

Sorting Through Fact and Fiction About 'Ice': Online Learning for Frontline Workers

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National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction
(NCETA)

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Acknowledgement of Kurna Country

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.



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Background

1. Increasing concern in communities, the media and politically about the use of crystal methamphetamine (ice).
2. Pressure on health and community services to respond appropriately.
3. Media portrayals not always accurate / evidence-based.
4. There has been a lot of misinformation.

What are your views about how this issue has been portrayed?



Examples of Media Portrayals

WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 26TH/27TH MAY 1990

Users say it makes them feel wonderful and helps them cope – while it ‘fries’ their brains’ nerve ends and sends them insane. Will Ice, the drug turning Hawaii into a battleground, take off here?

ICE

THE NEW VICE

BY MIKE SAFE AND MIKE SAGER

THEY MAY HAVE CAUGHT THEIR MAN, but Sydney drug squad detectives were unsure what they had caught him with. The tiny packet of clear to white crystals, like crumbled rock candy, was unlike anything they had seen before.

At first they thought it was the amphetamine known as speed, a stimulant that has existed for many years in various forms.

But laboratory tests discovered otherwise. The substance was a smokeable crystal methamphetamine, a more potent variation of speed and capable of delivering a heavy and immediate hit or “rush”.

On the streets it is known as Ice.

The drug that has turned Hawaii (population 1,083,000) into a battleground, relating to nearly 80 per cent of its drug crime, has reached Australia. Two years after the first warning signals from the Australian Federal Police monitoring post in Honolulu, Ice appears to be a reality here.

“We’re apprehensive,” says Detective Sergeant Brent Martin, of the Sydney southern region drug

PHOTOS BY KEN SAKAMOTO
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MAIN PHOTO GEORGE FETTING

THE ICE STORM

Sleepless binges, manic sexual urges, psychotic episodes ... methamphetamine is filling hospitals around the country with its victims.
Mark Whittaker reports.

Scott remembers when he lost his mind. The first time it happened, the personal trainer from Melbourne was in New York studying drama and literature, doing a bit of bar work, shooting up crystal to go out partying. Towards the end of his year overseas he went on a three-day bender and came home to a friend's apartment where he was staying. The friend rolled over in his bed and he was wearing a huge, fluorescent African mask.

Scott fled to the kitchen, where he saw a movie being projected on to the walls showing policemen about to bust in and arrest him. His friend came out: “What’s wrong? What’s wrong?” How dare he put that huge, freaky mask on then pretend not to know what was up. Scott ran on to the street and spent the next three days scurrying across Manhattan, covering from the sirens that he knew were coming to get him. He hadn’t slept or eaten in six days when he knocked on another friend’s door and was given a sleeping pill. When he woke, he was normal again.

Returning to live in Sydney in 2000, Scott found crystal was just taking off there. He gave it a miss for a while, but its pull was irresistible. It wasn’t like he was an addict. He had a job and lots of friends. His body was hard.

Over the next three years he continued bingeing on the drug, often going for five sleepless days and then two to four weeks without touching the stuff. But he got to the point where, half the time he had it, he descended into a psychosis every bit as fierce as his New York episode. “I must have had psychosis maybe 30 or 40 times. I put myself through the same ordeal of imagining people were trying to kill me. Sometimes I’d see people

filming on my bedroom wall my parents being tortured. Sometimes I would imagine the trucks and the cars in the street had meat mincers inside them and were trying to run me down so they could mince me up alive.”

He felt guilty about missing work at his new job. He had deadlines, people to manage. And he was certain they were all bitching about him. So he quit. His circle of friends changed. He went to the theatre less. But he still knew he wasn’t an addict; addicts used drugs every day.

The memory of the first time he’d shot up the drug kept pulling him back. It was like the first cigarette of a



COVER: JAY



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As A Result

1. Workers are feeling:
 - Uncertain about their ability to respond effectively to people using crystal methamphetamine
 - Vulnerable and at risk of aggression from clients.
2. Highlighted the need to enhance the confidence of workers to utilise their existing skills, knowledge & training to respond to people using crystal methamphetamine.



Responding to Concerns About Ice

The Victorian Government developed its Ice Action Plan – a central focus of the Plan is on training frontline workers.

NCETA was commissioned to develop
Ice: Training for Frontline Workers.

Free, open access online training resource.

