Newcomer’s Pack

Crystal Meth Anonymous

®
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Looking for a meeting?

Be sure to check

www.crystalmeth.org.uk/find-a-meeting

for our most up-to-date list of meeting locations and times!
The Twelve Steps of Crystal Meth Anonymous*

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding praying only for the knowledge of God’s will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

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To the Newcomer...

The purpose of this pamphlet is to help answer some of the questions newcomers may have about recovery through Crystal Meth Anonymous. This pamphlet has been written by members of our fellowship, all of whom have found recovery through CMA.

What is Crystal Meth Anonymous?
Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other, so they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to lead a sober life and carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers.

Am I an Addict?
Only you can answer that question. For many of us, the answer was clear. We could not control our drug use. Our lives had become unmanageable. Have you tried to stop using crystal meth and found that you couldn’t? Do you find that you can’t control your use once you start? If so, you may be suffering from the disease of addiction. The fellowship of Crystal Meth Anonymous can help.

Can I Recover?
There is a solution. Our experiences may differ externally, but internally we believe they are very much the same. Many of us that had been arrested, lost our jobs and the trust of our family and friends, now lead productive, honest and purposeful lives. To do so, we place our sobriety before all else and remain open to a
spiritual life. If you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it, then you are in the right place.

We encourage you to stay close to the CMA fellowship and experience recovery with us.

How Can I Stay Sober?

1. **Attend meetings and fellowship**
   Meetings are where we find the support of others who are recovering from crystal meth addiction. We suggest attending 90 meetings in 90 days in order to get a better understanding of how Twelve Step recovery can help you.

2. **Get a sponsor and do Step work**
   A sponsor is a person in the fellowship that helps guide us in working the Twelve Steps.

3. **Get involved in service**
   One of the best ways to stay sober is to help others in recovery. Even a person with only two days sober can help someone with one day.

What about God?

Crystal Meth Anonymous is a spiritual program, but we believe our members can define what spirituality means for themselves. What is crucial to recovery is an adherence to spiritual principles. Among these, there are three—honesty, open-mindedness and willingness—that are vital. With these, we will not be defeated.
How does CMA work?

Like other Twelve Step fellowships, CMA’s program of recovery consists of three basic components (which were mentioned briefly on the last page):

1. **Meetings and fellowship**
   We attend meetings regularly to learn how others have stayed sober and to find support in our efforts to cope with fear, loneliness, grief or other emotions that might overwhelm us from time to time. After a meeting, we often go out as a group for dinner or coffee. At fellowship, we discuss the ideas we have just heard and get to know other members on a more personal level. Our experience has shown that daily attendance of Twelve Step meetings and fellowship are among the most effective ways to stay sober.

2. **Sponsorship and Step work**
   A sponsor is another recovering addict whom we choose to offer us guidance in working the Twelve Steps of CMA. They also share with us how they have stayed sober and make suggestions to help us stay sober as well. Sponsors do not tell us what to do; the choices we make in recovery are ours alone.

3. **Service and commitments**
   We strengthen our sobriety by helping other addicts. We volunteer to do service. For example, we agree to make coffee, stock recovery literature, keep a group’s finances, or stand by the door to offer a warm hello to a newcomer. These commitments keep us attending meetings regularly, help others in the program get to know us and provide us with the satisfaction of following through on our promises.
How is CMA different than other Twelve Step programs?

We have found that we relate best to other crystal meth addicts because they understand the darkness, paranoia and compulsions of this particular addiction. The Twelve Steps of CMA were adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. We do not believe we are better or worse than those in other Twelve Step programs. At the same time, many of us fail to fully identify with “a falling-down drunk” or, in the case of a heroin addict, “a nodding-off junkie.” The hyper-extended length and intensity of crystal meth’s effects, be it compulsive cleaning or sexual activity, were unique. Many of us have attended other Twelve Step programs, but the feeling of identification in the Rooms of CMA has helped us to keep coming back. After all, who but another meth addict understands the insanity that accompanies the high and, finally, that seemingly bottomless drop into depression that makes us desperate to use still more?

What about alcohol and other drugs?

