

ALCOHOL AND DRUG DEPENDENCE ELEVEN – METHAMPHETAMINE

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(This is based on belief in God. If that offends you, stop reading now)

In this presentation, we look at methamphetamine, the second drug most likely to kill.

It's hard to comprehend people so enslaved by a drug, they eat scabs and drink the urine of others to get high. But meth addicts will do whatever they are told, no matter how demeaning, to get meth. It has that powerful of a hold on their minds. Two meth dealers I personally know told me exactly the same thing. They like dealing meth because it makes them feel like a god. Customers will dance to whatever tune they play, do anything they ask. (To be continued)

General Description of Drugs in this Class:

Methamphetamine is a central nervous system stimulant drug similar to amphetamine. Highly abused, it is classified as a Schedule II drug. Much illegal methamphetamine comes from foreign or domestic superlabs. Local production, more prone to explosions, occurs in small, illegal home laboratories, endangering owners, neighbors and the environment.

Common Street Names: Speed, meth, crank, crystal-meth and glass. Since effects last far longer than cocaine, but cost is about the same, it is sometimes called "poor man's cocaine."

How Methamphetamine Affects Users:

After the high, users can become agitated and feel "wired," with unpredictable behavior. They are friendly and calm one moment, angry and terrified the next. Some repeat meaningless tasks like taking apart and reassembling machines. Others pick at imaginary bugs under the skin. With continued meth use, pleasure diminishes and users need increasing doses to achieve a high.

After a number of days on meth, during which users barely sleep or eat, they become exhausted, run out of meth and "crash." Initially, the crash produces depression and an urge for more meth. That is followed by lethargy and then a long deep sleep. Depression returns once the user awakens and may last for days. During this time, the potential for suicide is high.

With prolonged use, stimulant psychosis can develop. Users become extremely paranoid, hear voices and experience delusions of people talking about or following them. Meth-induced panic and psychosis can be very dangerous, resulting in extreme violence and lasting for days after the last dose. Some users remain paranoid, delusional, apathetic and socially withdrawn for weeks. When it lasts for years, the drug likely triggered a pre-existing mental disorder.

Legitimate Medical Uses:

A mild version of meth can be obtained through prescriptions that can't be refilled. Medical uses are treating disorders like narcolepsy with doses much lower than what's typically abused. Amphetamines can also be used to treat symptoms of allergies. There is no legitimate reason to mix these medicines with chemicals like antifreeze and battery acid, too toxic to put into landfills, and then have users ingest them.

Reasons Behind Meth Use:

Even with lower doses, methamphetamine makes the user feel energetic, alert, self-confident and even powerful. It's easily available, easy (?) to make and cheaper than cocaine. Once addiction almost immediately sets in, especially the powerful mental component, meth is completely in control of mind and body.

Meth offers an absolute escape from a life and situations that would otherwise be intolerable, problems to which there seem to be no solutions. When on meth, at least in your own mind, you're at the top of your game.

Consequences for Abuse of Methamphetamine

Physical Health

Even small amounts of meth produce the same physical effects as other stimulants like cocaine or amphetamines. These include increased wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, increased respiration, rapid heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure and hyperthermia.

Long-term meth abuse has many negative health consequences. Just some are extreme weight loss, severe dental problems (meth mouth), anxiety, confusion, insomnia, mood disturbances and violent behavior. Pregnant women using meth tend to suffer from premature labor, detachment of the placenta and low birth weight babies having possible neurological damage, failure to thrive and lethargy. Withdrawal is really fun and often fatal for their baby when born addicted.

Mental Health

Chronic meth abusers display a number of psychotic features, including paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations and delusions (for example, the sensation of insects crawling under the skin). Depression, irritability and anxiety also result. Permanent damage can occur to brain cells from injury to small blood vessels serving the brain

Probability of Addiction / Dependence

Meth is astonishingly addictive. Dependence can occur after one use. The really scary part? My numbers are unsubstantiated, but meth users themselves tell me almost everyone who uses meth is unable to stop, and is usually dead within seven years from their first hit.

Social or Societal Consequences

Manufacturing meth produces pounds of toxic waste. Makers often pour leftover chemicals down drains or directly on the ground. It leaches into the water table, remaining in soil and groundwater for years. Houses, trailers, barns and other buildings used to make meth must be cleaned up before any human being can safely use them again. In many cases, meth labs cause such serious contamination that the structure must be incinerated. Removing and handling all that hazardous waste is very expensive and costs a not-too-amused society a lot of money. Most members of society would prefer meth manufacturers and dealers be incarcerated for life.