It has everything you are likely to want to know about crystal methamphetamine.



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Ice: Training for Frontline Workers

nceta.androgogic.com.au

nceta.flinders.edu.au



1. The most comprehensive repository of information, training resources and materials on crystal methamphetamine that you can get anywhere.
2. Significant uptake – more than 6,500 people have registered since its launch in January 2016.



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Reinforces Workers' Skills & Knowledge

1. Most workers already possess the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with people affected by crystal methamphetamine.
2. Workers need some specific knowledge and skills about crystal methamphetamine.
3. Services may need slight service reorientation.
4. Existing service provision approaches and interventions are reinforced and utilised throughout the online training
5. Enhances workers' confidence that treatment works.



What's in the Online Training?

1. Contains 7 Modules.
2. Each Module has between 3 to 8 Topics (Total: 28 Topics).
3. Designed for independent learning but you can also work through it with your colleagues, supervisor, mentor etc.
4. Don't have to start at the beginning of the online training.
5. Has been structured so you can work through individual Modules or Topics.



More About the Online Training

These are the 7 Modules:

- Module 1 : About Ice
- Module 2: Effects of Ice
- Module 3: Communicating with Ice Users
- Module 4: Ice Users and Critical Incidents
- Module 5: Interventions
- Module 6: Prevention
- Module 7: Organisational Responses

Coming soon: new additional Topics including:
Working with Indigenous Communities.



Structure

Each topic comprises:

1. Learning objectives
2. Links to further support / information services
3. Factual information
4. Audio visual materials (e.g., YouTube links)
5. Evidence-based interventions
6. Reflection exercises
7. Case scenarios
8. Knowledge quizzes
9. Further readings and resources.



Modules

Module 1 : About Ice

- 1.1 About Ice and other forms of methamphetamine
- 1.2 Patterns of Ice and other forms of methamphetamine use in Australia
- 1.3 How methamphetamine / Ice affects users
- 1.4 Methamphetamine: Legal issues.

Module 2: Effects of Ice

- 2.1 Ice intoxication
- 2.2 Ice withdrawal and long term effects
- 2.3 Using Ice with alcohol and other drugs

Modules

Module 3: Communicating with Ice Users

- 3.1 Communicating and engaging with Ice users
- 3.2 Assessing and managing self-harm and suicide with Ice users
- 3.3 Basic mental health responses for Ice users.

Module 4: Ice Users and Critical Incidents

- 4.1 Critical incidents involving Ice users
- 4.2 Managing critical incidents
- 4.3 Recovery, review, resumption

Modules

Module 5: Interventions

- 5.1 Overview of interventions
- 5.2 Brief interventions
- 5.3 Assessment
- 5.4 Counselling and cognitive behavioural approaches
- 5.5 Withdrawal management
- 5.6 Relapse prevention and management
- 5.7 Groups with specific needs
- 5.8 Supporting / working with families and carers

Modules

Module 6: Prevention

- 6.1 Ice prevention models and strategies
- 6.2 Harm reduction strategies

Module 7: Organisational Responses

- 7.1 Systems redesign
- 7.2 Organisational change
- 7.3 Workforce development
- 7.4 Stress, compassion fatigue and burnout
- 7.5 Workplace and worker support

Key Points

1. Methamphetamine is not a new drug.
2. More powerful and potent form – more complex presentations & greater chances of becoming addicted.
3. Workers can use existing communication strategies & skills when engaging with people using crystal methamphetamine.
4. Existing interventions e.g., brief interventions, counselling & cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) are effective in responding to people using crystal methamphetamine.
5. Keeping yourself, clients, families and community members safe.

Utilisation & Feedback

Overwhelmingly positive response to the online training:

1. More than 6,500 people have registered to use the learning resource.
2. Agencies and services have incorporated the online training into their:
 - Existing online training / professional development programs
 - Face-to-face training.
3. Is being used to inform the development of an accredited training program.



Summary

1. Ice: Online Training for Frontline Workers is:
 - The most comprehensive available resource on crystal methamphetamine
 - Evidence-based
 - Freely accessible.
2. It uses a flexible and independent learning approach:
 - Learners don't have to start at the beginning
 - Learners can work through the training resource on their own or with their colleagues.
3. Contains 7 Modules and 28 Topics.
4. Reinforces workers' existing skills and knowledge.



Acknowledgements

Ice: Training for Frontline Workers

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