

CRYSTAL

(A.K.A BASE, ICE, TINA, METH, GLASS)

This booklet aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about crystal and to provide information on reducing the possible negative impacts of using crystal.

This resource has contact listings that include information and support options for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people seeking help or advice.

**(A.K.A BASE, ICE,
TINA, METH, GLASS)**



CRYSTAL

EFFECTS • HEALTH • SEX • HELP
Info for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

We'd like to thank members of the community who attended or spoke at the ACON Crystal Community Forums in 2004 and 2005, whose experiences contributed to the development of this resource.

TEXT:

Detlev Jackson, Project officer,
Injecting and Other Drug Use Project, and
Brad Gray, Education Unit Manager.

DESIGN:

One of a Kind Media Group PTY LTD, Chippendale.

THANKS:

Paul Dillon – NDARC, KathyTriffitt– PLWHA NSW, Andrew Trist – NUAA, AIVIL,
Stephen Wye – NUAA, Rene Slym – St Vincent's D&A Unit, crystalneon.org
(Seattle, USA).

REFERENCES:

Australian Injectors and Illicit Drug User's League (AIVL) draft notes on
Methamphetamine for Handy Hints Booklet.

- OHA Rehabilitation guidelines, March 1999.
- Wikipedia definition of psychosis, April 2005.

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

PG 04

INFORMATION ON CRYSTAL

PG 05

What Crystal Is
Effects of Crystal
Manufacture
Myths and rumours

PG 05

PG 05

PG 06

PG 06

HOW CRYSTAL IS TAKEN

PG 08

Snorting
Swallowing
Shafting
Smoking
Injecting
Veins and vein-care

PG 08

PG 08

PG 09

PG 09

PG 10

PG 11

CRYSTAL AND HEALTH

PG 12

Psychosis
Crystal-related paranoia
Helping someone having a psychotic episode
Crystal and sex
Crystal and HIV medications
Partying on crystal
Mixing crystal with other drugs

PG 12

PG 12

PG 13

PG 13

PG 15

PG 15

PG 15

HELPING YOURSELF AND HELPING OTHERS

PG 16

Supporting someone who needs help
Tips on helping someone on the road to recovery
Treatment options
Detoxification and Rehabilitation
Tips for cutting down, having a break, or quitting
Depression and anxiety

PG 17

PG 18

PG 20

PG 21

PG 22

PG 23

GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

PG 24

Information, support and referrals

CRYSTAL

(A.K.A BASE, ICE, TINA, METH, GLASS)

INTRODUCTION

The number of people in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities in NSW who have tried or who use crystal regularly is rising, along with the need for accurate information. This booklet aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about crystal and to provide information on reducing the possible negative impacts of using crystal.

This resource has contact listings that include information and support options for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people seeking help or advice.

**(A.K.A BASE, ICE,
TINA, METH, GLASS)**

INFORMATION ON CRYSTAL

WHAT CRYSTAL IS

Crystal is a type of methamphetamine and is a powerful artificial stimulant. Stimulants speed up the operation of the brain and central nervous system, including heartbeat and breathing. Amphetamine (speed) is also a stimulant, but less pure than crystal so it's effects are less powerful and shorter lasting.

EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL

The effects of crystal (like all drugs), will depend on a number of factors including the amount taken, how it's taken, it's level of purity, one's mood before use, the location of use, interactions with other drugs and physiological factors (eg age, gender, weight, etc).

Other factors like an individual's length of use, dependence and health will also influence effects.

Effects can be both psychological (affecting the brain) or physiological (affecting the body), and will change if the dose is larger, or use continues regularly over a longer period.

Crystal is used for a range of desired effects. These include, euphoria, increased libido, energy, increased alertness, reduced appetite, faster reaction time and feelings of increased physical strength.

However, there can also be a range of effects that are unwanted or undesirable. They include increased heart rate, breathing rate and temperature, irregular heartbeat, abdominal cramps, sweating, dilated pupils, tiredness, sleepiness, itching/picking/scratching, agitation, nervousness, paranoia, aggression, (pseudo-) hallucinations and drug cravings.

MANUFACTURE

Because the manufacturing process is illegal, the strength and level of impurities in crystal can vary. Speed, which is an amphetamine, is usually much less pure than crystal.