Many of us struggled with the suggestion that we give up alcohol and other unprescribed drugs, along with crystal meth. The first step in our recovery was for us to admit we were addicts. We came to understand that our addictive behaviour could easily be transferred to other substances. Physicians, psychologists and other professionals familiar with the treatment of our disease refer to this as cross-addiction. This is a very real danger. Further, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol or other drugs have often led us right back to crystal meth. For some of us, it took time, but for most it happened fairly quickly. Our innocent escape to the neighbourhood bar sent us back to our crystal meth dealers in search of our drug of choice. It is important for us to remember that alcohol is a drug, period.

What about relapse prevention?

We experienced great relief when, in time, the desire to use crystal meth was lifted. We know that it is easier to stay clean
than to get clean. Relapse never had to happen, but when it did, it was crucial for us to be rigorously honest about our using, and in any self-examination that followed. We returned to meetings immediately, called friends in the program, and discussed our obsession to use. We did not risk being further caught in the familiar patterns and torment of our addiction. We tried to accept our mistake, without being embarrassed. CMA members welcomed us back, listened and often made helpful suggestions as we redoubled our efforts in recovery.

**Why one day at a time?**

The idea of never using crystal meth again was impossible for us to comprehend. In early recovery, we were encouraged to make a commitment each day not to use just for *that day*. This pledge was still too much for some of us. In these instances, we promised ourselves something along these lines: “I won’t use crystal meth, *just for the next hour.*” This helped us to stay in the here and now and not to get caught up in what *might* be. For these reasons, we say we stay sober one day at a time.
What about Sponsorship?

One of the first suggestions offered in CMA is to get a sponsor. Just what is a sponsor? How do we get a sponsor, use a sponsor and be a sponsor?

What is a sponsor?
An addict who has made some progress in 12-Step recovery and shares that experience on a continuous, individual basis, with another addict who is attempting to attain or maintain sobriety. Sponsorship responsibility is a basic part of the CMA approach to recovery from addiction through the 12 Steps.

What does a sponsor do?
There is no single best way to sponsor. All members are free to approach sponsorship as their own personalities may suggest, using their own individual experiences. A sponsor is a person who:

- Can often relate to the situation and care
- Leads by example, focusing on humility, responsibility, anonymity, honesty, and building trust
- Provides a guide through the 12 steps
- Encourages the sponsee to attend meetings, find a home group, get a service commitment, and attend service events
- Encourages work with other addicts
- Makes suggestions to help the sponsee live by the principles of the program
- Introduces recovery literature
- Notes progress that the sponsee may not be able to see
- Helps the sponsee identify character defects.
How to get a sponsor

All we had to do was ask. Some of us asked CMA members whose recovery we admired. Some of us asked our friends in CMA to recommend someone. Others asked for help getting a sponsor when we shared at meetings. Some meetings have Sponsorship Coordinators or Matchmakers who could help us.

When we got the courage to ask for help, we usually got a positive response. Many of us were told “yes, I’d be happy to” right away. Some of us were invited to meet and discuss it to see if it seemed like a good match. Sometimes someone agreed to be an “Interim Sponsor,” sponsoring us for the short-term or to try it out.

How to choose a sponsor

When we were at meetings, we listened to what people said. We looked for people who had something we wanted. We looked for people whose recovery we respected, who demonstrated the principles of the program in their day-to-day lives. A potential sponsor’s continuing ability to live a sober, happy, productive life was self-evident.

Many of us picked sponsors whose experience was similar to our own. It helped us relate to them. Some of us picked people with experiences that differed from our own. Both ways worked.

A sponsor is like a “safari guide” that we choose to lead us through territory that is new for us but familiar to them. We will inescapably be exposed to the personality of our guide, as part of the process. Agreement with personalities and opinions is not essential to recovery, but acceptance of the principles of the program is indispensable.

It was suggested to us that we not pick anyone to whom we had a strong sexual attraction. Such attractions can get in the way of recovery, complicating the honest sharing between sponsor and sponsee.
Who can be a sponsor?

We suggest that sponsors have a working knowledge of the 12 Steps and personal experiences dealing with life in recovery. We discussed this matter with our sponsors.

