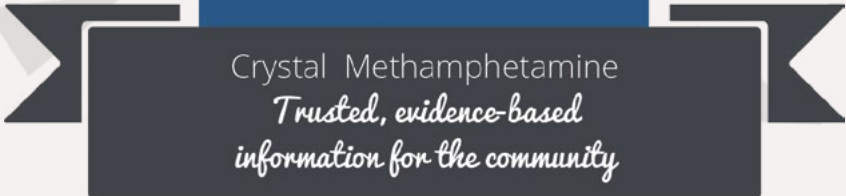


The background of the entire page is a light grey color, decorated with numerous small, semi-transparent grey triangles of various sizes and orientations, creating a subtle geometric pattern.

CRACKS IN THE ICE

A dark blue ribbon banner with folded ends on the left and right sides, positioned horizontally across the middle of the page.

Crystal Methamphetamine
*Trusted, evidence-based
information for the community*



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This booklet provides evidence-based information about crystal methamphetamine (ice). It summarises the information available on the online toolkit *Cracks in the Ice* (cracksintheice.org.au). Both the booklet and the online toolkit are designed to help individuals, families, health workers and communities to better respond to issues related to crystal methamphetamine.

ABOUT CRACKS IN THE ICE

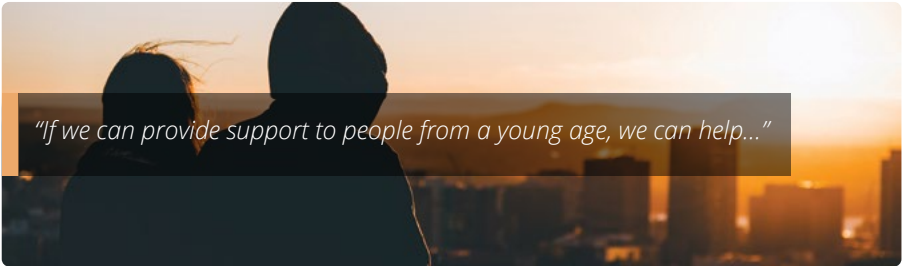
Cracks in the Ice (cracksintheice.org.au) was informed by input from community members across Australia, and was developed in collaboration with researchers from:

- The Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney
- National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales
- National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University
- Centre for Brain and Mental Health Research, the University of Newcastle

In April 2015, the Australian Government established a National Ice Taskforce to provide advice to the Government on the impacts of crystal methamphetamine (ice) in Australia and actions needed to address this growing problem. The Final Report of this Taskforce stated that “The first priority must be supporting families, workers and communities to better respond to people affected by ice.” (Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Final Report of the National Ice Taskforce, 2015).

As part of a coordinated response to this need, the Australian Government Department of Health funded the development of *Cracks in the Ice*, an online toolkit to provide evidence-based information about crystal methamphetamine for the Australian community. *Cracks in the Ice* aims to improve access to information, online resources and support for individuals affected by crystal methamphetamine; their families and friends; health workers working across a range of sectors; parents, teachers and students; and community groups.

This booklet provides a brief overview of the information contained on the online toolkit. For comprehensive information about crystal methamphetamine (ice), please visit *Cracks in the Ice* online.



“If we can provide support to people from a young age, we can help...”

SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES



Culturally appropriate resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are essential to support and empower individuals and communities who are working to address methamphetamine use and related harms.

Based on the knowledge shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, we have developed a variety of resources that support and empower individuals and communities who are working to address crystal methamphetamine use and related harms.

Information is available in animations, videos (e.g., lived experience stories), online and printable factsheets along with free brochures. There are a wide range of topics including the effects of crystal methamphetamine, how to start a yarn and tips for managing clients. Specific support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also listed.

For more information visit:

cracksintheice.org.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples



WHAT IS CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE (ICE)?

Crystal methamphetamine, or ice, is a synthetic drug is a synthetic stimulant drug and variant of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine typically comes in three different forms (ice, base and speed) that vary in their appearance and potency.

ICE	BASE	SPEED
		
APPEARANCE	APPEARANCE	APPEARANCE
Translucent crystals, sometimes shards.	Dampish, 'gluggy' substance. Colour varies from white to brown.	White or off-white powder.
ALSO KNOWN AS	ALSO KNOWN AS	ALSO KNOWN AS
Crystal meth, meth, shabu, tina, glass.	Pure, point, wax, meth.	Goey, meth.
METHOD	METHOD	METHOD
Smoking (e.g. with a glass pipe), injecting.	Swallowing, injecting.	Snorting, swallowing, injecting.
POTENCY HIGH	POTENCY MEDIUM HIGH	POTENCY LOW MEDIUM

The effects of ice differ slightly from speed and base because it is often a purer form of methamphetamine, meaning it gives a stronger and longer lasting feeling of euphoria ('high'). Because of this, it also has more potent and serious side effects, both during use and in the 'comedown' or 'crash' phase after use. This is why, compared to other forms of methamphetamine, ice has a greater potential for the person using the drug to develop dependence, psychosis, and other long-term physical and mental health problems.

