

COMING OFF CRYSTAL METH

Steps to living a life in
RECOVERY

A booklet for people who
are using crystal meth



One person's story about "meth"

...in their own words...

ON USING...

I was 18. And I'm 35 now. I was smoking it. I grew to really enjoy it. It's the rush you get. Complete euphoria. I expected a crack high – when I first tried it, I didn't like it, because I was expecting something different. But then somebody showed me how to do it right. Once you've been up for a while you become Superman. That's a good feeling. Why would you want to change that? That's why it's hard to quit.

DECIDING TO QUIT...

I felt **I was worth taking the time to quit**. I didn't like the way I felt any more. I was young but I was acting like I was – old. I didn't realize but it had attacked my teeth really bad too. I went to the dentist and he said my teeth were bad already. I had to quit.

I scared myself too. Because I had stayed up for 4 or 5 days and I didn't even know how the hell I got home. I was so blacked out. It literally scared me. That was it. Those were the underlying factors of why I quit. First – I got home, I didn't know how I had got there. I stunk. **I looked in the mirror and I cried, and I said, "That's it. You have to quit."**

THE PROCESS OF QUITTING...

I had to throw it away. I had friends with me though. Friends that really truly cared about me. And they said, you know ... I just seen you last week, and you look so – shadows under your eyes, cheeks sunken in, and skin ... grey and leathery. I did not look beautiful anymore. And I did not like it. We all – we have that light inside and **my light was getting snuffed out**. Darkness. The drug, right?

GOING THROUGH WITHDRAWAL...

Honestly, it's not only physical, it's mental. Emotional. It goes that deep. That's a scary thing. You can completely lose yourself in the withdrawal.

... AND ON TO A BETTER PLACE

The thing is to have a proper support system. Because my family truly loves me. So I know that **if you have that good support system, you can quit**. But you need to find those people in your life. You need to have a higher power as well to help your mind and your soul.

HOW ARE THINGS NOW THAT YOU HAVE QUIT?

Today **I feel awesome. I feel good. I feel happy. And blessed**. I wouldn't have had my children if I'd kept going.

**KNOW THAT YOU'RE WORTH
THE TIME AND THE EFFORT.**

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERING STOPPING?

You can! Don't wait any longer... you can quit. If I had that position to be able to help someone like that, I would help them. So you need to make a decision, and you can do it.

You need to be stubborn to quit the drug. You need to be completely determined and not listen to anybody. There's going to be people who want you to come back. Because you're their money maker. They're not your friends. No effin' way. Because when I was ready to quit – where were they?

I want to see everybody quit. You have to have that determination first. You have to have that will, to want to quit. And don't give up. **Know that you're worth the time and the effort**. You can come out the other side.

**THIS SASKATCHEWAN RESIDENT
IS NOW IN RECOVERY.**

**FROM ACTIVELY
USING METH...**

**...THROUGH WITHDRAWAL
& INTO RECOVERY**

ANOTHER SASK SUCCESS STORY:

Tala grew up in a Saskatchewan community. She was determined to quit using crystal meth over 15 years ago. Traditional Indigenous medicines and spiritual ceremonies were key factors in her success. **Tala became a social worker!**



WANTING TO QUIT:

I felt like ...I could die, go crazy from doing drugs, or go to jail...and I didn't want any of those things. I asked myself - "What am I doing with my life?"

TALA'S TIPS FOR QUITTING:

- Quitting crystal meth requires a "big reset". Plan for it.
- Find a safe space where you won't have access to meth.
- Surround yourself with supportive people in your life.
- Connect to those in your culture who can help you quit. If you are from an Indigenous culture, consider seeking traditional medicine.
- Reconnect to your kinship and the land.
- Remember who you are. You are significant and of high value.
- Find ways to share your story.

ON GETTING THROUGH THE FIRST FEW DIFFICULT DAYS OF QUITTING

Know this - withdrawal is temporary. It is not forever & it will get better!

