

# Crystal Meth Anonymous®

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE (PI&O)**

### **TELEPHONE HELPLINE GUIDELINES**



#### **CMA PI&O Committee Approved Literature**

*This document has been approved by the Public Information & Outreach Committee and it is to be used widely by the Fellowship. We encourage feedback and comment so that they may be considered in the future updates.*

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## PI&O TELEPHONE HELPLINE GUIDELINES

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The purpose of the Public Information & Outreach Advisory Committee's Helpline is to ensure that CMA's message of recovery is available to the still-suffering crystal meth addict. We accomplish this by providing consistent information and resources to all those affected by crystal meth.

General requirements, volunteers should:

- have at least one year of continuous clean time
- be working or having worked the Steps with a Sponsor
- have a working phone that nobody else has access to (e.g., mobile phone)
- have access to the internet separate from the phone on which they'll take calls
- be able to commit at least one recurring hour per week (e.g., every Tuesday 3-4pm)

### General information

- This service commitment is an opportunity to practice the 12<sup>th</sup> Step in accordance with spiritual principles and the 12 Traditions.
- Remember you represent CMA and this may be the caller's first contact with CMA – you are not acting as an individual in this capacity
- Set reminder(s) so you are prepared for your shift. It's recommended that you be near a computer so you can easily look up information.
  - Let Helpline Coordinator(s) know if you're going to be unavailable for a shift.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, do not try and answer it.
  - Ask if you can pass the caller's information on to the Helpline Coordinator so they can call them back to answer their question.
  - Alternatively, they can send an email to one of the contacts listed on our website.
- When answering a call, you do not need to indicate that it's CMA – you can simply say hello and ask how you can help.
- Before ending a call, ensure you've answered all the questions and addressed any concerns.
- We can provide referrals but not advice. We can encourage friends and family to seek out outside help or support from Al-Anon/Nar-Anon. See Appendix A.
- Practice active listening. Start the conversation by asking "What made you call us today?"
- Practice patience, gentleness and kindness. The caller does not know what you know –they've turned to us for solutions.
- Have fun – remain relatable and human; connect with the caller.

### Tips for answering calls for the Helpline

- Have your phone on and ensure you have access to the internet. Schedule your time slot as time for you to be home and relaxing with a book or TV. Many of us find it easiest to answer calls on our cell and search information on a laptop instead of trying to use our phone for both tasks.

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- Carry the message of CMA
  - CMA is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other, so they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers.
- Encourage the addict to attend a CMA meeting by providing day, time and location. Encourage them to explore CMA literature if there are not any nearby CMA meetings.
- If you provide a referral (see Appendix A), remind the caller that we are not affiliated with or endorsing any of that information. We simply provide it as a convenience.
- Set & keep healthy boundaries. If the caller is threatening or abusive, end the call and contact the Helpline Coordinator.
- Make notes about the call and send them to the Helpline Coordinator. See examples in Appendix B.
- Live in the solution.

### **Matters to avoid when answering calls for the Helpline**

- Providing referrals other than the approved list or providing referrals without the disclaimer.
- Giving medical, legal, financial or other advice.
- Having extended conversations.
- Sharing personal opinions.
- Staying on the call if the caller is abusive or threatening.
- Persuading a caller to stop using or other behaviors.
- Breaking anonymity or confidentiality, even your own.
- Giving out contact information, other than those on the referral list.
- Taking yourself too seriously.

### **Suggested Answers for commonly asked questions**

Q: Seeking a meeting

A: Check if there is a local fellowship website Contact Us \ CMA Contacts \ Local Contacts. Use the local fellowships information. If there isn't one, using the callers ZIP code or City/State find the closest meetings – provide them several options, if possible.

Q: What is CMA?

A: See tips (page 2) for CMA description. Direct caller to [crystallmeth.org](http://crystallmeth.org) for further information.

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Q: My friend/husband/child/etc. went to treatment and doesn't attend meetings.  
Is that OK?

A: CMA has not opinion on this matter, the only requirement for CMA membership is a desire to stop using.

Q: Is alcohol a drug / does CMA practice or advocate abstinence from alcohol?

A: Yes, alcohol is a drug and CMA advocates abstinence from all drugs including alcohol and any other illicit substance that alters mind/body chemistry.

Q: Can I take my prescription and claim clean time?