When to get a sponsor

It is never too soon or too late to get a sponsor. Many of us got sponsors right away. Some of us needed to take time to decide who we wanted to ask. Some of us resisted getting a sponsor. Looking back on it, that made our early recovery more difficult. It has been proven through our experience that working with a sponsor makes recovery easier.

While we looked for sponsors, we were sometimes approached by people offering to sponsor us. Sometimes we said yes, but didn’t have to accept an offer that didn’t feel right.

Sponsorship does not have to be a life-long relationship. Many of us began with an interim sponsor until we found someone available for a more permanent relationship. Some of us changed sponsors if it wasn’t working.

How sponsorship works

CMA is based on the value of people who share a common problem helping each other. With our sponsors, we began to believe that we could do together what we could not do alone.

Our sponsors were our hotlines. We called them when something triggered us to think about using, or when unpleasant memories came up that used to send us to dealers, bars, or the Internet. Our sponsors identified with our feelings and gave us hope that, in spite of how we felt, we did not have to use.

Our sponsors acted as sounding boards when we had to make decisions. We found it a good idea to discuss major decisions with our sponsors, not so they could make the decision for us, but so they could share their own similar experiences. Sponsors
unfamiliar with a particular dilemma often directed us to someone else in the fellowship who has had related experiences.

Our sponsors made suggestions based on their own experience. Our sponsors sometimes gave us advice. We tried to be willing to accept the help being offered.

Sponsors help not only when times are confusing or tough but also when things are going well. Success and hope are also shared with a sponsor. By simply sharing we find unconditional love, selfless giving, patience, tolerance, honesty and trust in this crucial relationship.

Although CMA members differ in their approach to sponsorship work and in the time they can give, nearly all see it as an opportunity to enrich their own spiritual growth and experience the satisfaction that comes from working with others.

**What a sponsor is not**

It is not a sponsor’s job to be a landlord, loan company, lawyer, doctor, accountant, psychiatrist, financial broker, marriage counsellor or therapist. Sponsors who are in those professions leave that role at the door of CMA. Here they are like us: one addict trying to help another.

Sponsors do not keep up the pretence of being right all the time. If they do not know the answer, they may quickly admit this, and help us find other sources of information including professional guidance when needed.

**What does a sponsee do?**

It is suggested that sponsees contact their sponsors regularly. Many of us called our sponsors every day, even if it was just to check in. We also met in-person with our sponsors. Most sponsors told us how often they expected us to call and meet with them. However we communicated with our sponsor, we found it was important to be honest and keep an open mind. We were willing to take suggestions and did the work our sponsors
recommended. Our sponsors guided us, but it was made clear that we were responsible for our own recovery. We could not expect our sponsors to work harder on our recovery than we did ourselves.

Sometimes we worried about being a burden, and our sponsors always told us that we were helping them a lot more than they were helping us. We came to understand that by using our sponsors, we helped them recover. Our sponsors often told us that they could only keep what they had by giving it away.
What Is a Service Commitment?

We often take on service commitments in an effort to support individual meetings and Crystal Meth Anonymous as a whole. In doing so, we have benefitted personally. Especially as newcomers, we were often encouraged by our sponsors to take commitments at meetings.

Being “of service” is the core of our First Tradition: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CMA unity.”

Showing up early to help set up chairs or make coffee helped us to meet other members as the room filled up. We learned responsibility by having others depend on us. Following through on our commitments improved our sense of self-worth, while supporting the fellowship.

When it was announced at a meeting that a commitment was available, some of us received a gentle nudge from our sponsors or a friend in the program. It was their way of pointing out an opportunity for us to contribute to the group.

By accepting a commitment, we made a contract with the group to show up—on time— and perform the duty to the best of our ability. If we couldn’t meet our obligation, we found a replacement and notified the meeting’s Secretary or Chair. Acceptance of responsibility helped us to stay sober.

For many of us, being of service was a new experience—very different from the self-centeredness that so often ran our lives when we were using.