Ice is usually sold in points (0.1g) or grams and can be cut (mixed) with other substances. This reduces its purity and makes the effects even more unpredictable.

WHY DO PEOPLE USE CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE?

There is no single reason why people use drugs. Usually several things act in combination. Regardless of why someone starts to use crystal methamphetamine (ice), it can very quickly become a problem. Common reasons for using stimulant drugs include:

- To fit in/feel part of a social group
- To reduce inhibitions and increase confidence
- Out of curiosity or to experiment
- To escape reality
- Out of boredom
- To manage mental health issues (e.g. low mood, anxiety, depression) and the impacts of trauma
- To forget or help cope with problems (e.g. unemployment, unstable housing, financial difficulties, lack of social support, stress)
- To enhance work performance
- To enhance sexual experiences and intimacy



Although many people report that they use stimulant drugs to feel more confident or lift their mood, in reality, taking methamphetamines like ice often increases nervousness, agitation, and can trigger anxiety attacks. During the “come down” phase of the drug wearing off, it is common for people to feel down or depressed.

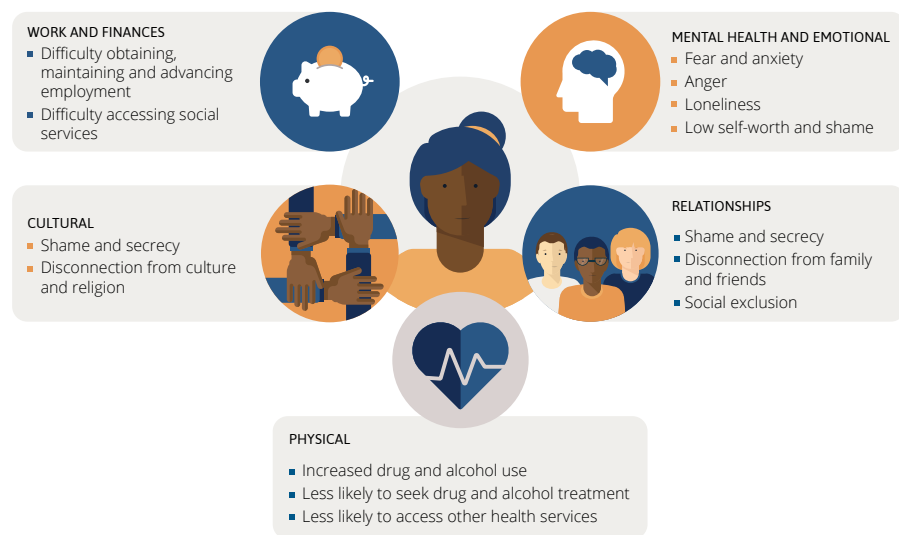
For more information about why young people use ice and tips for being assertive, visit: cracksintheice.org.au/why-do-people-use-ice

STIGMA AND CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN AUSTRALIA

People who use crystal methamphetamine are often affected by stigma. Stigma is often described as a mark of disgrace that's applied to someone when something about them is judged by others. Stigma can contribute to people being mistreated and discriminated against in society.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF STIGMA?

Stigma can have many impacts on people who use crystal methamphetamine. For example, it may prevent them from accessing support. Other impacts may be:



LEARN MORE

There are many steps we can take to reduce the stigma surrounding crystal methamphetamine, such as increasing our understanding of the drug without reinforcing harmful misconceptions and stereotypes.

Learn more about the effects of stigma and what you can do to reduce it at cracksintheice.org.au/get-the-facts/ice-facts/stigma-and-crystal-methamphetamine-use

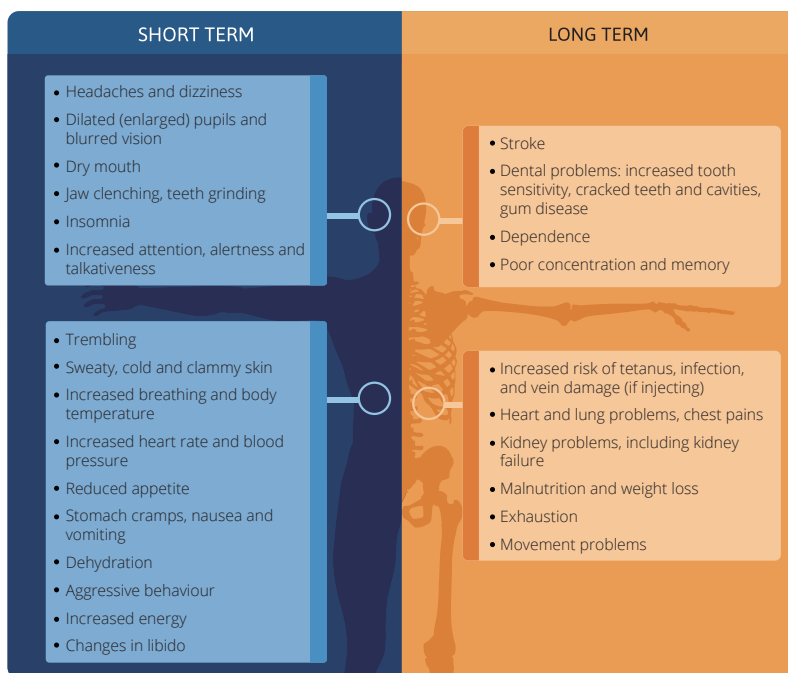
WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Crystal methamphetamine (ice) triggers the release of chemicals in the brain (also known as neurotransmitters) called dopamine, serotonin and noradrenaline. These chemicals, which are responsible for making us feel excited, alert and euphoric, can be depleted by consistent and heavy use. Prolonged use can also damage or destroy their receptors in the brain — sometimes to a point where people using the drug no longer feel normal without having the drug in their system.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