Legal Consequences

If found using, dealing or manufacturing meth, you will be incarcerated. Moreover, your children will be removed from your care, since they are no longer safe with you. And you will shortly have no home anyway for them to live in, when they tears yours down due to chemical contamination. Most addicts incarcerated for recurrent meth use have lost everything they ever owned to pay for this drug, within a few years of initial use.

The Trap Associated With Methamphetamine Use:

Knowing how addictive meth is, most dealers give away the first dose. They know in short order, the customer will give them anything for a continued supply. There is no known

effective cure. A very few beat the addiction through sheer will power. Some are delivered through the power of God. Most users just die within a few years.

The Rest of the Story:

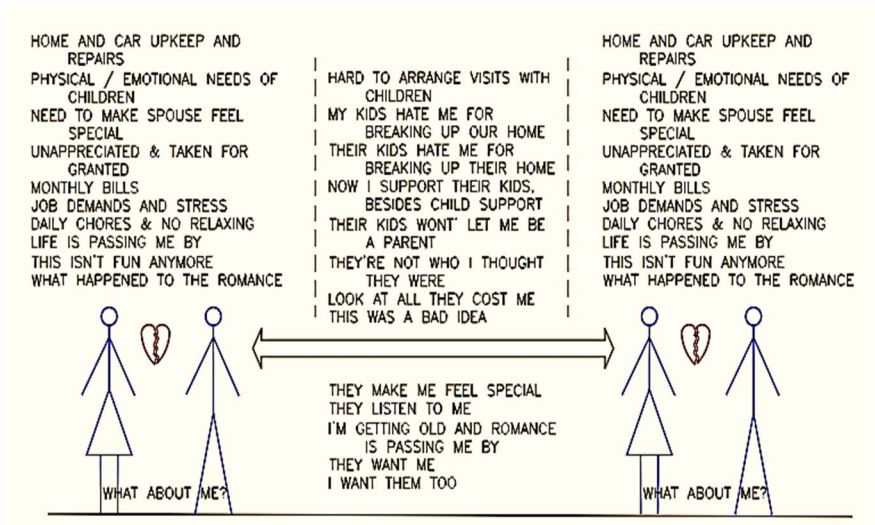
What will meth users do for their dealers, in order to purchase more? Strip naked, no problem. Perform unnatural sex acts? No problem. Let the dealer beat them black and blue? That's fine, so long as they are given the meth. At whatever price the dealer feels like charging.

Since meth stays in our bodies for a while, when users know they will soon be arrested, they purposely take meth again. Once in jail, the drug will still be in their system. Then their scabs and urine can be sold to other inmates. Buyers will eat the scabs and drink the urine, for the brief high from the drug still inside those byproducts of the previous user's body.

A Practical Application:

There are many seductive opportunities in life that once taken, we really wish we could let go. Like two people, seeing each other under perfect circumstances, a little harmless flirtation, followed by temptation and then a decision to leave the familiar behind and seek new excitement in life. Funny how we just trade one set of stressors for the same, only

with additional problems added. Because the same issues wait for us, just with more stress added. And what temptation looks like, once it's yielded to, never really matches its allure.



A Historical Application:

In the creation account in the first few chapters of Genesis, we stumble across an amazing choice made by Eve. A dealer in misery approached her with a proposition. Want to be just like God, knowing good from evil? Just take one hit of this fruit, that you know full well will kill you, if you partake. Fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Since everything in Eve's life till then had been good, the only thing really being offered was an experience of evil. For some unfathomable reason, Eve thought it sounded good. After her use of the new fruit, life became filled with pain, exhaustion and misery, until her eventual death.

What drug exactly, was that snake dealing?

Trying Out a Better Way:

Too often, we turn to outside sources to find a way to escape problems or find a better source of strength. Even when the perceived power source is obviously dangerous. And calling on the Maker of our lives for help, might require admitting we needed Him all along.

Instead, we turn to a smaller god, our friendly neighborhood meth dealer. A cruel deity who will take our possessions, every bit of our money and cost us our children. Just before his product takes our lives. But maybe we can die with our dignity intact, by doing life our way.

Or perhaps not. Spit that scab out from between your teeth. It's not yours.



The Snake Approaching Eve - Peter