The following is a list of different service commitments we have taken at CMA meetings. This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Because every CMA group is autonomous, some groups may not have all of the positions listed here, and some groups may have other commitments that are not included.
Setup
Arrives early to setup chairs and arrange the room as appropriate for the particular meeting’s format.

Coffee/Refreshments
Makes coffee and sets out cookies or other snacks. Sometimes this commitment involves purchasing supplies for refreshments.

Greeter
Welcomes people as they enter the meeting.

Cake
Buys or makes cakes for anniversary meetings in groups that celebrate sobriety milestones in this fashion.

Chips
Hands out sobriety chips to help other members mark their time in sobriety. Sometimes this commitment involves purchasing chips.

Phone List
Maintains the group contact list.

Sponsor Coordinator
Makes announcements asking for people to identify themselves if they are willing to act as a sponsor and helps match members with potential sponsors.

Literature
Maintains a stock of program literature and makes announcements at meetings to let members know what is available.
Clean-up
Ensures the room is returned to order after the meeting. Sometimes makes announcements reminding attendees to put away their trash.

Treasurer
Collects the Seventh Tradition contributions, pays the meeting’s bills, hold the prudent reserve, and makes reports to the group as to its financial condition. This individual is also responsible for forwarding any contributions the group may make to the local intergroup, the General Service Office, or other service entity.

Secretary
The responsibilities for this commitment vary widely from group to group but generally centre around making sure the meetings run smoothly. They may also help run the business meetings.

Chair
The responsibilities for this commitment also vary but may include calling the meetings to order, selecting speakers or discussion leaders, and helping to run the business meetings.

Service Structure Commitments
The service commitments we just mentioned were all at the individual meeting level. Other opportunities to be of service exist with your local Intergroup and the General Service Organization. These positions, such as General Service Representative or Intergroup Representative, are elected and have various requirements for clean time. Local intergroups and the General Service Organization also operate several committees, providing even more opportunities to do service.

Other Commitments
Many other opportunities for service exist, such as conventions, fund-raising, public information, hospitals and institutions outreach, as well as other areas.
What about God?

The question here is what do you think about God? What’s your definition? God the Mother, God the Father? A Universal Force? Or do you not believe in God at all? Not sure? It is ok! This is not a religious program. CMA suggests we develop a relationship with a power greater than ourselves. This power is of your own understanding, or misunderstanding—it can be anything you choose, provided it makes sense to you. Your conception of a Higher Power is just that, yours.

Something had to change

Almost none of us came to CMA looking to find God. We came to CMA because we wanted to stop using meth, because we had a sincere desire for our lives to get better, or for a thousand other reasons. For far too long crystal was a power greater than ourselves. It dictated when we got up, when we passed out, and everything we did in between. Meth was our master... The fact of the matter is we really were no stranger to a Higher Power. Now something had to change. Whether we were court ordered, sent by our family and friends, or sick and tired of being sick and wired, we came to CMA because we could not quit on our own. Soon after arriving in the fellowship we began to realise the thing that needed to change was us.

For most of us, CMA was our last resort. Our willpower hadn’t been enough. Our own resources had been insufficient. We felt doomed to a life of active addiction without some outside help. Fortunately, CMA and its solution were there for us. In the First Step, we admitted we couldn’t stop using on our own; we were powerless to do so. We could no longer bear the unmanageability of our using lives. We needed a power greater than ourselves—something stronger than our addiction—to get clean. In the fellowship of CMA this power is often called Higher Power, God of our understanding or God. The most important thing is that your Higher Power can work in your life.
We came to believe

Try to keep an open mind. There are probably as many concepts of a Higher Power as there are people in CMA. Some of us already had a clear idea of our spirituality when we came to CMA or began to re-explore the God we grew up with. Others decided to personalise a version of God they could relate to more easily. For others, God was not a being, but a spiritual concept: a force or the system that underlies the universe. Your Higher Power could be a concept such as love, hope, faith or compassion, or as many of us found, an unsuspected inner resource. Making your Higher Power the CMA fellowship, a Twelve Step Program, principles, the meetings, and your fellows works too. Another useful approach is thinking of God as Good Orderly Direction or a Group of Drug addicts.

