



Development of resources to prevent methamphetamine ('ice') related harms in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population:

Phase 1 – Focus Groups Summary Report

Crystal methamphetamine or 'ice' is a drug of particular concern in Australia. There is evidence that it causes significant harm and distress to those who use the drug, their families and communities. In 2015, a website for the broad Australian community titled Cracks in the Ice (cracksintheice.org.au) was developed to provide information and resources about crystal methamphetamine. Following this, it was recognised that there was a need for culturally appropriate accessible resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2017 to 2018, the National Drug Research Institute (Curtin University) conducted fifteen focus groups in metropolitan cities, rural regional towns and regional towns servicing remote communities to identify the questions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members have regarding crystal methamphetamine and how best to provide web resources.

Who were the participants?

In total, 166 people participated including concerned community members, people who have used crystal methamphetamine, health workers and family/friends of people who have used crystal methamphetamine.





What did the focus groups identify?

Although some variation within and between focus groups in the various sites was present, there were four key areas of concern regarding crystal methamphetamine in community.



Harms to those who use 'ice'.



Impact on families and communities



Availability & accessibility of support services



Supply and demand of 'ice'.

The website should be tailored to:

- Health workers, Families & friends, People who use ice and Community members.





The types of information that were identified as most important included:

- Facts about crystal methamphetamine, prevalence of use, signs a person may be using ice, stages of change, harms of ice use on families.

Suggestions for resources needed to direct community-based strategies included:

- Present information that can enable and support family and community to respond to crystal methamphetamine use.
- Provide practical information on how to prevent or reduce the harms associated with crystal methamphetamine use and managing acute crystal methamphetamine behavioural incidents.
- Create empathy and break down stigma for people who use crystal methamphetamine and their family members.
- Present stories of people who have stopped using ice, family members who have experienced impacts and health workers that highlight a narrative of hope.



Information provided about support services that is:

- Locally based and illustrates how to navigate the treatment system.

How should the website look?

- Visual /pictorial format with interactive aspects.
- Video clips of personal stories (people who have used ice, family and community members)
- Be culturally appropriate, including Aboriginal language, imagery and colours. Reflect variations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.
- Easy to navigate and clear about what it provides.
- Practical and directly relevant links to external websites.

In summary, the focus groups highlighted the wide-reaching impact and concern crystal methamphetamine 'ice' is having on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities, services and individuals. Additionally, focus group participants provided clear direction on what a national online resource should achieve and the complex layers of culture, localisation, empathy and interactivity that is needed.

We would like to thank the team at the National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University who undertook Phase 1 of the project and led the completion of the focus groups. We would also like to thank the many community members from around the country who provided their input and feedback regarding the development of this resource, and who so generously shared their experiences and stories.



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