

WHAT TYPE OF HELP IS AVAILABLE?

SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT HAS A PROBLEM WITH ICE. WHAT TREATMENT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are treatment and support options available to someone who is experiencing problems with ice or other drugs. The more intensive treatment options (such as residential rehabilitation clinics) are not always the best option. In fact, providing intensive rehabilitation too early can be harmful, as it can make someone feel overwhelmed and disengaged from treatment, thinking that it's not relevant for them, and may prevent them from accessing support in the future.

Below you'll find information on some treatment options and who they are best suited to. If you are unsure of which option is best for you or a loved one, your local doctor should be able to conduct an initial assessment and refer you to a service which fits your needs.

TREATMENTS THAT WORK FOR ICE USE

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT)

CBT involves understanding how particular patterns of thinking can affect our feelings, our behaviours, and the situations we encounter in the world. CBT assists a person to firstly identify those patterns of thinking that are working **against** them, and to develop strategies to make these thoughts work **for** them instead. This will have a flow-on effect to the person's feeling and behaviour.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

MI was originally developed to help people experiencing drug and alcohol issues consider how these choices affect their life. It centres on the individual having a conversation with a health professional about their use in a non-judgemental and collaborative way, with the person themselves setting the direction and tone of this conversation. MI can be used even with people who aren't even contemplating making any changes to their drug use, and can assist them in re-assessing the role of drugs in their lives. CBT and MI have been used in combination with each other and may help people reduce their ice use. Adaptations that have been effective or utilise these techniques to reduce **methamphetamine** use are [Breaking the Ice](#), [ASSIST](#) and [Ice: Training for Frontline Workers](#).

SEEING A PSYCHOLOGIST

Seeing a psychologist is a good way to learn the techniques involved in CBT and MI. Psychologists create a safe space for people to come and talk about things they might not feel comfortable talking about with families/friends. They can assist people who are trying to understand their thoughts and feelings, and help them to learn skills and techniques to manage these thoughts and feelings. For people who are ready, a psychologist can help with setting goals to encourage changes in a person's life.

People presenting to their General Practitioner with mental health concerns may be eligible for 10 Medicare rebateable sessions each calendar year under a [Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan](#). Alternately, the Federal Government has recently introduced an ATAPS ([Access to Allied Psychological Services](#)) program by which eligible individuals (as determined by a General Practitioner) can have 12 psychology sessions per calendar year with no out-of-pocket expense.

Psychologists see people experiencing a range of mental health issues and can therefore assist with drug use concerns and any other difficulties you may be experiencing. This option is particularly suitable for people who do not need assistance with basic needs such as housing and food, as they have the means and motivation to attend regularly scheduled counselling appointments. Given that a limited number of subsidised sessions are available, this service is most appropriate for individuals who may only require a limited number of sessions or who don't need to attend therapy very frequently (for example, once a month).

DRUG COUNSELLING APPOINTMENTS

Drug Counselling appointments can also be booked with a trained counsellor at a [drug and alcohol service](#). Some services may also be able to help with concurrent mental health issues such as **anxiety** disorders and **depression**. Again, this option is suitable for those not needing assistance with basic needs, but are able to attend regularly scheduled counselling appointments.

OUTREACH SUPPORT

Outreach Support can be provided by a trained health professional who visits a person's home to help them complete daily activities and supports them in tasks such as securing safe housing and attending health check-ups. They may also be trained in providing counselling support for both drug and mental health issues. This option is particularly suitable for people who are severely **dependent** on ice and unable to attend regular counselling appointments at a clinic due to housing or financial issues.

ONLINE TREATMENT PROGRAMS

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 professional. For example, [Counselling Online](#) provides free drug and alcohol counselling over the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to anyone in Australia. This site also offers a range of practical information, an SMS support program, an online peer support forum, and details about how to find a telephone or face-to-face treatment program in your state.

Online automated programs that have demonstrated benefits for people with drug use problems include the [SHADE](#) program (**depression** and alcohol/other drug use) and [OnTrack](#) (alcohol use and depression). Other online automated programs include [MoodGym](#) (depression), [MindSpot](#) (**anxiety** and depression), and [ThisWayUp](#) (depression and anxiety), which may assist people with additional concerns associated with their ice use. A number of online portals now exist, which can help people work out which is the best online program for them. These include [Head to Health](#), and the [DigitalDog](#). Online services can help provide treatment at times when people most need them, and are available 24 hours a day. They can offer support whilst people are waiting to access face-to-face treatment services, or in situations where specialist services are unavailable.

The NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use recently launched a new online early intervention for ice use, based on CBT and MI, called [Breaking the Ice](#). The [Breaking the Ice](#) program is designed to help individuals become more aware of how their use of ice affects their health and other areas of their life. To access this online program, please visit: <https://breakingtheice.org.au/>

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

Residential Rehabilitation, such as 'rehab', 'detox' or '**withdrawal**' clinics are places where people can stay for a few days or up to a few months at a time. The rehabilitation clinics provide accommodation, food and access to health professionals such as nurses and counsellors. These clinics often run daily activities such as education classes, exercise classes, movie sessions and gardening. Nurses and doctors are able to provide support for individuals experiencing withdrawal symptoms, and psychologists, counsellors or support workers assist with emotional difficulties during this time. Residential rehabilitation allows the individual to devote a significant amount of time to their mental health and is an environment where people may be able to set goals and make a plan for their future. This option is suitable for people who are severely **dependent** on ice, have limited family support and do not have commitments such as school or work, or who would not otherwise have access to a safe, drug-free environment to withdraw from ice.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE WITHDRAWAL, TREATMENT & RECOVERY PROCESS?

You should expect the **withdrawal**, treatment and the recovery processes to be challenging, and to take time. Often long periods of time have occurred from when a person first starts to experience problems with ice use until they access treatment or other support. We all need to help a person using ice to understand that it will also take time to recover, as they learn to re-enter the world again without ice. This may sound tough, but it can also be very rewarding, and open up many more opportunities in life. It is never too late to start treatment - be fair to yourself, and be kind to yourself during this process. Sometimes you will have setbacks, you will get upset and will feel like giving up. You should know that this is a normal step in the recovery process. Health professionals are there to support you and you should feel free to discuss how you're feeling and let them know of any concerns you have.

The severity of ice withdrawal will depend on how long and how much people have been using, and the level of **dependence** a person has developed on ice ([click here for a screener for dependence](#)). The longer you have been using and the more you have been using, the more intense the withdrawal will be as your body recovers. Your mental and physical health will also affect the severity of withdrawal from ice, which is why we recommend seeking assistance to build up your mental and physical health in addition to getting through the initial withdrawal period. Although everyone's withdrawal from ice will be different, there are some common symptoms of withdrawal from ice that can be found [here](#).

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

If you're worried about a loved one who may be using ice, you can get support. It can be difficult to seek help, but in most cases the sooner you reach out for support, the better. You may want to discuss your concerns with a friend that you can trust. Your General Practitioner or family doctor can also be a good starting point – they can confidentially discuss your concerns with you and refer you on to other services if you need additional support.

For more information on support services and how to get help for yourself or a loved one, visit the [When and Where to Get Help](#) section.

If you need **emergency support**, please call **Lifeline (131 114)** which is a 24 hour crisis helpline or **dial '000'** for the police or an ambulance.