The initial effects of crystal methamphetamine often last for between 4 and 12 hours depending on how much, and how, the drug is taken. Although the effects of crystal methamphetamine can usually be felt quickly, it can take 1 to 2 days to entirely leave the body.



Use of methamphetamine is also associated with increased mortality rates relating to overdose, natural diseases, suicide and accidental injury.

THE COMEDOWN PHASE


A 'comedown' or 'crash' phase is often experienced by people who use methamphetamine as the drug starts to wear off. These feelings can last a few days and symptoms can include:

- Feeling down or depressed
- Decreased appetite
- Exhaustion
- Increased need for sleep
- Irritability
- Feeling anxious

WITHDRAWAL

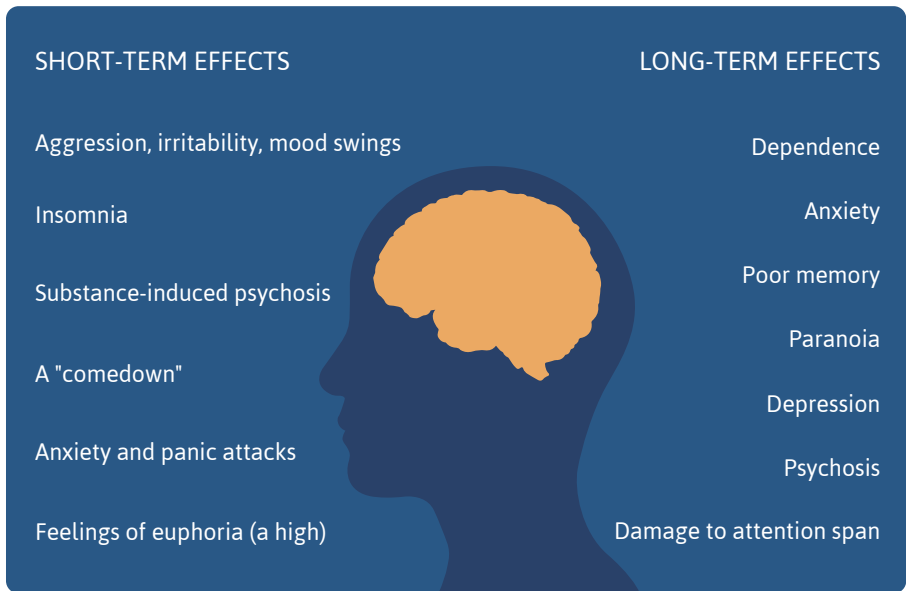
Withdrawal refers to unpleasant symptoms experienced by people with a dependence on methamphetamine. Depending on the severity of dependence, these symptoms can last for several days or weeks, and can include:

- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Aggression
- Restlessness
- Cramps
- Vomiting
- Intense cravings
- Feeling down or depressed
- Fatigue

A photograph showing the backs of two women standing on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The woman on the left has her hair in a bun and is wearing a dark top. The woman on the right has long hair and is wearing a light-colored top. The ocean is visible in the background with some waves.

"After a few slip ups and one or two relapses my friend did get off it and has been in recovery for about a year. I am so proud of her."

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS



For some people, symptoms experienced while using the drug, or during the 'comedown' or 'crash' phase, persist and develop into mental disorders in their own right.

SIGNS OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

Methamphetamine increases a person's heart rate which can cause shortness of breath and trigger panic attacks. Other common symptoms include restlessness, trembling, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, muscle aches, headaches, nausea or vomiting. If these symptoms persist, it may be a sign that an anxiety disorder is present.

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

As the effects of methamphetamine begin wearing off, it is common to feel very low for a few hours or even up to a few days. Some people who use methamphetamine regularly can experience depressive symptoms even when they are not using the drug because it can deplete brain chemicals which are responsible for making us feel happy and excited. If these symptoms persist, it may be a sign that depression is present.