ON HOW SHE FEELS ABOUT LIFE NOW

I don't need weed, I don't need coffee, I don't need chocolate. I don't need anything to make myself feel good. I can literally wake up & go, 'Wow (breathing in) I'm so thankful for life'. I feel amazing, & the joyful authentic peace that the Creator wanted me to feel when I was born.

SOME EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL METH

Sometimes it's reassuring to know that you're not crazy - it's the drugs.

...ON MIND & MOOD

irritable, nervous, stressed, mood swings, impulsive, panic, seeing/hearing things (hallucinations), paranoid, depressed, feeling like harming yourself, extremely tired - but can't sleep

Nosebleeds
(with snorting)

Brain changes -
unable to feel good
without the drug

Dental problems
or "meth mouth"

Upset stomach,
stomach pain

Risk of
heart attack

...ON
BODY

Hands & legs:
shaking, not
working properly

Risk of
kidney damage

Skin: makes you
look older than
you really are

Very bad infections

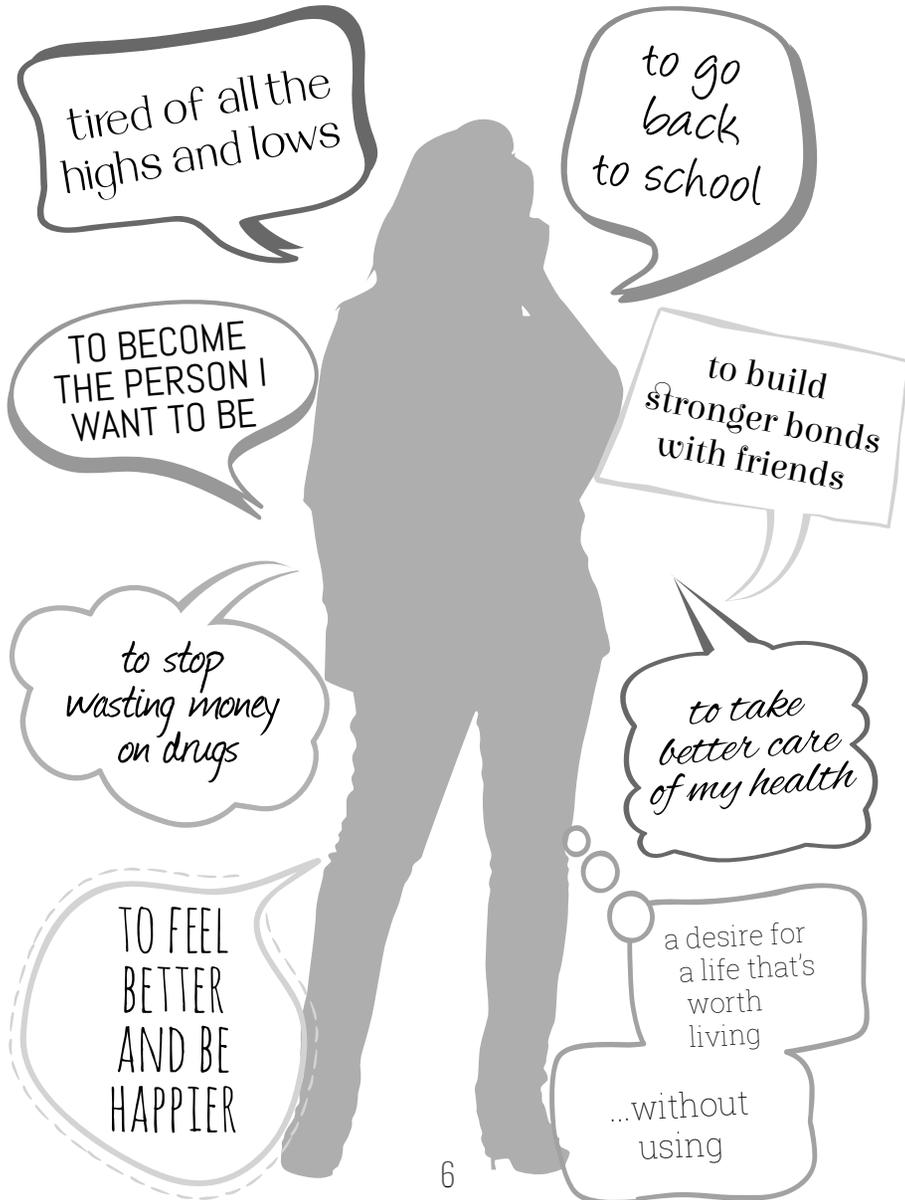
Body begins to
smell bad, like
chemicals