Depending upon the manufacturing process and the chemicals used, the appearance can range from transparent or white, to shades of red, yellow or orange. Consistency ranges from waxy (often-called base) or powdery (usually called speed) to crystalline (referred to as crystal, ice, tina and glass).

MYTHS AND RUMOURS

Chasing/smoking on aluminium foil will give off harmful fumes when heated

At the time of writing this resource, no research was available to confirm this.

It is impossible to overdose on crystal meth

Overdose is often associated with opiate drugs like heroin, which slows down and can stop heartbeat and breathing. Overdose on crystal meth is possible, however, it does not cause the same symptoms. Signs of crystal overdose include irregular heartbeat, very fast pulse and heartbeat, shortness of breath, confusion, disorientation and psychosis.

Different types of methamphetamine have different effects

People often believe that crystal, ice and base all have different effects. However, they are more or less the same combination of chemicals. They will have been manufactured or cut differently and therefore have different levels of purity and different kinds of impurities.

Using crystal will improve your t-cell count

This rumour has surfaced from time to time, and is a favourite with some sellers of crystal, it is also untrue.

Injecting takes less of a toll on the body than smoking, because smoking affects the lungs

Smoking crystal can cause harm to lungs, but there are also a number of possible serious health issues associated with injecting. (see injecting section, Page 10).

Crystal is worse than GHB or GHB is worse than crystal

Neither drug is worse than the other. Effects are different and can be serious if too much of either drug is taken. Someone who is experiencing difficulties with either drug needs support.

Sex with crystal is better than sex without crystal

Many guys who no longer use crystal report that while sex without crystal is different to sex with crystal, in some ways they found it more pleasurable without because they felt connected with the person instead of the drug. For some long term crystal users, finding a way to enjoy sex without crystal may require the support and assistance of a counsellor or other professional.



HOW CRYSTAL IS TAKEN

Crystal is taken in a number of different ways. The effects of crystal can be powerful and absorption into the body especially from smoking or injecting is fast. All drug use, including crystal, involves some risk. The only way to avoid any risk is not to use crystal at all. However if this is not an option for you, there are a range of ways to reduce these risks when using crystal.

SNORTING

Snorting crystal using a variety of implements (eg rolled-up bank note, straw, empty biro, etc) is probably the most common way powdered forms of crystal are taken. Both the snorting equipment and the crystal can damage the delicate lining of the nose.

To help reduce the chance of damage to your nostrils:

- Finely chop the powder before inhaling.
- Alternate nostrils and
- Rinse the nostrils out after snorting.

Hepatitis C can be passed on from tiny, often invisible, amounts of blood on shared snorting equipment.

- Always use your own snorting equipment and keep it away from other people's so they don't get mixed up.

SWALLOWING (BOMBING)

Crystal is sometimes swallowed. Swallowing the actual crystals causes irritation as they travel to the stomach.

To reduce the chance of irritation:

- Dissolve the crystal in warm water, or
- Wrap it in cigarette paper before swallowing it.



SHAFTING (SHELVING, STUFFING)

Sometimes crystal is shafted (inserted into the arse). This method of use is often associated with sex play. Shafting can have a strong laxative effect. Crystal shafted directly, especially in crystal form, may burn the lining of the arse. Damage to the lining of the arse can increase the chances of HIV and hepatitis C being transmitted.

To reduce the chances of burning the lining of the arse:

- Dissolve the crystal in warm water and squirt into the arse or
- Wrap it in cigarette paper before inserting into the arse.

Washing your hands before and after shafting is important to prevent transmission of a range of faecal (shit) borne diseases like hepatitis A and shigella.

SMOKING (CHASING)

Smoking, or chasing, is one of the most common ways to use crystal – especially when it's in a crystallised form. Glass pipes used to smoke crystal can become very hot and cause burns to mouth or gums, or have sharp edges if they are damaged. Sometimes crystal is also smoked on aluminium foil, or the base of soft drink cans, often because glass pipes are not available – these can also cause cuts or burns. These types of injuries can make hepatitis C transmission possible if equipment is shared.

To reduce the chances of burns, cuts or Hepatitis C transmission

- Put tape over rough edges and the mouthpiece.
- Don't share pipes or equipment with sharp edges.
- Keep a spare pipe available in case one becomes damaged or becomes too hot.