Some of us called our Higher Power God and others did not. Some of us didn’t worry about defining it. Others were uncertain and worried that the program wouldn’t work if we were unsure about all this God stuff. But even if all we could say was, “Supreme Whatever, I’m not going to make it without some power greater than myself!” that was enough for a good start. As long as we were willing to accept the aid of some kind of Higher Power, we could recover.

When we were ready to accept direction things began to change. Once we started we began to see the importance of having this “Power greater than ourselves” guide us in this new direction. We started to see and feel the effects of this Higher Power in many areas of our lives. There is no right or wrong answer and the items we found valuable was an open mind and a willingness to grow in understanding. All that we needed to make a beginning was to remain willing.

While it is common to start out thinking of the CMA group and our fellows as our Higher Power, many of us found we eventually needed more than that. We wanted a Higher Power that could be with us all the time: when we couldn’t get to a meeting, when our sponsor was out of town, or when we couldn’t reach others in the
fellowship. Many of us found our Higher Power had to become something greater than a specific person, group, or situation. Allowing your concept of a Higher Power to be vague, uncertain, and flexible may be necessary. Some of us found our concept of our Higher Power changed as we grew in recovery.

What if I don’t believe in God?
The word “God” is used six times in the Twelve Steps of CMA. For many this was not a problem. However, some of us had negative experiences with organised religion, or we had images of a harsh, judgmental, and punishing God. Even some of us had decided that there was no such thing as God at all. But all of us found that if we kept an open mind, we were able to find a “God of our understanding” that helped us in sobriety. Even those committed atheists or agnostics found they too could fit in. Not believing in a God need not be a problem. People of every imaginable belief or non-belief happily coexist in CMA.

We admit it sounds a little strange to say that the “God of our understanding” may be “No God at all”, but atheists have done just that, and achieved and maintained sobriety.

Is CMA a religious organisation?
No, CMA is not a religious organisation. There are no set religious beliefs to which members must subscribe. No beliefs of any kind are required. Even the Twelve Steps are only suggestions. People of all beliefs are equal members in the fellowship of CMA and have achieved sobriety.

It is important to remember this: We didn’t necessarily come to CMA to find religion. We came to this fellowship because we could relate to others who were also addicted to speed and who had found a way out of that obsessive cycle of addiction. We have found replacing that old master speed with a kinder, gentler Higher Power gives us the freedom to learn and grow in our recovery.
A few suggestions for newcomers

- Remember that CMA is a spiritual, not a religious, fellowship
- Try to keep an open mind
- Find others with whom you can talk about spirituality
- Find a Higher Power that suits you
- Use the group as your Higher Power if that helps
- Don’t worry if you are uncertain
What about Alcohol and Other Drugs?

The goal of Crystal Meth Anonymous is to help crystal meth addicts lead a life free of active addiction. CMA recommends total abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol, for the following reasons:

1. Many crystal meth relapses start with alcohol or another drug.
2. Addicts tend to use any substance addictively. When we do, we find ourselves with the same problems and maybe some new ones.
3. We have found our spiritual lives compromised if we use any mind-altering substances whatsoever. Abstinence works best if we want to live the richest and fullest of lives.

Alcohol

Many of us didn’t come to CMA because we had a drinking problem. “Alcohol was never an issue for me,” is commonly heard in meetings. But our experience has shown drinking alcohol can be a disaster.

We’ve seen it happen many times: ABC, or “alcohol becomes crystal.” One drink easily leads to two or more, and once we are under the influence, we are much more likely to use. Inhibitions are down. Judgment is impaired. We may feel a little high, but not high enough. We might start off with one friendly drink at an office party and end up calling our old drug dealer that same night. Others experiment with “manageable” drinking, sticking to one or two drinks with seemingly no apparent consequences. But that can be a slippery slope. Once we are drinking, it’s not such a big leap to start using crystal meth again. Stories of those who thought they could drink like “normal” people are common in our fellowship. But ultimately, our goal is to live free of active addiction, not to switch from one substance to another.
**Being around alcohol**