Skin sores and scabs
that can leave scars;
feeling like bugs are
under the skin

...ON LIFE

risk-taking behaviour, threats to your safety, losing your job and/or home, loss of family and friends, forced to do things you don't want to do to get drugs (sex for money or drugs, theft, assault/murder), jail/prison

 **TIP.** Keep your list on the fridge, by your bed, or in your wallet to remind you why you are committed to quitting.



What are some reasons you might want to quit?
What are you sick of? What do you want to get back, or move on to?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Quitting is hard - but you can do it!
These reasons will help you face the challenges ahead.

Taking the first step.

FEELING REALLY ROUGH

	First few days	First 1-2 weeks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needing to sleep a lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor sleep
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aches, pains & headaches 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety, panic, and fear • Being agitated and irritable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood swings and depression
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhaustion, or feeling a total loss of energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling a sense of loss
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling hungry and eating more than usual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong cravings for meth • Hard to concentrate • Stomach upset, still eating more • Sometimes paranoia and hallucinations (less common)

What that first month might be like.

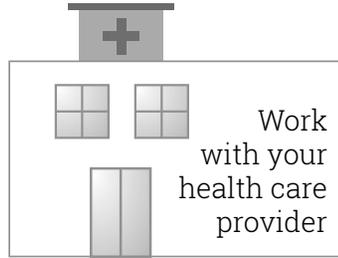
BEGINNING TO FEEL A LOT BETTER

	The 3 rd week	The 4 th week
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep begins to improve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling healthier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling a sense of "I can do this!"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety and mood swings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less moody • Some nervousness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tiredness, but starting to get back some energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy improves
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cravings for meth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paranoia and hallucinations usually get better, but may sometimes last longer

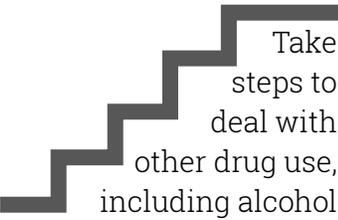
After the first month, many of the worst symptoms will be behind you. The effort needed to stay away from using is life-long!

What are some things that could help me quit?

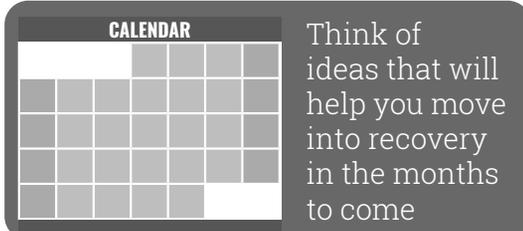
Find a safe place to go through withdrawal



Seek individual or group counseling (e.g. trauma-based therapy)



Make a plan for how you will spend your days and nights in the first month to get through withdrawal



Are there medications to help me quit?

No medications are clearly shown to help stay off crystal meth. However, they may sometimes be used to treat other conditions, depending on your mental health and overall health.



ACTION PLAN

People, places and actions I plan to avoid:

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

People, places and actions likely to support me:

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

Things to do if I get restless:

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

Talk about your plan with your health care team.

Are you currently using crystal meth?
Do you ever think about quitting?

This booklet is for those who are using crystal meth
and are wondering what it would be like to come off.

**Quitting & staying off
is tough.
BUT you can do it!!**

**YOU ARE WORTH
THE TIME AND EFFORT!**

GO ONLINE to learn more, get help, and find support

- A list of resources in Saskatchewan: www.reachoutsk.ca
- Mental Health and Addictions – Saskatchewan
tinyurl.com/sask-support
- Contact info for Safe Housing – Saskatchewan – ShelterSafe
<https://sheltersafe.ca/saskatchewan>

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