To reduce the chance of smoking too much or burning the throat:

- Inhale slowly and
- Leave time between one smoke and the next.

INJECTING CRYSTAL

Injecting crystal means effects are felt quickly, almost as quickly as smoking, which has the fastest effects. Injecting any drug including crystal can involve risk of HIV and Hepatitis C transmission.

To prevent the transmission of HIV or Hepatitis C when injecting:

- Use your own equipment and ensure everyone else has their own including water, filters, spoons and tourniquets as well as needles.
- Make sure there is plenty of equipment available – more than you think you might need. Free injecting equipment is available at ACON and at needle and syringe programs. You can also buy injecting equipment at some pharmacies.

When two people who are HIV positive (or hepatitis C positive) share injecting equipment, they risk getting a different strain of the virus. Some strains of HIV and hepatitis C can have a more serious effect on someone's health.

Hepatitis C is easier to get or pass on than HIV. Someone who is HIV positive also risks co-infection with hepatitis C if they share injecting equipment with someone who is hepatitis C positive.

Co-infection with HIV and Hep C can make both infections more difficult to treat, because Hep C can damage the liver, making it harder for HIV medications to work, as they are absorbed into the bloodstream via the liver.

Injecting can allow bacteria to enter the body and cause abscesses and blood infections like endocarditis.

To reduce the chance of infections:

- Wash your hands before and after injecting yourself or helping others.
- Wipe the injecting site (as well as your hands and other equipment) with an alcohol swab and
- Clean or cover the surfaces that any equipment will come in contact with.

Before injecting, crystal is dissolved in water – this is called “mixing”. If the crystal doesn't mix well it might not be very pure. Any lumps that don't dissolve should not be injected they are unlikely to contain any crystal and might actually be harmful.

To reduce the chance of injecting impurities:

- Use sterile water.
- Draw up the dissolved solution through a small ball of cotton wool or other filter prior to injecting.
- Draw up from a spoon as there's less chance of spilling mixture onto a surface that might not be clean or sterile.
- If you have to mix in the deal bag be careful not to tear or puncture the bag.
- If possible, try to prepare over a surface you've wiped or cleaned before mixing in case the bag tears or the mixture escapes.

VEINS AND VEIN CARE

Frequent injecting in the same place can lead the vein tissue to become inflamed, increasing the risk of scarring, abscesses, and vein collapse. The best way to avoid vein damage is not to inject, or to use crystal another way. If this isn't an option for you then there are a number of things you can do.

To reduce the risk of vein damage, including:

- Give the veins time to recover between injections.
- Rotate injecting sites from arm to arm and up and down the same arm.

Using crystal causes veins to tighten and shrink and also increases blood pressure and heart rate. Because this effect lasts for quite some time after injecting, the veins will be smaller and harder to find.

To increase the size of the veins to make injecting easier:

- Have a hot shower or apply a hot washcloth to the injecting site for a few minutes, and/or pump your hand or arm up and down to increase blood flow.



CRYSTAL AND HEALTH

PSYCHOSIS

Psychosis is a psychiatric classification of a mental state where someone's perception of reality is distorted.

Someone having a psychotic episode will often see or hear things that aren't really there. The person can be convinced that someone is plotting to harm them, or that they are invincible, or experience personality changes like becoming aggressive. The person is often unaware of their unusual or bizarre behaviour and may have difficulties with social interaction and carrying out the activities of daily living.

Speed or crystal psychosis happens when there is too much of the drug in the body. Psychosis can occur at low doses if use is regular and ongoing. It can also happen from a single, large dose. Signs of speed-psychosis include hallucinations, panic, paranoia, aggression and/or other irrational behaviour. Lack of sleep (and food) can contribute to these symptoms.

Once psychosis has occurred, it is increasingly likely that it will re-occur each time someone uses crystal and can continue even after a break from use.

In most cases psychosis goes away once crystal use has stopped and the drug related chemicals in the brain have broken down. This usually takes a few days but it can take longer if more crystal is taken.

IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING CRYSTAL PARANOIA

The only sure way to prevent or stop crystal related paranoia is to stop using crystal. If this is not an option, even for a short while, there are a number of **ways you can help reduce the impact:**

- Use with people you know and trust.
- Use in places where you feel safe.



