



My Experience and Recovery from Meth Addiction

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For most of us, meth is an energy that you've never had. Your eyes widen, your heart races, your senses are amplified, and goosebumps run across your skin. You become hyper-aware and sensitive to noises, smells, even your vision. I was able to read a book for the very first time. I was creating stories and art pieces one after another. I felt more productive than I had ever been.

Things slowly began to crumble, loss of a job, odd jobs working for people. Payment for drugs is not always monetary, but you always pay in one form or another. As the crumbling continues, so do the tooth aches, dry mouth, eyes, skin, twitching, and restlessness; homelessness, lack of self-care, including medical care; visual, auditory, even physical hallucinations, teeth grinding, cramps, no sleep. You begin to forget hunger and thirst.

Some surveys show only one out of two crystal meth users will stay sober for the first three months after they try to get sober. Without formal treatment however, only one in nine users will make it through the first three months. The success rate of crystal meth users to continue sobriety after three years without any rehabilitation or treatment is ONLY 5%. When all relapse incidents are grouped together, it is estimated that 92% of crystal meth users will relapse at least once in their recovery efforts.

Referring to my own experience, familial, friend, and counseling supports are the most integral part of my recovery. I also was able to find work in HIV services which is not where I ever expected to be. This position is fulfilling and challenging. I became an HIV Peer Educator in 2019, obtained my CHW (Community Health Worker) in 2019 and my CPS (Certified Peer Specialist) for mental health and substance use shortly after. I was also certified MARS (Medication Awareness Recovery Services) a bit later.

The work I do allows me to stay focused in my recovery. Today I am successful through these experiences and have been given opportunities to share my story on HIV and substance use disorder to medical students, to others who are challenged with substances, and other professionals.

I have always been capable, but today I am grateful and fortunate to be one of the 5%.