

Support Growing for Therapeutic Use of Psychedelics for Vets with PTSD

Chicago Physician Using Ketamine for PTSD Patients Now

CHICAGO, IL, USA, November 10, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the psychedelic renaissance reaches the veterans community, some supporters are hoping to bring that treatment

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Dr. Rachel Norris

acceptance to other [PTSD](#) survivors as well. One such supporter is Dr. Rachel Norris, founder and medical director of Imagine Healthcare, a mental health and wellness clinic in Chicago specializing in [ketamine](#) treatments for mental health.

This summer, The New York Times called it “A Psychedelic Renaissance at the V.A.” in a feature on the handful of clinicians who have brought back [psychedelic therapy](#) within the Veterans Affairs health care system. Further a survey by YouGuv this summer found that 54% of

respondents said that they favor “allowing research into the therapeutic potential of certain psychedelic substances for active-duty military members with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).”

“There is truly compelling evidence supporting the use of psychedelic substances, as well as ketamine, for depression and anxiety disorders including PTSD. It was incredible to be present when some of the most brilliant minds and leaders in the field shared their findings at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Psychedelic Research in September in the Netherlands,” says Dr. Norris. “I am often frustrated by the fact that the medicinal use of psychedelics is currently illegal. Attending this conference made me even more determined to change this with my advocacy work with the Illinois Psychedelic Society,” said Norris.

Over the last few years, recognition and acceptance of psychedelics and psychedelic-like therapy has been growing. While not a “classic” psychedelic, ketamine does have psychedelic-like properties in that during a ketamine treatment, one may disconnect from their surroundings, thoughts, emotions, memories and even sense of self. Perception of time and space is often warped. Each person’s experience is unique and each session can differ for each individual.

Ketamine is approved for use as an anesthetic and other uses are considered “off label” as

physicians and scientists continue to study them. In the U.S., psychedelics like LSD and psilocybin are illegal. Studies continue to examine the efficacy of both ketamine and psychedelics for mental health, pain management and other ailments.

“Severe stress states such as PTSD, life-long depression and chronic pain can impair multiple brain functions and physically damage connections in the brain,” says Dr. Norris. “We know that ketamine acts on the NMDA receptors to increase glutamate levels and to put it simply, the increase of glutamate in the brain is thought to be what accounts for the rapid positive effect on mood disorders while it also helps to repair, strengthen and even regrow connections that provide long term benefit in helping to change the way we process information and emotions.”

As more studies show promising results, they could mark a major step in the quest to both legalize and legitimize psychedelics and make them more broadly available for clinical use.

Supporters like Norris hope acceptance of veterans’ use of psychedelic medicine will lead to increased support for other patients as well. While combat-related trauma makes up 6% of the traumatic events leading to PTSD, other violent acts including physical assault, rape and sexual trauma can lead to rates of PTSD in the double digits.

According to numerous studies, women are twice as likely as men to develop PTSD. Further, as the pandemic wears on and society’s reliance on female caregivers in healthcare, education and at home deepens, more women who are in these caregiving positions are seeking treatment for anxiety, depression, and in some cases, PTSD. Norris recently authored an academic paper for *Neurological Disorders in Women: From Epidemiology to Outcome* about the impact of the pandemic on nursing.

One study cited by Norris found that 47% of nurses working in a hospital setting during the pandemic were at risk for PTSD.

"This was a shocking statistic, even for someone like myself who spent decades training and working in large hospital systems. Given the gaps in current treatment options, ketamine is a promising tool occupying a more prominent role in relieving the symptoms of anxiety disorders like PTSD," said Dr. Norris. "And considering how common PTSD is and the increasing numbers battling it, ketamine can make an important difference for a large number of people who suffer from this debilitating condition," she concluded.

Patient Luke is one client who was previously debilitated by PTSD before seeking treatment with ketamine therapy from Imagine Healthcare. Luke was wounded in a bystander shooting in 2020 that killed a friend and wounded another. Wracked by PTSD and pain from trouble accessing health care services at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Luke finally made his way to Imagine Healthcare.

Prior to starting ketamine infusion treatment, Luke couldn’t leave the house due to his PTSD,

anxiety and depression. Now, two years after the shooting, between talk therapy and ketamine, he has returned to mental and physical health and is feeling positive about life.

For many, ketamine works rapidly to begin to change their brain neurons. Many people have reported changes in mood within minutes to hours after a single treatment of ketamine. However, these effects are often mild and short-lived. This is why it is recommended to have a series of infusions as opposed to just one, and studies have validated this model. Most people who benefit from ketamine infusions will notice more profound and lasting changes starting 1-2 weeks after they start treatment.

At Imagine Healthcare, like other clinics around the country, the majority of people who undergo these treatments note improvement in their symptoms. The team at Imagine Healthcare recognizes that there are a number of factors that can enhance the success rate including the mode of administration, the environment in which the treatments are given, integration of psychotherapy, mindfulness techniques, and the person's openness to the possibility of healing.

Other treatment options Imagine Healthcare physicians may suggest to patients include: Wellness Treatments such as micronutrient infusions, plant medicine protocols, breathwork, meditation, and yoga or other movement practice, Psychotherapy and Educational Groups Sessions.

To learn more about Imagine Healthcare, Dr. Norris, and ketamine infusion treatments, visit the clinic at www.imaginehealthcare.org.

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