- Stay in doors and away from busy venues or the street where your behaviour might attract unwanted attention.
- Reduce the amount you use.
- Don't stay awake too long, try to get some sleep, even short naps are better than no sleep.
- Eat and drink something.

HELPING SOMEONE HAVING A PSYCHOTIC EPISODE

- Keep yourself safe, don't put yourself in harm's way.
- Take them to a safe quiet place, away from other people and any distractions.
- Keep them and yourself calm.
- Occupy them with another activity.
- Explain that taking more crystal, will definitely make them feel worse.
- Seek medical help if needed.

CRYSTAL AND SEX

Sex and crystal can be a potent mix. Some people say crystal makes them feel confident, attractive and horny. However, there are a range of potential risks when combining crystal and sex.

Crystal is known to increase sexual stamina, so sex sessions can go on for very long periods. The longer the session, the more likely that unsafe sex might occur. This could be due to a number of factors, alone, or in combination. For example, the session might last longer than the supply of condoms and lube, or because using crystal can also numb feelings of pain, increasing the chance that an injury, like cuts, abrasions or tears to the dick, arse or vagina won't be noticed. Injuries like these increase the chances of HIV, Hepatitis C or other sexually transmissible infections (STIs) being passed on or picked up.



To help reduce these risks:

- Have plenty of condoms and lube ready so that you don't run out.
- Keep your own toys (dildos, butt plugs etc) separated from other people's or wash them after each use.
- Use a new condom each time the toy is used on a different person or another part of the body.
- Stop from time to time and check for signs of damage, for example lube going pink or red indicates the presence of blood.

Crystal use (especially smoking) can lead to bleeding gums, sores or loose teeth. This increases the risks of HIV, hepatitis C or other STIs being passed on when giving oral sex (that is going down on a dick or vagina).

To help reduce these risks:

- Look after your general oral health (clean teeth, gargle and floss – but not immediately before sex).
- Treat sores and abscesses as soon as possible.
- Use condoms or dams for oral sex.

Using crystal can make it difficult for some men to get or maintain a hard on (erection). To counter this some men use Viagra or other impotence drugs.

Viagra use presents a number of health risks. Including:

- Mixing Viagra with amyl has been known to cause heart attacks. Do not mix these two drugs! Either don't have any with you, or let your sex partner(s) know that you don't want any amyl.
- Viagra (and other impotence drugs) can make erections last for hours. It is unhealthy for the dick to remain hard for such extended periods. Stop every hour or so and let the dick go soft – even for a few minutes. This will allow new blood to flow in.
- There have also been cases of penis fracture or 'broken dick' because the Viagra makes the penis remain hard for a long time. A fracture occurs when an abnormal force is applied to the erect dick (for example from the other person's pelvic bone). The 'fracture' is actually a tear in the thick fibrous coat surrounding the tissue that produces an erection. Avoiding sudden movements when the person being fucked is on top, will help reduce the risk of fracture, which is more common in this position.



CRYSTAL AND HIV MEDICATIONS

Crystal and most HIV medications are processed by the liver. Some protease inhibitors such as ritonavir use the same 'pathways' as crystal to break down and process, which can lead to a chemical build up – sometimes to dangerous levels. Little is known about these adverse reactions, although there have been a few documented reports of fatalities. Extreme caution is urged and lower amounts of crystal are advisable to avoid serious adverse reactions and drug toxicities. It is best to avoid taking crystal, base, ice or ecstasy and HIV medications together within a four hour period. For further information speak to your doctor or ACON's treatment information service.

PARTYING ON CRYSTAL

One effect of crystal is that it can keep you awake for long periods of time. For this reason it is often used as a party drug or for long sex sessions. Crystal also raises the body temperature and reduces appetite. These effects can result in dehydration, tiredness or exhaustion. It can also take a long time to recover.

To reduce the wear and tear on the body and to help recovery:

- Take breaks from time to time to let the body cool down.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Try to eat something even if you don't feel hungry, maybe drink a protein shake and
- Try to rest or even sleep.

MIXING CRYSTAL WITH OTHER DRUGS

It is common for people to use a variety of drugs in combination, often to enhance or block the effects of other drugs they have taken. There is a greater chance of harm if more than one drug is used at the same time, because interactions can be unpredictable. The likelihood of experiencing problems increases when drugs of unknown content and purity are combined. This includes over-the-counter drugs, prescription drugs and illegal drugs.