SIGNS OF PSYCHOSIS

Heavy, consistent use of methamphetamines like ice can cause acute* psychotic reactions in some but not all people. These symptoms can last a few hours or up to a few days. A small number of people may find these symptoms last much longer (e.g. more than a few weeks) or continue even when a person is not using methamphetamine. If these symptoms persist it may be a sign that an underlying psychotic disorder, such as schizophrenia, is present.

Some symptoms of methamphetamine psychosis include:

- Feeling suspicious or paranoid
- Hallucinations (hearing, seeing or smelling things that don't exist)
- Unusual thoughts (e.g. thinking other people are reading your mind or stealing your thoughts)
- Repetitive compulsive behaviour
- Muddled thoughts or incoherent speech
- Being hostile towards others

For more information about mental health effects of methamphetamine use, visit <https://cracksintheice.org.au/mental-health-effects>



"It's important for people to feel like they are not alone. Families and friends can play a critical role in the recovery of people using ice."

* acute is defined as something having a sudden onset, sharp rise, or short course - for example, showing symptoms of a serious illness very suddenly.

HARM REDUCTION

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction aims to reduce the risks and adverse effects associated with drug use. Using crystal methamphetamine, ice, carries a number of risks to both physical and mental health. Risks come with any level of methamphetamine use, even using small amounts may lead to serious effects or overdose.

HOW TO REDUCE HARM AND KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE:



Have someone with you that you trust, so you can both keep each other safe, including monitoring for signs of a bad reaction and calling for help if an overdose occurs. Ice may also make you feel anxious and/or paranoid so having someone you can trust/feel safe with can help.



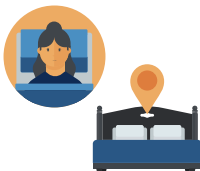
Alternatively, have the phone numbers of friends or family handy, or have contacts for your local generalised and specialist services (these may include GP/ED/health centres and AOD centres).



Ice can reduce your appetite, cause your body to overheat or become dehydrated, so try to eat before you use and keep water with you. Try to have a well-balanced diet and avoid relying on fast food. Look for easy to eat, healthy foods if you are having trouble eating - like smoothies, yoghurt, pasta, or soup.



Ice is the purest form of methamphetamine and is very potent. Especially with a new batch, start off using a small amount and wait a while before using more.



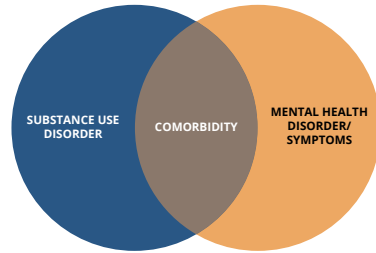
Ice can cause disrupted sleep patterns which may develop into insomnia-like sleep problems. If your body starts feeling tired, it may be time to rest and take a break. Having a good sleep routine as well as a safe, comfortable, and quiet place to rest may aid in trouble sleeping and/or restlessness.

CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

WHAT ARE CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS ('COMORBIDITY')?

'Comorbidity' occurs when a person experiences two or more medical conditions at the same time. These co-occurring conditions are referred to as 'comorbid' and often interact with one another over long periods of time.

When someone experiences both a substance use disorder (e.g., crystal methamphetamine dependence) and a mental health disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression, psychosis) at the same time they generally have poorer overall health and wellbeing compared to those experiencing just one of these conditions.



Adapted from the Comorbidity Guidelines.

People experiencing co-occurring substance use and mental health issues should discuss this with their local doctor, AOD counsellor, or mental health professional to ensure both areas of concern are addressed in treatment.

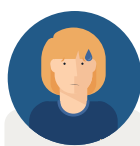
To learn more, visit <https://cracksintheice.org.au/what-are-cooccurring-conditions>

METHAMPHETAMINE AND OVERDOSE

An overdose can occur when a person has taken a drug and experiences negative effects, as the body is unable to handle the dosage taken. Methamphetamine overdose (also known as toxicity) can result in complications such as heat stroke, heart and other organ failure, seizures, and/or possible death.

Crystal methamphetamine overdoses can occur with any dosage taken, depending on a person's prior health status, tolerance and whether it has been taken with other drugs or alcohol. As ice, or crystal, is often the purer form of methamphetamine, overdoses can happen even if someone has taken a small amount.

Learning the signs of an overdose can potentially save a life. Signs of overdose can include:



**Hot, flushed
or sweaty skin**



**Severe
headaches**



**Chest
pain**



**Unsteady
walking**



**Difficulty
breathing**



**Psychotic
symptoms**



**Feeling panicked or
very agitated**



**Confusion or
disorientation**



**Tremors, spasms, jerky
movements or seizures**

Call an ambulance (000) as soon as possible if you suspect an overdose might be happening. Remember, paramedics do not involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or to others.

