which is known as the "psychedelic" or "transformational" state. Sometimes called ego-dissolution, it can be understood as a state of "simple self" where awareness is reduced to a simple observer of the KAT experience.

Use Of Concepts For KAT

Judaism is very much a universalistic religion when stripped of more ancient modalities. In our experience, contemplating the simple relationships above can help providers and clients contextualize the various shifts of consciousness occurring in KAT practice. This contextualization may be beneficial to both preparation and integration.