- Reducing the number of drugs combined will reduce the chance of unwanted effects.
- Wait for the effects of one drug to be felt before taking another.
- Avoid adding other drugs to the mix to 'come down', these can also produce unwanted effects or dependence, especially if used long-term.



HELPING YOURSELF AND HELPING OTHERS




Generally speaking, someone who needs help to deal with their crystal use has developed crystal dependence. Dependence can be psychological, physical, or both, and means the person and their body has become used to functioning with the crystal present, and finds it difficult to function without it.

Someone who is very involved with using crystal may not see some of the negative effects on their own life, or on the people close to them.

There are a number of signs that someone may be having problems with their crystal use including:

- Crystal becomes one of the most important things in their life.
- Financial problems due to crystal taking priority over other responsibilities.
- Crystal is having negative impact on work performance and attendance.
- Relationships with friends, family or partners begin to break down.
- Crystal related health issues like exhaustion, psychological problems, malnutrition and disturbed sleep become more common.
- The person using feels out of control.
- Taking risks that are outside of what they would normally do.
- Crystal use continues even though it is no longer enjoyable, or provides a high.

If you recognise some of these signs either in yourself or someone you know, you or they may be in need of some help or support.



SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP

Before approaching a friend about the problems they may be having with crystal, it is useful to talk to a professional. A trained counsellor or drug worker will be able to advise you on the best way to approach them and what options are available for them, and also allow you to get a better picture of what your friend is going through.

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) has trained counsellors that you can talk to. They also have an extensive referral list of other services. They can be contacted on 9361 8000 or 1800 422599. The service is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day.

If you have decided to talk to a friend or partner about their use, remember:

- They need to know you are still their friend.
- Approach them in a way that they won't feel that what you are saying is a criticism or judgement.
- They might be affected by crystal, feeling either invincible or depressed when you want to talk.
- If they are still enjoying using crystal, it may be hard for them to accept that their use is out of control.
- They may become angry, aggressive or defensive.
- If you've used together they may feel you are being hypocritical.
- They may be experiencing paranoia.
- It might be easier for them to accept things you are saying if the message comes from more than one person.

TIPS ON HELPING SOMEONE ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Some approaches that have worked:

- Calm responses, not hysteria.
- Leave the person alone if they become angry and try again another time.
- See the issue in terms of the person's dependence on crystal rather than the person.
- Encourage the person to talk about the things they are not enjoying about their use.
- If you are in a relationship and your partner has become dependent on crystal, you may need to take more responsibility for everyday running of things and control of finances until the person is back on their feet. This can be a common source of friction.
- Remember it is a huge step for someone to admit that they have a problem with using crystal.
- If it is difficult for the person to see that their use is causing problems in their life, it is important to let them know that you will still be there for them, even if you need to take a break from them for a while. They are likely to need your help when they are ready to address the issue.
- If they do admit to having a problem, try to get them to seek help from somewhere they will feel safe, eg: a doctor they trust or a confidential counselling service.
- Keep in mind that if the person has decided to address their crystal use, some people will respond better to individual approaches eg seeing a counsellor or other practitioner while others will respond better to group approaches, eg: SMART groups or NA. Encourage them to consider both before choosing.
- Talk about safe sex. If the person has stopped having safe sex since they began to use crystal, they are at risk of acquiring or transmitting STIs (including HIV). But take it easy, don't push, give them time to reflect on what they are doing.

Some approaches that have not worked:

- Displaying anger or frustration. If you are feeling these, wait until you have calmed down before approaching the person.
- Sharing responsibility for the person's use, for example calling in sick for them when they are coming down, or making the come-down easier (cups of tea in bed, foot-rubs) can make it harder for the person to see that their use may be a problem.
- Letting the person "flip-flop" on a decision to stop using crystal.
- 'Abandoning' the person, eg saying if they continue to use, you will not be there for them. (Unless your personal safety is threatened).
- Using terms such as "you have a problem", or pushing the "problem" issue. Instead, focus on your concern and support for the person.
- Laying down the law about the person stopping immediately; outline your concerns and give them a little time to think things over before raising the issue again.
- 'Rationing out' their crystal changes your role from friend/partner to jailer which will have a negative impact on your relationship.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

There are a range of treatment options available for dealing with crystal dependence.