For more information on what to do if an overdose occurs, including how to put someone in the recovery position, visit cracksintheice.org.au/get-the-facts/staying-safe/methamphetamine-and-overdose

USING CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE WITH OTHER DRUGS

Combining crystal methamphetamine with other drugs carries extra risks and makes its use even more dangerous. The more drugs a person takes (or is affected by) at a time, the more chance there is of something going wrong.

THE RISKS OF USING ICE WITH OTHER DRUGS

It is not possible to predict the different effects crystal methamphetamine, ice, will have from person to person, or from using one time to another. Being under the influence of more than one drug at a time makes the effects even more unpredictable. Factors that cause the effects of crystal methamphetamine to vary include:



The drug itself (e.g. its purity, the amount used, frequency of use, how the drug is used, whether the drug has been cut (mixed) with another substance)



The person taking ice (e.g. their mood, expectations, personality and individual characteristics)



The setting (e.g. where the person is and the people they are with)



COMBINING ICE AND STIMULANTS

E.G. ICE AND COCAINE



+

=

**SEROTONIN SYNDROME
PSYCHOSIS
ANXIETY OR PANIC ATTACKS
HEART PROBLEMS**

COMBINING ICE AND DEPRESSANTS

E.G. ICE AND ALCOHOL



+

=

**HEART PROBLEMS
RISK OF OVERDOSE
PSYCHOSIS**

Using ice with stimulants (e.g. cocaine) can increase the risk of cardiovascular (heart) problems and **substance-induced psychosis**. Using multiple stimulant drugs can also increase the risk of experiencing **serotonin syndrome***, anxiety or panic attacks.

Using ice with depressants such as alcohol, cannabis, heroin or benzodiazepines places extra strain on the heart which may lead to serious complications, especially among people with pre-existing heart problems. Using ice with cannabis can increase a person's risk of experiencing mental health problems, including psychotic symptoms, especially in those who have existing mental health problems.

Using ice with stimulant medications (e.g. Ritalin) can increase the risk of **anxiety and panic attacks**, heart problems and substance-induced psychosis. Using ice with some types of anti-depressants can increase the risk of **serotonin syndrome**, especially among people who are taking a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant medication.

** A life threatening condition usually starting within 24 hours of taking the drug where the brain becomes overloaded with the neurotransmitter serotonin. Symptoms include coma, seizures, shaking, confusion, rigid muscles, rapid heartbeat, and overheating*

WHEN AND WHERE DO I GET HELP?

A number of services throughout Australia can provide information, support and treatment options for people who are experiencing problems with methamphetamine and other drugs. Although it can be difficult to seek help, in most cases the sooner you reach out for support, the better.

Your local doctor or health worker can be a good starting point – they can discuss your concerns with you and provide referrals to other services that you might need.

If you need **emergency support**, please call **Lifeline (13 11 14)**, which is a 24-hour crisis helpline, or dial **'000'** for the police or an ambulance.

NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG HOTLINE: 1800 250 015

The National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline (1800 250 015) is a 24-hour service offering free and confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs. It will automatically direct you to the Alcohol and Drug Information Service in your state or territory. These local alcohol and other drug telephone services offer support, information, counselling, and referral to services.



For other key support services, visit the *Cracks in the Ice* website:

cracksintheice.org.au/when-and-where-do-i-get-help

For a list of support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, please visit:

cracksintheice.org.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/support-services

WHAT TYPE OF HELP IS AVAILABLE?

Health providers can offer support to someone who is experiencing problems with methamphetamine in a variety of settings. These can include alcohol and other drug counsellors, psychologists or other allied health workers, peer workers or outreach workers.

Below are some commonly used treatments and models of care:

- **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** helps people understand how particular patterns of thinking can affect feelings, behaviours, and situations. It can help someone to develop strategies to challenge unhelpful thoughts, which can have flow-on effects to feelings and behaviour. CBT methods can be learnt by seeing a psychologist, who will help people learn these skills in a safe and confidential space.
- **Motivational Interviewing (MI)** involves having conversations with a health professional about drug use in a non-judgemental and collaborative way. It can be used to assist someone in re-assessing the role of drugs in their lives, even if they do not want to reduce their drug use.
- **Online treatment programs** can involve 'chatting' to a trained counsellor over the internet in real-time or by email, or a pre-programmed online course that is offered with or without support from a trained health professional.
- **Residential rehabilitation clinics** are places where people can stay for a few days or up to a few months at a time for support through withdrawal and recovery.
- **Other support options** which may be helpful include support groups (e.g., SMART Recovery) and multicomponent treatment programs.

Recovery from methamphetamine dependence is challenging but it is never too early or too late to seek help.

For more information about support options, please talk to your local doctor or visit cracksintheice.org.au

HOW CAN I SUPPORT A LOVED ONE?