A: CMA has no opinion on your medical decisions but we do encourage members to speak honestly and openly with their healthcare providers, including mental health professionals.

Q: What is the nature of crystal meth addiction / are these symptoms normal?

A: CMA concerns itself with the nature of recovery. If you or someone for whom you care has a problem with crystal meth, we can offer a solution. We cannot diagnose the symptoms of a third party.

Q: What happens at meetings?

A: Meetings are free to attend and do not require reservations. Anyone who may have a problem with crystal meth may attend. Open meetings can be attended by non-addicts. During meetings, members gather to share experience, strength and hope about the nature of addiction and recovery. Often there is a person who leads the meeting and others then share on a given topic. There is no requirement to share; silent reflection is another form of participation.

Q: I am not an addict but want to help.

A: We appreciate any support we can get. CMA cannot accept donations of any kind from those outside the Fellowship. Professionals of many types can ensure that those affected by crystal meth addiction are aware of CMA. They can find information under the tab "For the Public."

Q: Caller has a problem with meth but expresses hesitation, blame or other hurdles to CMA.

A: Remember that many of us weren't ready for CMA immediately. Practice empathy and identify with the caller and share your stories of pre-recovery hope. A calm and deliberate manner can help the caller feel comfortable with what may be their first contact with CMA.

Q: I am looking for a treatment center / healthcare provider.

A: CMA does not provide this information and the caller should check with their insurance provider, primary care provider, county health department or other professionals.

Q: I am looking for information on AA/NA/AI-Anon/Nar-Anon/CM-Anon.

A: CMA is not affiliated with this entity but we can provide you the following information (see Appendix A).

Q: What is a Sponsor?

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A: A Sponsor is another recovering addict who shares their experience of recovery on a continuous and individual basis with another addict who is attempting to attain or maintain sobriety. See the pamphlet "What About Sponsorship?"

Q: Caller is seeking a specific contact in CMA General Services (e.g., Public Information & Outreach Chair or has a question about an order placed for books/chips and is therefore seeking the Fulfillment Chair).

A: Direct caller to Contact Us \ CMA Contacts \ General Service Contacts

### **Appendix A – Referral information**

Our website is [www.crystalmeth.org](http://www.crystalmeth.org)

Our toll-free Helpline number is 855.METH.FREE (855.638.4373)

Tell caller that CMA is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, any of these other organizations.

- Alcoholics Anonymous — [aa.org](http://aa.org)
- Narcotics Anonymous — [na.org](http://na.org)
- CM-Anon (Friends & Family) — [cm-anon.org](http://cm-anon.org)
- Al-Anon (Friends & Family) — [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org)
- Nar-Anon (Friends & Family) — [nar-anon.org](http://nar-anon.org)

### **Appendix B – Call Notes examples**

March 26

Fielded call from addict in Idaho Falls ID looking for CMA meeting. Nearest registered meetings are Boise and Salt Lake - both 100+ miles away. I encouraged her to reach out to UT fellowship (provided their 801-number listed on site) & said they may also be able to provide some resources on starting a meeting in ID Falls. I directed her to website for literature, etc. Encouraged her to call us back if further questions or any problems

April 29

Fielded call from addict in LA area. Provided her meeting times, locations for specific days of week, per schedule on [cmainla.com](http://cmainla.com). Also provided her that web address and the local CMA number. She had lots of general questions about meetings (do I need to reserve a seat, bring an ID, what's the duration, can I bring a friend as support, etc.) I answered all these questions being careful not to be too definitive but still provide an appropriate response. I encouraged her to attend a meeting if she had further questions.

September 22

Fielded call from individual in LA area - calling on behalf of her Spanish-speaking female friend. Friend's husband is using and wife is concerned, behavior has become erratic and scary. I said we didn't (yet) have a Spanish-dedicated phone number but directed her to the Spanish-language download ("Eres un Adicto") on literature download page as well as [cmainla.com](http://cmainla.com). Also referred her to Nar-Anon of Southern California website. She had specific questions about permanent damage, etc. I stated we're not doctors and only doctors can make that assessment. Thanked English-speaking caller for being an ally of the wife and encouraged her to help wife find other resources in the area (social work programs and the like) that could fill the language gap.

December 15

Fielded call from director of treatment facility looking for general information about CMA and starting a meeting in his facility. Walked him through website and various piece of pertinent information. Obtained his contact information and permission to share with the H&I Chair for referral.