If you or your friend/partner are experiencing negative effects of crystal use like severe paranoia, psychosis and/or exhaustion then immediate medical attention may be required. See a doctor or call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (9361 8000 or 1800 422599) for information.

For long term users there are three possible options that can be used either individually or in combination. They are detoxification, rehabilitation and counselling.

Detoxification and rehabilitation: are two options for people wanting to stop or cut down use of crystal. Access to these services will depend on location, type of service and drug used.

For information and advice about what is available, contact ADIS (Alcohol and Drug Information Service), a free and confidential telephone service. Trained counsellors familiar with what can happen when use of Crystal gets out of control are available 24 hours a day on 9361 8000 (or 1800 422 599 – country areas).

Counselling: You or your friend/partner can seek counselling to help develop strategies to deal with issues associated with crystal use like physical and psychological dependence, financial and employment difficulties and/or relationship problems. Counselling is often part of detoxification, (during or after) or to support someone who wants to quit.

DETOXIFICATION:

Detoxification is a way of giving the body time and space to rebuild and heal. During detoxification, the body goes through a process of withdrawal from crystal. This withdrawal can sometimes have unpleasant side-effects, typically the opposite of the effects of the drug. These can often be managed with other medication. Detoxification from a drug takes time and varies depending on the drug, the person and the severity of the use. The bulk of crystal withdrawal symptoms will be experienced in the first few days, but can last for several weeks after use of crystal has stopped. Because crystal is longer acting than speed, withdrawal symptoms can last longer.

Detoxification alone, without the right follow-up is often not enough. Sometimes the problems that were there before crystal use resurface after detoxification and the person will need services to help them deal with these. These are often called Rehabilitation services.

Agencies that can provide support during the withdrawal period are listed in the Contacts pages under Detoxification services.

REHABILITATION:

Rehabilitation allows people who are having problems with crystal to manage any factors which contributed to use in the first place, as well as coping with triggers which might lead to ongoing use or re-uptake once use has stopped. Rehabilitation provides skills for the person to reconnect with their partner, family and the community, and help with regaining their independence.

Rehabilitation services should be provided in the best environment to meet the individual's needs, including in-hospital, outpatient, and home care settings, on a local short-term, long-term, regional or remote basis. Agencies that can provide support during the rehabilitation period are listed in the Contacts pages under Rehabilitation services.

TIPS FOR CUTTING DOWN, HAVING A BREAK OR QUITTING

There are a number of things someone can do to either quit, have a break or cut down on their crystal use. Quitting or cutting down can be difficult as certain people, places or situation may trigger memories of crystal use and lead to cravings.

There are a range of strategies people can use to help cut down, or quit including:

- Being aware of when or why they use crystal eg: when, why, where and with whom they are most likely to use.
- Recognise that they may experience withdrawal from the crystal. They may experience mood swings, depression, irregular sleep, anxiety, boredom and other feelings. These are all symptoms of withdrawal so they need to plan on how they will deal with them.
- Set small, easily achievable goals. Cutting back on the number of days a week or the amount used can help, as can buying smaller amounts of crystal.
- Avoiding people, places and situation that might trigger use. If someone uses with particular friends, at certain clubs or when they go to a sex venue then they should be avoided until they have their crystal use under control.
- Keeping busy. Boredom can be a major motivator to use. Keeping busy with exercise, hobbies or volunteer or paid work can help reduce the boredom. Spending time with friends and family who do not use crystal can also help.
- Making plans to deal with difficult situations. Planning who they will call, what to do if they start to feel like they are going to slip back into using.
- Getting a health check up. Seeing a doctor for a check up or trying alternative therapies can help someone to feel better, maybe start an exercise program.
- Exploring treatment options. If they find it difficult to quit on their own they may need help to achieve their goals. They could talk with a counsellor, a drug worker or doctor about what other options are available.

- Telling trusted friends or family. Letting friends or family know they are trying to cut down or quit and talking to them about how they may be able to help.
- Getting rid of drug paraphernalia. Throwing out pipes, injecting equipment and any remaining crystal and anything, that may be associated with use. eg: porn.
- Cutting ties with dealers and 'using' friends. Deleting their dealer's and 'using' friends phone numbers to make it difficult for them to keep in contact.
- Getting professional support. Seeing a counsellor, trying a group like SMART or Narcotics Anonymous.
- Taking a break. Going away somewhere that they won't be able to access any crystal or won't be put in a position where they'll be tempted to use will give them time to think about their use. But they will also need to be prepared to face the same challenges when they get back.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Depression and anxiety are two very common experiences for people trying to control or quit crystal use. Sometimes people forget that both of these are common effects of withdrawal.