Crystal methamphetamine use not only affects people using the drug, but can also have a negative impact on their family, friends, and community. Families and friends can play a critical role in the recovery of people who might be experiencing problems with methamphetamine (or other drugs).

The *Cracks in the Ice* website provides up-to-date information for the Australian community, including friends and family members who may be concerned about a loved one's use of crystal methamphetamine. Information and tips for starting the conversation, helping someone who has taken the drug and finding help for your loved one are provided on the online toolkit at cracksintheice.org.au/families-friends



Concerned about someone using ice? →



Starting the Conversation →



When someone you care about won't seek support →



How to protect yourself and others →



What type of help is available? →



Family and Friends Support Program →



BreakThrough Ice Education for Families Handbook →



Family Drug Support Online →



Coping with stress and uncertainty during COVID-19 →

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMEONE MIGHT BE USING CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE?

Signs that someone may be using can include:

- Dilated (enlarged) pupils
- Increased energy
- Aggressive behaviours
- Trembling
- Complaints of stomach cramps, blurred vision, headaches or dizziness
- Exhaustion, fatigue or insomnia
- Irritability and moodiness
- Reduced appetite or other changes to eating patterns
- Anxiety symptoms such as panic attacks, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, muscle aches, headaches and nausea
- Problems with money, friends, relationships or the law

I WANT TO START THE CONVERSATION - HOW CAN I RAISE THE ISSUE?

Starting the conversation about a loved one's crystal methamphetamine, ice, use can be tricky. Having that initial conversation may not meet all of your expectations and resolve everything but can be critical in setting the scene for further conversations in which you are considered a trusted confidant.

Tips for starting a conversation about ice and other drugs:

- **Gather information** to make sure you understand what ice is and its effects.
- Have a clear idea of **what it is that concerns you about ice**.
- **Arrange a suitable time to talk** when you will have some privacy and you won't be interrupted.
- Ask what they know about ice; **don't make assumptions** about their knowledge of the drug.
- **Don't tell them what to do** and try not to be judgmental.
- **Let them know you care about them.** People will be more likely to listen and engage in conversation if they feel valued and respected.
- **Be trustworthy and supportive** so they know that they can rely on you in a time of need. Make sure they know your conversation will be kept confidential.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

The following signs may indicate that a person is dependent on ice:

- They mention that their ice use is out of control.
- They are increasing their amount of ice use, or seem to be less affected by the same amount.
- The substance is consumed in larger amounts, or over a longer period of time, than intended.
- They worry about their ice use.
- They express a wish to stop using ice, or at least to cut down or control their use.
- They find it difficult to stop using, or to go without ice.
- Missing an opportunity to use ice makes them feel anxious or worried.
- Much of their time is taken up by drug-related activities (for example, obtaining ice, using the drug, recovering from its effects).
- Other social, professional or recreational activities are reduced or completely given up in order to make more time for the drug.
- Their ice use is affecting their relationships with friends, family members and colleagues.
- They are unable to carry out routine responsibilities such as work, school or family time.

WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT?

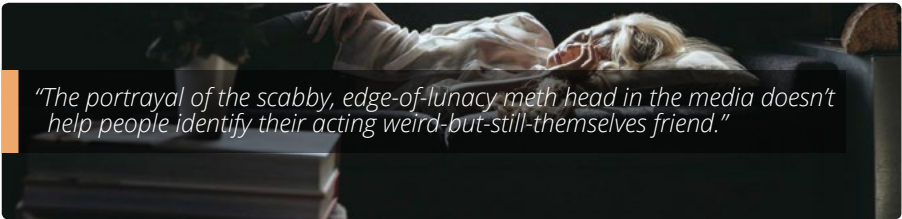
There are a number of services throughout Australia that can provide information and support for family and friends of people who are experiencing problems with ice and other drugs. Family Drug Support (fds.org.au, ph: 1300 368 186) and the Family and Friends Support Program (ffsp.com.au) are two such organisations.

For other support options visit

cracksintheice.org.au/when-and-where-do-i-get-help

For more information on how families and friends can provide support to a loved one with potential ice problems, please visit:

cracksintheice.org.au/families-friends/



"The portrayal of the scabby, edge-of-lunacy meth head in the media doesn't help people identify their acting weird-but-still-themselves friend."

RESOURCES FOR HEALTH WORKERS

The *Cracks in the Ice* online toolkit has a range of factsheets, guidelines and online resources for health workers working across a range of sectors, including:

- General Practitioners
- Frontline workers in hospital settings and emergency departments
- Frontline workers in alcohol and other drug settings
- Mental health practitioners (e.g. psychologists, social workers and counsellors)
- Paramedics
- Police Services

These evidence-based resources aim to guide and support health workers when faced with challenges relating to ice.

