



CMA Conference Approved Literature

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STAYING SOBER BREAKING THE RELAPSE CYCLE

RELAPSE IS NOT A REQUIREMENT. HOW DOES A RELAPSE HAPPEN? STEP ONE. THERE IS A SOLUTION.

Crystal Meth Anonymous

Many people in recovery whose lives were ruined by meth pick up drugs again out of desperation. We are addicts: We're wired for using in good times and bad. If it should happen to you—if you relapse—don't give up! It may feel like the end of the universe, but it doesn't have to be. It can be a new beginning. Please, please come right back. Relapse doesn't mean we will never be able to stay sober. It just means we need to try again if we really want to live a life free of active addiction.

Relapse is not a requirement

Though relapse is a reality for some, it doesn't have to be a chapter in every recovery story. We try not to use the excuse of others who slip and still recover to use once more—especially because the consequences of a slip can be devastating. Maybe we find an hour's relief from whatever problem chased us out, or a moment of the old excitement we were craving, but then it's just new kinds of hell. The last time you got high, was it pretty? Some of us in Crystal Meth Anonymous ended up in a hospital. Others finished our last run after a police chase, sporting a pair of shiny bracelets and some new bruises. Some of us sold our body and soul for that last high. Still others don't come back.

If we do relapse and make it back to the rooms, the best thing we can do for ourselves and others is pick up a newcomer chip and share our experience openly. Other addicts will benefit from our experience. We can remind them that using never gets any better. Above all, we should be kind to and forgive ourselves. We keep coming back until the program sticks, and we stay. In the fellowship of CMA we find the support we need to hang on to recovery and start new lives. Fellow addicts will love us until we can love ourselves enough to work the Steps and recover.

Our experience teaches we never have to use

again. The program of recovery works when we avoid getting high one day at a time. Sometimes, we have to take it minute by minute. If we fall off, we get up and try again! Our recovery is successful if we work for it. When we work as hard to stay sober as we did to get loaded, we will recover. And recovery for us means being given a new life we never dreamed possible.

How does a relapse happen?

Those of us who don't relapse stay sober because we work for it. Are you ready to work for it? In time, we learn to recognize when we are in "relapse mode" so we can stay sober in tough times. We believe a relapse begins long before we return to using. Most of the time, before we turn back to crystal, we start with alcohol or some other drug. This is why CMA members practice complete abstinence from all mind-altering substances.

Other signs of slippery thinking: Often we begin skipping meetings or stop going altogether. Some addicts start isolating from their sponsors, friends, and support networks. Others may return to using because we stop working the Steps or refuse to work them at all. Difficult situations may lead us to believe that using is the only way out of our misery. The common thread is that the drive for isolation at the core of our disease begins to disconnect us from the program and fellowship so vital to our survival.

What can we do if we sincerely wish to stay sober but still have the desire to use? We get a sponsor and work the Steps. We practice the principles of honesty, open-mindedness and willingness, and we take action. Taking suggestions from our fellows who stay sober, we can begin to learn a new way of living. Remember, CMA is a spiritual program; the standard relapse prevention tools work only so well. We greatly increase our chances of staying sober when we work the Steps, develop a relationship with a Higher Power of our

understanding, clean up the wreckage of our past and help others.

Admission and Acceptance

It's never too soon to get a sponsor and start working the Steps. We may hear people suggest that the only Step you work perfectly is the first one: "We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth, and our lives had become unmanageable." It's true. On any day that we're truly living this Step, we are more likely to stay sober.

Why did we come to CMA in the first place? If we didn't have someone breathing down our necks, were court ordered, or have an intolerable feeling deep inside, we probably wouldn't be here. Are we powerless over crystal meth? Is life unmanageable? If we're ready to accept this truth, we admit it every day, one day at a time, even after we've learned to pick up chips instead of meth. Once we accept this basic truth about ourselves, we have taken the first step towards recovery.

There is a solution

Crystal meth used to seem like a good answer to our problems. Not anymore. We came to CMA because we finally realized that our drug use was causing most of our difficulties. So when the urge to use again becomes strong, we take a deep breath, reach out for help, and trust in the better answer we are finding a day at a time in our fellowship, in the Steps, and in our Higher Power. We never have to use crystal meth or any other drug ever again. ■