Depression. Someone who is quitting or cutting down should expect to feel more down than up, especially during the first few weeks or months after quitting or cutting down.

To help combat depression they can:

- Set realistic short term goals and stick to them.
- Recognise that achieving each of them is a success.
- See a doctor or counsellor if the depression feels overwhelming.

Anxiety. Cutting down or quitting crystal can leave large gaps in someone's life, and make everyday problems seem harder and more noticeable. Their body might also be coping with health problems or suffering from general neglect. But there's no need to panic. The body and mind have a remarkable ability to heal themselves especially if someone helps them along and gives them time to recover. People will feel less anxious if they can find ways to replace the space that crystal occupied in their life.

GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND REFERRALS

Alcohol and Drug Information Service

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS): ADIS is a 24 hour telephone based counselling and information service. You can call to find out general drug information as well as referrals to specific services.
Ph 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney).

ACON (AIDS Council of NSW)

ACON has a range of services for the gay lesbian, bisexual and transgender people that include:

- Counselling which provides support and referral options.
- Enhanced primary care service, which works with doctors in the Darlinghurst area to assist people using crystal.
- The Treatments Officer provides information on interactions between crystal and HIV medications.
- NSP Service provides sterile injecting equipment, advice and referral around crystal use.

ACON Sydney

9 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 9206 2000 or freecall 1800 063 060 (outside Sydney).

ACON Hunter

129 Maitland Road, Islington NSW 2296
Ph: 4927 6808

ACON Mid North Coast

4 Hayward Street, Port Macquarie NSW 2444.
Ph: 6584 0943

ACON Illawarra

47 Kenny Street, Wollongong NSW 2500
Ph: 4226 1163

ACON Northern Rivers

27 Uralba Street, Lismore NSW 2480
Ph: 6622 1555

SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project)

69 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale NSW 2008
Ph: 9319 4866

The New South Wales Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)

NUAA is a peer and membership based organisation. Members include people who use or have used illicit drugs, families and friends of people who use or have used.

NUAA provides information resources and support to people using drugs and wanting to know how to reduce harms arising from use.

admin@nuaa.org.au

Ph: 8354 7300 or 1800 644 413 (outside Sydney).

PLWHA (People Living With HIV/AIDS NSW Inc)

PLWHA has information and referrals for HIV positive people who use crystal. Contact them for more information on 9361 6011.

Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP)

NSPs provide access to clean injecting equipment and referral and information. To find out about more about these or for a NSP close to you call ADIS on 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney).

SUPPORT AND RECOVERY GROUPS

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)

ADIS has an up to date referral list of other groups and services. They can be contacted on 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney). The service is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day.

Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA)

CMA is a 12-step abstinence based fellowship for people wanting to quit their crystal use. CMA meets weekly in. For more information call 9206 2052 (10:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday).

Crystal SMART Group

SMART stands for Self Management and Recovery Training. Crystal SMART is a self-help group for people who want to manage their crystal use. The group focuses on providing a 'toolkit' of practical strategies for controlling use.

Crystal SMART meets weekly. For more information call 9206 2052, (10:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday).

St Vincent's Hospital Alcohol and Drug Service also runs a number of non-crystal specific SMART Recovery groups. For more information call 9361 8020.

Detoxification and Rehabilitation Centres

There are no detoxification or rehabilitation centres specifically for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, however there are a number of centres that provide services for crystal users. To find out about more about these call ADIS on 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney).

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

NA meetings follow a twelve-step program to develop skills to support abstinence from use. There are often meetings with a focus on crystal, or for members of the gay lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. To find out about more about these call ADIS on 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney).

Rainbow Recovery

The Rainbow Recovery Club provides a meeting place, primarily for gay, lesbian and transgender people, in 12 step programs for recovery from alcoholism, drug and other addictions. See their website for more information: <http://www.rainbowrecovery.com.au/> mail@rainbowrecovery.com.au