To view all of the resources, visit: cracksintheice.org.au/health-workers

Training and Online Resources

[View all resources →](#)



Methamphetamine associated psychosis:
Information for health workers →



Methamphetamine ('ice'): A clinical guide for
Primary Care Health Professionals →



Crystal methamphetamine education for Needle
and Syringe Programs (NSPs) and related
workplaces →

Quick tips for managing and working with clients

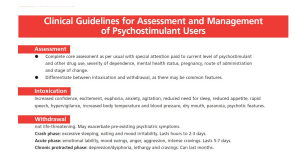
[View all resources →](#)



Managing a client who is angry or aggressive →



Managing a client with symptoms of psychosis →



Quick Guide for Assessment and Management of
Psychostimulant Use →

Guidelines for Health Workers

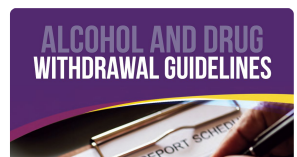
[View all resources →](#)



Methamphetamine Treatment Guidelines →



Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg: A Practitioners'
Guide to Ice →



Alcohol and Other Drug Withdrawal Guidelines
→

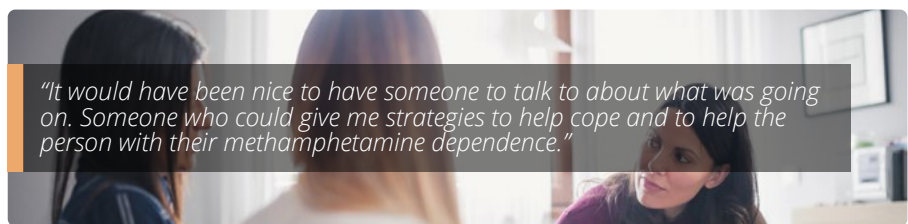
DO'S AND DON'TS OF MANAGING AGGRESSION

Problems relating to anger and aggression are not uncommon in alcohol and other drug services and should be managed appropriately. In general, episodes of aggression are usually triggered by a particular event, which may involve circumstances that have led the client to feel threatened or frustrated.

The following signs may indicate that a client could potentially become aggressive or violent:

- **Appearance:** intoxicated, bloodstained, carrying anything that could be used as a weapon
- **Physical activity:** restless or agitated, pacing, standing up frequently, clenching of jaw or fists, hostile facial expressions with sustained eye contact, entering 'off limit' areas uninvited
- **Mood:** angry, irritable, anxious, tense, distressed, difficulty controlling emotions
- **Speech:** loud, swearing or threatening, sarcastic, slurred
- **Worker's reaction:** fear, anxiety, unease, frustration, anger

If a client becomes aggressive, threatening or potentially violent, it is important for alcohol and other drug workers to respond in accordance with the policies and procedures specific to their service. It is also important for service providers to have knowledge of how to respond to challenging behaviour, including physical threats or actual violence.



"It would have been nice to have someone to talk to about what was going on. Someone who could give me strategies to help cope and to help the person with their methamphetamine dependence."

Source: Marel C, Siedlecka E, Fisher A, Gournay K, Deady M, Baker A, Kay-Lambkin F, Teesson M, Baillie A, Mills KL. (2022). Guidelines on the management of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings (3rd edition). Sydney, Australia: Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use, The University of Sydney. The Guidelines were funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

Further information about managing phases of aggression can be found at: comorbidityguidelines.org.au.

BELOW ARE SOME GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AGGRESSIVE CLIENTS:

✓ DO

- ✓ Stay calm and keep your emotions in check.
- ✓ Adopt a passive and non-threatening body posture (e.g. hands by your side with empty palms facing forward, body at a 45-degree angle to the aggressor).
- ✓ Let the client air his/her feelings and acknowledge them.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to keep a dialogue going.
- ✓ Be flexible, within reason.
- ✓ Use the space for self-protection (position yourself close to the exit, don't crowd the client).
- ✓ Structure the work environment to ensure safety (e.g. have safety mechanisms in place such as alarms and remove items that can be used as potential weapons).
- ✓ Make sure other clients are out of harm's way.

X DON'T

- X Challenge or threaten the client by tone of voice, eyes or body language.
- X Say things that will escalate the aggression.
- X Yell, even if the client is yelling at you.
- X Turn your back on the client.
- X Rush the client.
- X Argue with the client.
- X Stay around if the client doesn't calm down.
- X Ignore verbal threats or warnings of violence.
- X Tolerate violence or aggression.
- X Try to disarm a person with a weapon or battle it alone.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS

Getting the facts about ice and other drugs is an important step in preventing their use and related harms. The *Cracks in the Ice* (cracksintheice.org.au) website provides access to information and resources about crystal methamphetamine for parents, teachers, and students. This includes:

- Strategies for starting a conversation with a young person.
- Help-seeking and harm-minimisation tips for students.
- Evidence-based programs for psychostimulant use for use in schools e.g. the **Our Futures: Cannabis and Psychostimulant Module**.
- Information for parents and teachers about preventing drug related harms.

