

How Ketamine Helps Make Change Happen

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1. Short Communication

The lateral habenula is a center of emotional processing. It is also known as the brain's "disappointment center." Specifically, the lateral habenula focuses on emotions and feelings that are difficult. In 2017, a study revealed that the lateral habenula in depressed animals and humans functions abnormally and tends to "over fire" neurons, causing an overwhelming abundance of negative thoughts, feelings and essentially, a depressive episode. Increasing evidence indicates that the aberrant activity of the LHB is associated with depressive symptoms such as helplessness, anhedonia, and excessive negative focus. Ketamine is known to directly affect this area of the brain. And it may serve to "reset" the brain's "disappointment center" and thus ease symptoms of depression and restore more normal processing of disappointment or emotional pain.

2. The Lateral Habenula is a Biological Quirk!

This region of our brains developed over millions of years to reconcile the conflict which arises between the right and left hemispheres of our brain. The left – stated simply – is the thinking part. The right is our feeling part. How often are these hemispheres in conflict? The answer is a lot. An example of the conflict is how we can verbalize a positive statement about a situation when we accept the rules that support it yet have negative feelings about it. Such as when we have to compromise at the end of a business transaction where some things we wanted are forfeited. Compiling these negative feelings in spite of all other things going well we are at risk of harboring resentments (re-sending/re-cycling in our minds the accumulated disappointments). Thus, eroding our resilience; our ability to increase our fund of positive thoughts and feelings.

Importantly, ketamine facilitates neurogenesis and neuroplasticity (see article in your Allay Health and Wellness folder). The assisted therapy component teaches us to re-think our relationship with happiness and with change – as both are intricately related. It is not unreasonable to want change and the relief of depressive symptoms to happen overnight. However, change is a process. Changes will often happen sooner with ketamine infusions and ketamine assisted psychotherapy. The way this happens is through applied lifestyle changes and the increased motivation produced by the effects of ketamine. Life happens and disappointments and setbacks will invariably occur. However, what is different is our ability to better adapt, and move on.

3. There are Two Universal Rules of Human Behavior

The first rule is the fact that all humans will attempt to experience positive feelings and deactivate negative ones. The second rule is, with all things being constant, something experienced as positive cannot remain as positive as when it initially occurred. The loss of positive feelings over time, no matter how positive our initial feelings may have been, will tend toward neutrality as time progresses. This will occur in all aspects of our life, whether it is the acquisition of material possessions or falling in love. We observe this in our own lives, as well as that of others' lives. This doesn't mean new positive feelings won't happen again. They invariably will. It is this belief that must be restored if life is to happen as life worth living. Testimonies of patients who have experienced ketamine assisted therapy support this outcome. Ketamine assisted therapy can restore not only a sense of hope. It opens the door to possibilities. Healing the brain involves both organic and cognitive repair and leads to optimal functioning. In essence it, gives back

the will to live and the possibility for happiness. It does involve work. The ketamine experience alone is incomplete. The real benefit is through the work which follows. And now that it's possible, your potential is greatest.