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zation. We do not endorse any particular belief system, but most of us found that our own willpower was not enough. We found a solution to our crystal meth addiction through a power greater than ourselves. Everyone is free to define this power as he or she wishes. Some people call it God. Others think of it as the CMA group itself, the forces of the universe, or the laws of nature. Some people don't give it much thought at all and still recover. In CMA, there is room for many kinds of belief and nonbelief. (More information is available in the CMA pamphlet "A Higher Power.")

What advice do you give to new members?

Here are a few things that worked for many of us in the early days of recovery:

- We stayed away from the people, places, and things that we associated with our crystal meth use. We avoided seeing people who were still actively using, even if we considered them friends. Some of us changed our telephone numbers to avoid calls from using buddies or dealers. We changed Internet screen names and identities to avoid triggering messages and e-mails. Some of us needed to stay away from the Internet or home computers. We avoided any place where there was a lot of crystal meth use.
- We attended CMA meetings regularly—every day, if possible. Some of us went to more than one meeting a day if we needed to. At meetings, we found the support and friendship of people who were struggling with the same problem we were. We had an opportunity to talk about what was going on with us right at the moment.
- We exchanged phone numbers with people we saw at meetings. We called

even if we felt shy or awkward when doing so. If we felt like "picking up" crystal meth, we picked up the phone instead and reached out to a fellow recovering addict. Most people were happy to listen and share their own experience.

- We found a sponsor. A sponsor is another recovering addict who offers guidance and support in a one-on-one relationship. When we started coming to CMA, people at meetings were there to respond to our questions, but that wasn't always enough. Issues came up between meetings, and many of us found we needed close support as we began to live a life free of active addiction. Our sponsors gave us that support.

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

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NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AM I A CRYSTAL METH ADDICT? Only you can answer that question. No one in Crystal Meth Anonymous will tell you whether you're an addict. Some of us knew we were addicts when we entered the program, and some of us weren't sure. But we all wanted to do something about our problem with crystal meth. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you tried to stop or reduce your crystal use and failed?
- Is crystal making you feel depressed or hopeless?
- Are you using more crystal: greater amounts or more often?
- Are you missing work, social commitments, and family obligations due to your crystal use?
- Are you spending more money on crystal than you would like?
- Do you regret things you do while using?

If you answered yes to any of these, you might be an addict. If you are not sure, we suggest you come to a meeting. Anyone who has a desire to stop using crystal meth is welcome. (See our "Do I Have a Problem?" pamphlet for details.)

What exactly is crystal meth anyway?

Crystal methamphetamine is an addictive psychostimulant that affects the central nervous system. It is manufactured illegally by mixing some common over-the-counter ingredients with a variety of chemicals such as iodine crystals, acetone, bleach, battery acid, and red phosphorous.

Is using crystal meth dangerous?

We know from personal experience that using crystal meth can be dangerous. Many of us have suffered serious consequences from using crystal meth. Some of us have ended up in emergency rooms, psych wards, or jails. Many of us became paranoid, hearing voices and

believing we were being watched by the authorities or persecuted by other people. Some people claim that their crystal use led to HIV infection; others are resistant to many HIV medications because they stopped taking them while they were using. Hepatitis C, staph infections, syphilis, and other STDs were contracted by others. Other personal experiences have included:

- Fatigue/insomnia
- Weight loss/wasting
- Heart problems
- Lung collapse
- Stroke or seizure
- Brain hemorrhage
- Meningitis
- Skin abscesses
- High blood pressure
- Hyperthermia
- Anxiety
- Hallucinations
- Memory loss
- Suicidal thoughts
- Depression
- Psychosis

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 that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth and all other mind-altering substances. 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, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to live free of active addiction and to carry that message to the addict who still suffers.

What happens at a CMA meeting?

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

How can CMA help me with my problem?

We are not doctors, therapists, or drug counselors. We understand what it's like to be addicted to crystal meth because we are recovering addicts. We know what it's like to keep making hollow promises to stop using crystal meth and to find ourselves breaking our promises again and again. We know what it's like to suffer as a result of our crystal use—our members have suffered financially, socially, romantically, professionally, emotionally, and physically. But by working together with fellow recovering addicts in CMA, we are rebuilding our lives and learning how to stay free from active addiction.

How do I join CMA?

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

So how much does it cost to join CMA?

There are no dues or fees for CMA membership. Typically, each CMA meeting passes a collection basket to cover expenses such as rent and literature. Members are free to contribute as much or as little as they wish.

Is CMA a religious organization?

No. CMA is not allied with any religious organi-

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