For comprehensive information and resources for school communities about alcohol and other drugs, visit **Positive Choices:** positivechoices.org.au

To order free drug and alcohol information booklets for teachers, parents and students, visit positivechoices.org.au/order/booklet



Tools for Teachers



School-based drug prevention: What works? A guide for teachers →

Tools for Parents



Starting the conversation about crystal methamphetamine with a young person →

Tools for Students



Asking For Help Factsheet →

I'M A PARENT - HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISK OF CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN THE FAMILY?

As a parent or guardian, it is normal to feel responsible for your child's life and the decisions they make. Research has shown there are many ways in which parents can minimise the chances that a young person will use drugs, including ice, or experience harms from their use.

1. BE A ROLE MODEL

It's important to set a good example, as your behaviour and attitude towards ice and other drugs can have a big influence on your child's behaviour. Avoid contradictions between what you tell them and what you do, and try to find fun ways to deal with problems that don't involve drugs.

2. BE INVOLVED IN THEIR LIVES

Get involved and show an interest in their hobbies and activities. Aim to spend time with your child regularly where you can give them your undivided attention. One way of doing this is to set up a routine of having meals together or helping them with their homework. If they go out, ask them about where they are going and who they are going with and make this discussion a regular part of your conversation. Knowing who your child is with and where they are can help reduce risk. It's also important to restrict internet access to central areas in the house.

Peer influence exerts a huge effect on your child's behaviour, so it is natural to want to help your child choose the right friends. If you pick your child up from school or after school activities, be open to inviting their friends to your house. You can also build a support network by getting to know their parents. If you have good reason to believe your child's friends are involved in ice or other drugs, be prepared to support them to find a new set of friends by engaging them in some new activities.

3. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN GOOD COMMUNICATION

Encourage them to share their thoughts, feelings, and opinions to show you value what they think. This will allow them to be honest and not just say what they think you want to hear. Try not to lecture them, it is important to listen to their thoughts and concerns and offer help and support. Try and make yourself somehow available most of the time. For example, make sure your child can contact you easily if they are at a party. And most importantly, let your child know that you are always ready and willing to talk and listen.

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

The Community Toolkit section of the website provides local councils, parents and citizen groups, community organisations or concerned community members with the appropriate tools for use at community forums and events.

To view all of the resources, please visit: cracksintheice.org.au/community-toolkit



Cracks in the Ice in the Media →



How to run a forum 10-step guide →



The Story Behind the Stereotype →



Promotion kit →



Webinars →



Media Guidelines for Communicating About Crystal Methamphetamine →



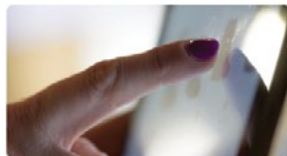
Download the *Cracks in the Ice* Booklet & Brochure →



Order *Cracks in the Ice* booklets and brochures →



Use the *Cracks in the Ice* PowerPoint presentation (PDF or PPT) and speaker notes →



Build your own handout →



Download and print factsheets →



Download and print *Cracks in the Ice* posters (A1, A4) →

WEBINAR SERIES

The *Cracks in the Ice* webinar series provides in-depth information about a range of topics related to crystal methamphetamine. The webinars are presented by expert speakers such as researchers, clinicians and individuals with lived experience of using methamphetamines and other drugs.

The webinars are recorded and made available to watch on-demand at:
cracksintheice.org.au/webinar



DEMYSTIFYING METHAMPHETAMINE USE AND FINDING A PATH TO RECOVERY

METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN YOUTH - MENTAL HEALTH AND FUNCTIONAL OUTCOMES



THE ABORIGINAL DRUG AND ALCOHOL RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION NETWORK (ADARRN) MODEL OF CARE

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DECRIMINALISATION' OR 'LEGALISATION' OF DRUGS? A CALL FOR CONSISTENCY



To be notified about upcoming webinars, subscribe to our newsletter at
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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

A variety of free and confidential telephone and online support services are available for people experiencing problems with crystal methamphetamine, as well as their family and friends.

- **National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline:** For free and confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs, call the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline. It will automatically direct you to the Alcohol and Drug Information Service in your state or territory. These local alcohol and other drug telephone services offer support, information, counselling and referral to services. **Phone: 1800 250 015**
- **Family Drug Support:** 24-hour support for relatives and friends affected by alcohol and other drugs. **Phone: 1300 368 186 | fds.org.au**
- **Lifeline:** Crisis telephone support. Open 24 hours. Also provides one-on-one online chat support. **Phone: 13 11 14 | lifeline.org.au**
- **Alcohol and Drug Foundation - DRUGINFO:** DrugInfo is a free and confidential phone service providing information on alcohol and other drugs as well as the contact details of counselling, treatment and support services. Available Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm AEST. **Phone: 1300 85 85 84 | adf.org.au/druginfo**

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Australian Government

**Department of Health,
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