

# The Therapeutic Bends

## RAPID DEPRESSION REMISSION AND THE THERAPEUTIC BENDS WITH KETAMINE-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY

ADAPTED FROM DR. JESSICA KATZMAN'S ORIGINAL  
PSYCHEDELICS TODAY ARTICLE

[HTTPS://PSYCHEDELICTODAY.COM/2018/09/08/RAPID-DEPRESSION-REMISSION-THERAPEUTIC-BENDS-KETAMINE-ASSISTED-PSYCHOTHERAPY/](https://psychedelictoday.com/2018/09/08/rapid-depression-remission-therapeutic-bends-ketamine-assisted-psychotherapy/)

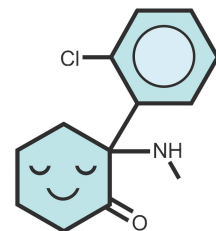


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### WHAT ARE THE BENDS?

CONFRONTING A NEW REALITY

READJUSTING ROLES

EXPLORING IDENTITIES

ADDRESSING REPRESSED EMOTIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE UNCONSCIOUS

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

### WHAT TO BE MINDFUL OF...

For individuals who find themselves in the treatment resistant category for depression, PTSD, OCD, and other challenging conditions, the novel use of ketamine and other psychedelic substances has largely been associated with hope and optimism. Many are exuberant to relinquish their bond to their daily symptoms and wonder how their life might look different once treatment has gained traction.

However, a lesser discussed experience of those who choose to pursue these treatments are the experiences of disequilibrium, difficulty adjusting to life without the familiar weight of depression, and the lengthy process of finding identity outside of a mental illness.

These often unanticipated effects of rapid depression remission are coined the "Therapeutic Bends," a term identified by Dr. Jessica Katzman in her work with patients undergoing ketamine assisted psychotherapy. It is likely that you will experience some variation of the therapeutic bends as you engage with ketamine, as many of our patients at Michigan Progressive Health have reported similar experiences.

Awareness of this possibility is key, and so we will walk you through the various bends in this handout, but will encourage gentle guidance through work with a therapist and conversations with providers about your own unique experiences.

## CONFRONTING A NEW REALITY

As one emerges from the trenches of depression, they may bear witness to the negative effects the depressive episode(s) have brought to life. Whether this is in the form of time lost, relationships damaged, or the impact of treatments on the body, to witness the multiple effects can be heavy, overwhelming, and discouraging.

*Witnessing and holding space for pain and feelings of overwhelm is important when transitioning from the depths of depression to a life that mirrors your values. Accessing support in the form of trusted, nonjudgmental friends, family, and providers will help see you through this stage.*

## EXPLORING IDENTITIES

A common experience for those who suffer from chronic conditions is the development of an identity through the condition. For example, when one identifies as a depressed person, this often encompasses one's perceived capacity to engage in certain activities, relationships, and life in general. Should this identity vanish, one might find themselves disoriented and unsure of who they truly are or what they are capable of.

*Grappling with these changes requires a lot of mental gymnastics, and again, support. Know that you are not the first to stumble upon this identity dilemma, and that our support groups can offer solace in shared experience. This is the time to begin questioning the accuracy of beliefs you hold to yourself.*

## UNDERSTANDING THE UNCONSCIOUS

While you may be able to list reasons or clues to why you are struggling with depression, anxiety, or other symptoms, there are likely other, deeply entrenched structures within your psyche that may explain your situation. Perhaps depression serves as a last remaining tether to a loved one, or as a means of escaping responsibility, full engagement in life, or intimacy with others.

*Recognize that this process takes patience and curiosity. The unconscious will reveal itself with time and especially within nonjudgmental spaces. There is always opportunity to rewrite your narrative.*

## READJUSTING ROLES

Families typically operate around and through various roles. For example, the depressed family member may be referred to as the "symptom bearer" or "scapegoat." As you begin to experience symptom reduction, the family system may be slow to accommodate new roles. This can serve as a barrier to achieving remission.

*Navigating these dynamics may appear intimidating, particularly due to the intimacy of your relationships. You do not have to go about this alone. Our providers at MPH are equip with interventions to help guide you to a point of self advocacy and inner knowing. If you want to get a head start, consider researching Nonviolent Communication.*

## INTEGRATING EMOTIONS

Depression can manifest as the body's attempt to conserve energy, as high energy emotions like anxiety, anger, or distress are not sustainable. Beneath the depression still lies the dormant emotions that precipitated the depression. These emotions can emerge as the depression remits, bringing about a host of challenges in self regulating and coping with life.

*The emotions that are felt in the absence of depression are appropriate as they typically stem from past trauma or relational hurts. Understanding this can be empowering, and with guidance from providers who recognize this step in the ketamine journey, the emotions may become integrated and channeled for greater healing.*

## SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Ketamine has been known to facilitate dissociative, psychedelic states containing moments of spiritual depth. This might look like a deepened sense of self or understanding of existence. Many times the experience has ineffable characteristics, but integration of these insights can catalyze profound personal growth.

*In preparation for any ketamine experience, it is important to acknowledge your spiritual identity or capacity to extend beyond the self. This work can seem abstract and uncertain. Our therapists and providers are equip to help you navigate this internal space.*