

compulsion to go back to using crystal meth again can seem overwhelming at times. We've found that several things can help us get through this difficult initial phase of our recovery:

- *Stay away from the people, places and things that are associated with your crystal meth use.* It may be difficult, but for now you might want to avoid seeing people who are still actively using, even if you consider them your friends. In order to do this you may need to change your telephone numbers to avoid calls from using buddies, and to change your Internet screen names and identities to avoid triggering messages and emails. You may need to avoid places – like sex clubs – where there is a lot of crystal meth use. You may need to stop visiting Internet sites, especially sexual sites, which may trigger you.
- *Attend CMA meetings regularly – every day, if possible.* At CMA meetings you will find the caring support and friendship of a roomful of men and women who are struggling with the exact same problem as you are. And you will have an opportunity, if you feel like it, to talk about what's going on for you right now.
- *Exchange phone numbers with people at CMA-meetings and don't be shy about calling.* Especially if you feel like "picking up" crystal meth, pick up the phone instead and reach out to a fellow recovering addict – most of us will be happy to listen to you and share our own experience with you. You are not alone!

These are only suggestions. They are the actions that helped us make it through those difficult weeks of early recovery. We know from our own experience that they work. We believe that by taking the same actions you, too, can begin to recover from addiction and start rebuilding your life.

How can I find out more about CMA, or locate a meeting?

For more information about CMA and to view an up-to-date list of meetings in San Diego with exact times and locations, please visit our Web site, at <http://www.sandiegocma.org>.

Frequently Asked Questions

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SDCMA

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Am I a crystal meth addict?

Do you find yourself repeatedly using crystal meth more often than you intended, or in larger doses than before? Have you gotten into trouble—with the law, with a lover or parent or friend, with your bank, or with your boss—because of your crystal use? While using crystal, have you engaged in any risky behaviors that you regretted or worried about afterwards?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, you may be a crystal meth addict. But no one in Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) will tell you whether or not you’re an addict. You’re the only one who knows for sure the answer to this question.

If you have a desire to stop using crystal meth, we welcome you at our meetings. We hope that in our fellowship you will find the support and guidance that you’re looking for.

Come to think of it, what exactly is crystal meth, anyway?

Crystal methamphetamine (crystal meth) is an addictive psychostimulant that affects the central nervous system. It is manufactured illegally by mixing some common over-the-counter ingredients with a variety of corrosive, poisonous, and carcinogenic chemicals such as (among others) acetone, lead, bleach, battery acid, and red phosphorous.

Is using crystal meth dangerous?

We know from personal experience that using crystal meth can be dangerous. Many of our members have suffered serious consequences as a result of crystal meth use. We know people who have ended up in emergency rooms, in psych wards and in jail. Many of us became paranoid, hearing voices and believing we were being watched by authorities or persecuted by other people. Some people say their crystal use led to their HIV infection; others are now resistant to HIV medications because their crystal use caused them to neglect their prescribed regimens. We know

someone who either fell or jumped off a building.

Other personal experiences have included:

- Fatigue, insomnia
- Heart problems
- Stroke or seizure
- Hallucinations
- High blood pressure
- Suicidal thoughts
- Damaged blood vessels
- Weight loss, wasting
- Lung collapse
- Brain hemorrhage
- Skin abscesses
- Hyperthermia
- Depression
- Anxiety, confusion, memory loss

What is Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA)?

CMA is a fellowship of men and women who share a common history and a common goal for the future: We have all suffered as a result of our addiction to crystal meth, and we all share the desire to stop using crystal meth and to reclaim our lives from the jaws of addiction. We meet regularly in order to share our stories and help each other recover from addiction and stay clean.

What happens at a CMA meeting?

There are different formats and topics for meetings, but all CMA meetings share one thing in common. You will always find recovering crystal meth addicts there, talking about what using crystal meth did to their minds and bodies, how they got and stayed clean, and how they are living their lives today. Some meetings focus on specific issues or important themes in recovery.

How can CMA help me with my problem?

We’re not professional therapists or drug counselors, and we’re not here to dispense advice. We understand what it’s like to be addicted to crystal meth because we are recovering addicts ourselves.

We know what it’s like to keep making hollow promises to ourselves and our loved ones that we’re going to stop using crystal meth, and find ourselves breaking our promises again and again. We know what it’s like to suffer as a result of our crystal use—our members have suffered financially, socially,

romantically, professionally, emotionally and physically. However, by working together with our fellow recovering addicts in CMA we’re rebuilding our lives and learning how to be sober and free from addiction.

How do I join CMA?

The only requirement for membership in CMA is a desire to stop using crystal meth and all other mind-altering substances. Basically, you’re a member of CMA if and when you say so. It’s that simple!

So how much does it cost to join CMA?

There are no dues or fees for CMA membership. Typically, each CMA meeting will pass a collection basket to cover expenses such as rent, literature, etc. All members are free to contribute as much or as little as they wish.

Is CMA a religious organization?

No. CMA is not allied with any religious organization, and we do not endorse any particular system of belief. The majority of CMA members do believe that we have found the solution to our crystal meth addiction not through our own individual willpower (which failed us so many times before!), but through a power greater than ourselves. However, everyone is free to define this power as he or she wishes. Many people call it God; others think of it as the CMA group itself; and some people don’t give it much thought at all. In CMA, there is room for people of all shades of belief and non-belief. More information is available in the CMA pamphlet “A Higher Power.”

What advice would you give to new members?

We don’t give advice—we can only share with you what has worked for us in our own recovery.

For all of us, the early days and weeks of recovery from addiction are an especially challenging time—we suffer from feelings of confusion, depression and physical exhaustion. The

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