Since alcohol is legal and commonly accepted in many social settings, we may find ourselves in situations where co-workers, friends or family members pressure us to drink socially. Even if they know we are addicts, they may not understand why we choose not to have a glass of wine at dinner or a champagne toast at a wedding. At times, we may need to be in a setting where there is alcohol. When we go to parties and work or family functions where alcohol is served, we must be rigorously honest with ourselves about our motivations for being there, and about our ability to stay sober in a situation where others are drinking. If we feel tempted to drink or do drugs, we can call our sponsor or other fellows for help, and if necessary, leave the scene. When offered alcohol, we suggest that saying, “No, thank you. I don’t drink” is more than sufficient as we do not owe an explanation to anyone. This simple statement will become easier in time as we get used to our new life in recovery.

**Recreational Drugs**

Recreational drug use can lead us back to our addiction just as alcohol can. Many of us returned to crystal meth—our drug of choice—when we used other recreational drugs. Just as alcohol can lead to a new addiction, so can any recreational drug. Substituting one drug for another generates new consequences and finds us new flavours of unmanageability. Is hitting a new bottom the life we want?

**Prescribed Medications**

We are not doctors. Prescriptions are sometimes necessary; being in recovery does not mean we compromise our health or suffer needless pain. As people in recovery, we are learning to take care of ourselves. However, we should be careful about using our health problems as a reason to compromise our new life. Certain prescribed medications that alter our mood can be a cause for concern. We tell our doctors we are recovering addicts so they can be more careful about what they prescribe. Some doctors with good intentions may not be versed in addiction—the
spiritual nature of our lives is not their area of expertise. Besides, some of us are good at manipulating our doctors: A doctor willing to write a prescription and an addict looking to get high is a bad combination.

The decision to take some medications that alter our mood is personal and individual. We suggest a spiritual solution first whenever possible. Taking a pill may rob us of the chance to learn and truly alleviate our discomfort. We talk to our doctors, sponsors, and trusted fellows, and try to do the right thing.

**Psychopharmaceuticals**

Rigorous honesty and respect for others is important in this area. We have known people who were bipolar, schizophrenic, or clinically depressed and could not stay sober—or function—without medically necessary drugs. Informed professional supervision is essential in this arena. Some of us were already on these medications when we came into CMA. We talked to our doctors because stopping abruptly can be very dangerous.

In early recovery, we may experience many strong and unfamiliar feelings. Recovery is a new way of life—we often feel overwhelmed. When we are first getting clean, some of us experience drug-related depression and paranoia. Some of us suffer from withdrawal. These times are difficult, but they are not necessarily indicators of ongoing mental illness. Meetings, our sponsors, our fellows, prayer, meditation, and working the Twelve Steps get many of us through tough emotional times. We remember that we are not experts in the medical treatment of mental disorders.

**Over-the-counter drugs**

Over-the-counter drugs possess risks, especially if they are mind-altering substances. They can get us high—just as alcohol and other drugs can—becoming new problems with new consequences and unmanageability. Many of us talk to our sponsors honestly about any and all chemicals we take, just to be on the safe side.
Clean and Clear

In recovery, we practice a new way of life without drugs and alcohol. Today, many of us can’t imagine any feelings—good or bad—from which we would have to escape by taking a drug. We can tolerate discomfort and see what new experiences might be on the other side of it.

In our active addiction, our lives revolved around drugs: looking for drugs, being high, coming down from using, “white knuckling” it to stay clean for short periods.... Everything took a back seat to drugs. Clean and sober, living a program of recovery, this is no longer the case. Remaining abstinent and working the Twelve Steps, we have a spiritual awakening—a change in our personalities. The obsession to use is lifted. We find a new freedom and a new happiness, a life beyond our wildest dreams.
Many people in recovery whose lives were ruined by meth pick up drugs again out of desperation. We are addicts: We’re wired for using in good times and bad. If it should happen to you—if you relapse— don’t give up! It may feel like the end of the universe, but it doesn’t have to be. It can be a new beginning. Please, please come right back. Relapse doesn’t mean we will never be able to stay sober. It just means we need to try again if we really want to live a life free of active addiction.

