

# Celebrate Recovery of Allen

## Recovery from Methamphetamine Addiction

Methamphetamine (MA) is an illegal synthetic drug that affects the central nervous system. One of a number of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), MA is similar in function to caffeine and cocaine. It's often confused with another popular drug, ecstasy, which is chemically similar to MA but not classified as a stimulant. All stimulants increase or enhance the activity of dopamine, noradrenalin, and serotonin in the brain.

MA is produced and sold in many forms: powder, crystalline chunks, pills, or capsules. In powdered, pill, or capsule form, MA is commonly called speed, meth, or chalk. It can be snorted, swallowed, or inserted. The crystal form of MA is commonly referred to as crystal meth, ice, shards, or glass. It can be smoked in a cigarette, pipe, or bong. Because it dissolves easily in water or alcohol, MA can also be injected. Whatever the form, MA is odorless and bitter-tasting. The oily, sticky base or paste from which it is made can have a yellow-brown tinge. MA powder is white, pink, or yellow. MA chunks are usually white (or off-white) and translucent.

**How does methamphetamine affect a person?** When smoked or injected, users experience an intensely pleasurable rush within 5 to 10 seconds. If inhaled, ingested or inserted, the effect is a pleasurable high with a slower onset ranging from 3 to 20 minutes. The rush or high initiates a prolonged euphoria which can last from 4 to 12 hours, and sometimes even as long as 36 hours. The euphoria is an elevation of mood, a sense of well-being, intellectual expansiveness, increased self-confidence, and heightened libido. This is combined with an increase in energy and wakefulness, a reduction in appetite and fatigue, and increased concentration and alertness. There can also be improvement in physical performance and in simple cognitive tasks. The negative side of using MA is related to the prolonged state of agitation that coincides with these benefits. This period of agitation can be marked by restlessness, athetosis (writhing, jerky, or flailing movements), and tremors. Some users experience insomnia, dizziness, and impaired speech. Long-term users often lose interest in their hygiene and develop skin problems and "meth mouth," a deterioration of the teeth, among a host of other side effects.

### **Four levels of methamphetamine use**

- recreational (occasional, with a social focus)
- instrumental (work/ performance focus)
- intermittent bingeing (bingeing and crashing as a pattern, with breaks in between the binges)
- chronic use (daily, with no breaks, and often marked by a switch from snorting or swallowing to smoking or injecting)

### **Some symptoms of longer-term methamphetamine use**

- schizophrenia-like behavior
- auditory and visual hallucinations
- repetitive behavior patterns (e.g., picking at skin, pulling at hair)
- formication (delusions of parasites or insects on the skin)
- paranoid delusions leading to sudden aggressive behavior
- psychosis resulting in homicidal or suicidal thoughts

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**The cruel irony of using methamphetamine:** After prolonged use of MA—especially at higher doses and with greater frequency—the benefits of the drug are reversed.

- Euphoria and confidence are replaced by chronic debilitating depression.
- Social connection and the feeling of well-being are edged out by irritability, isolation, paranoia, and anger.
- Enhanced school or work performance is replaced by memory loss, concentration problems, and a short attention span.
- Increased energy and wakefulness becomes fatigue.
- A reduced appetite becomes a greatly increased appetite.
- Sexual enhancement is replaced by sexual dysfunction.

Some have arrived at this crossroad. One road, a soft road, lures you on to further despair, illness, ruin, and in some cases, mental institutions, prison, or suicide. The other road, a more challenging road, leads to self-respect, solvency, healing, and personal fulfillment. We urge you to take the first difficult step onto the more solid road now.

## **Twelve Steps and their Biblical Comparisons**

**1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors. That our lives had become unmanageable.** *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)*

**2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.** *“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)*

**3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.** *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)*

**4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** *“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)*

**5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.** *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)*

**6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.** *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)*

**7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.** *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)*

**8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.** *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)*

**9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.** *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)*

**10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.** *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12)*

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**11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.** *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)*

**12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.** *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)*

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