

How we feel about almost everything—and everyone—is likely to change during our first few years clean. For that reason, getting into or out of a relationship can be incredibly stressful in early sobriety. Some of us who impulsively broke up with partners found we were unable to deal with being alone. Others who dove into new attachments lost any semblance of serenity. Some took the suggestion not to date in early recovery. We were encouraged to “keep it simple.” We were of service to our fellows. We learned how to be intimate and built platonic friendships that helped us with dating, romance, and sex when the time came. Looking around in meetings, we found plenty of examples of people who’ve made the transition to sex without drugs and stayed sober.

A Sexual Ideal Working the Twelve Steps provides us a set of values that promotes healthier relationships. We establish boundaries and gain self-awareness of our motives, character defects, and character assets. In Steps Four and Five, we shape a sound ideal for our sex life.

With each relationship, we ask ourselves, “Am I being selfish, self-seeking, or dishonest? Am I acting out of fear? Is what I am doing potentially harmful or destructive?” As we take our inventory and examine our motives, every intimate encounter becomes an opportunity to be more honest, considerate, and loving. We seek to align our sex lives with our Higher Power’s will for us. Learning how to connect with others beyond satisfying our own needs, we establish a sexual ideal that works for us.

Connection Walking our sober path and practicing the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps in our everyday lives, we experience increasing comfort with intimacy and the joy of living without shame and remorse. We wake up to a wonderful fact: We can be sober—in the moment, in our right mind—and not want to jump out of our skin. We learn to love ourselves and begin to feel whole again. In time, we can enjoy sex without thinking of crystal meth.

Sobriety allows all kinds of connections to become possible again. We find new friends in our fellowship and rediscover bonds with family and friends who respect our recovery. We feel grateful for those relationships. Each day, we’re given the opportunity to explore healthy intimacy with everyone, including ourselves. It may be the most difficult and rewarding thing we do, and we do it with the support and wisdom of the fellowship.

Our sober sex lives have a new spiritual center. One relationship we try to cultivate as we work the Steps is our relationship with a Higher Power. Where solitude used to terrify us, we now find it can be a beautiful experience. Cultivating conscious contact with our Higher Power, we realize that we are never alone. Day by day in recovery, whatever our spiritual and romantic lives look like, we no longer fear connection. We have found true intimacy, with ourselves and with others.



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SEX IN SOBRIETY

Crystal Meth Anonymous

FROM DRUG DRIVEN SEX TO A SEXUAL IDEAL.



When it comes to sex in sobriety, we may not have all the answers, but we can offer some solutions. We understand that there's a wide spectrum of sexual behavior, and we do not place judgment on anyone's preferences or activities. One thing we do agree on: Sober sex is not only possible; it can be wonderful. In this pamphlet, we'd like to share some of our experience, and, specifically, how we worked the Twelve Steps with our sponsors to address issues around sex and meth.

In our addiction, some of us experienced out-of-control, obsessive sexual behavior in combination with our crystal meth use. Some continue to suffer in recovery from the same obsessions. Others have difficulty finding sexual fulfillment. We may sometimes feel embarrassed, guilty, or regretful about our past, but sharing our experience in meetings and with our sponsors helps us realize we are not alone. We're comforted to learn that many of our fellows are also dealing with issues surrounding sex. The solution begins with honesty.

Like many crystal meth addicts, our thoughts and feelings about sex were shaped and sometimes distorted by our using. There may have been times we felt confused or overwhelmed by the complex emotions sex brings up. That's when we turned to our program, working the Twelve Steps and applying spiritual principles. In time, we grew to love ourselves and trust our Higher Power. We learned to no longer fear intimacy and found an ease in exploring and enjoying sex and having fun. With time, patience, a solid foundation in the Steps, and the support of our sponsor and the fellowship, we learned how to practice the principles of faith, hope, honesty, and trust to experience fulfilling lives.

Drug Driven Sex We turned to crystal as a way to escape. Maybe we felt personally or sexually inadequate. Maybe we were abused. Maybe we hurt others or ourselves. Maybe we lost the love and trust of people who were close to us. By the time we came to recovery, our self-esteem was so badly battered by our drug-driven sexual behavior that many of us

struggled with a heavy sense of shame and lacked self-acceptance.

We were accustomed to using people and allowing ourselves to be used. Sex was just another way to hide from pain, from relationships, from responsibility, from the whole world. Some of us got high at first to pursue sex, but soon were trading our bodies for that next hit. Ultimately we were unsatisfied by both sex and drugs, and felt physically and emotionally isolated. Yet still we searched for more, more, always more.

Crystal meth addicts aren't the first people to have complicated feelings or compulsive behavior around sex. It's a complicated subject even for those who aren't addicts. How can we enjoy our inherent instincts for sex and intimacy without causing harm or sinking into remorse and fear, or worse, relapsing?

There is hope! Many of us have been relieved of the shame we used to live with. We recognize addiction as a disease and believe we are essentially good people trying the best we can. With honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, and a lot of patience, we're able to build and repair relationships with others and ourselves. Today we reach out to others not just to take, but to share.

Sober sex can be scary at first. We can be frightened of feeling vulnerable without some substance to hide behind, especially with our clothes off! It may be challenging, but sober sex is infinitely more satisfying than the unfulfilling obsession we've left behind. Where drug-driven sex left us in pain and isolation, our new reality brings us personal growth and real connection.

We Can Stay Sober When we first came into CMA, we found ourselves susceptible to euphoric recall and struggled to set aside potent memories of sexual encounters on meth. Feeling lonely, some sought out risky people, places, and things. A few of us, exhilarated and happy for the first time in years, rushed into a new romance—climbing onto an emotional roller coaster that threw us for a loop.

Many CMA members say the quest for sexual contact led them back to crystal. What's going on?

Sex had become intertwined with our meth use, and severing this link takes time and effort. Our experience is that we need to stay rooted in our Twelve Step program. In recovery, many of us examined our relationships with certain partners, clubs, bars, pornography, sex-focused apps, and websites that led us to use meth. The work we did on our inventory and with our sponsor resulted in many different paths toward our new relationship with sex. Some members, with their sponsor's guidance, chose a period of abstinence. Others were directed to bring their Higher Power with them into their explorations of sober sex. No matter what path we chose toward a sober sex life, we were all able to rely on the safety net of the fellowship whenever we were triggered or frightened.

Many of us were broken down physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Crystal made intimacy—social and sexual—impossible. To become whole again, we needed time: Time to work the Steps with a sponsor, time to make sober connections, time to gather strength and hope from supportive fellows, and time to learn to have love and compassion for ourselves. Early on, things may feel strange and unsatisfying. That's okay.

After we've regained some stability and health, thoughts of drug-driven sex can still come upon us, seemingly out of nowhere. When these fantasies arrive, we ask ourselves, "What am I really looking for?" Sometimes it's as simple as not being alone. That's when we lean on the fellowship for support, by calling, talking, and sharing with other fellows. Just by staying connected and asking for help, we might be helping them as well. Perhaps they were also feeling isolated, living in fear, unable to reach out. Working with each other to stay sober, we're carrying the message of recovery. By sharing with our sponsors, going to meetings, joining in fellowship, and doing service, we foster healthy connections in CMA.