Relapse is not a requirement

Though relapse is a reality for some, it doesn’t have to be a chapter in every recovery story. We try not to use the excuse of others who slip and still recover to use once more—especially because the consequences of a slip can be devastating. Maybe we find an hour’s relief from whatever problem chased us out, or a moment of the old excitement we were craving, but then it’s just new kinds of hell. The last time you got high, was it pretty? Some of us in Crystal Meth Anonymous ended up in a hospital. Others finished our last run after a police chase, sporting a pair of shiny bracelets and some new bruises. Some of us sold our body and soul for that last high. Still others don’t come back.

If we do relapse and make it back to the rooms, the best thing we can do for ourselves and others is pick up a newcomer chip and share our experience openly. Other addicts will benefit from our experience. We can remind them that using never gets any better. Above all, we should be kind to and forgive ourselves. We keep coming back until the program sticks, and we stay. In the fellowship of CMA we find the support we need to hang on to recovery and start new lives. Fellow addicts will love us until we can love ourselves enough to work the Steps and recover.
Our experience teaches we never have to use again. The program of recovery works when we avoid getting high one day at a time. Sometimes, we have to take it minute by minute. If we fall off, we get up and try again! Our recovery is successful if we work for it. When we work as hard to stay sober as we did to get loaded, we will recover. And recovery for us means being given a new life we never dreamed possible.

**How does a relapse happen?**

Those of us who don’t relapse stay sober because we work for it. Are you ready to work for it? In time, we learn to recognise when we are in “relapse mode” so we can stay sober in tough times. We believe a relapse begins long before we return to using. Most of the time, before we turn back to crystal, we start with alcohol or some other drug. This is why CMA members practice complete abstinence from all mind-altering substances.

Other signs of slippery thinking: Often we begin skipping meetings or stop going altogether. Some addicts start isolating from their sponsors, friends, and support networks. Others may return to using because we stop working the Steps or refuse to work them at all. Difficult situations may lead us to believe that using is the only way out of our misery. The common thread is that the drive for isolation at the core of our disease begins to disconnect us from the program and fellowship so vital to our survival.

What can we do if we sincerely wish to stay sober but still have the desire to use? We get a sponsor and work the Steps. We practice the principles of honesty, open-mindedness and willingness, and we take action. Taking suggestions from our fellows who stay sober, we can begin to learn a new way of living. Remember, CMA is a spiritual program; the standard relapse prevention tools work only so well. We greatly increase our chances of staying sober when we work the Steps, develop a relationship with a Higher Power of our understanding, clean up the wreckage of our past and help others.
Admission and Acceptance

It’s never too soon to get a sponsor and start working the Steps. We may hear people suggest that the only Step you work perfectly is the first one: “We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth, and our lives had become unmanageable.” It’s true. On any day that we’re truly living this Step, we are more likely to stay sober.

Why did we come to CMA in the first place? If we didn’t have someone breathing down our necks, were court ordered, or have an intolerable feeling deep inside, we probably wouldn’t be here. Are we powerless over crystal meth? Is life unmanageable? If we’re ready to accept this truth, we admit it every day, one day at a time, even after we’ve learned to pick up chips instead of meth. Once we accept this basic truth about ourselves, we have taken the first step towards recovery.

There is a solution

Crystal meth used to seem like a good answer to our problems. Not anymore. We came to CMA because we finally realised that our drug use was causing most of our difficulties. So when the urge to use again becomes strong, we take a deep breath, reach out for help, and trust in the better answer we are finding a day at a time in our fellowship, in the Steps, and in our Higher Power. We never have to use crystal meth or any other drug ever again.
The Twelve Traditions of Crystal Meth Anonymous*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CMA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for CMA membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CMA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the addict who still suffers.
6. A CMA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the CMA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every CMA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Crystal Meth Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. CMA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Crystal Meth Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CMA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television, films and other public media.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*The Twelve Traditions of Crystal Meth Anonymous have been adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. AA is a program of recovery from Alcoholism only—use of AA’s Steps and Traditions, or an adapted version of its Steps and Traditions in connection with programs or activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.
Take numbers of people you meet at CMA meetings and keep in touch. *Together we can!*