

1972



*“When I was a child...*

*madness ran our household. After many fights and separations, my parents divorced and then remarried each other. I felt so sad every birthday and Christmas, and always thought I was alone in the big bad world. At the age of 11, I found something that made me feel good: Alcohol and pot”*

1996



*“I smoked meth for two years, and then...*

*I started slamming for three more years. In the process, I lost both my children, became homeless, ate from trash cans, lost my teeth and exposed my body and brain to hazardous, toxic chemicals. And after I'd lost everything: I used meth for five more years.”*

2007



*“Six years clean and sober!*

*After drug treatment, lots of therapy, sticking faithfully to a 12-step fellowship and two years of working in substance abuse treatment, I finally got my life back. Today, I have reconnected with my kids, have a good partner, a place to live, money in my pocket, but most importantly:*

*I got my self-respect back.” April*

### **What is meth?**

Methamphetamine, also known as “meth,” “speed,” “crank,” or “ice,” is a powerful and highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system.

Meth is a synthetic drug produced or sold as pills, capsules or powder that can be smoked, snorted, injected or swallowed.

Meth is cheap, easy to get and highly addictive. The high lasts long, it increases energy, enhances sexual pleasure and creates a general sense of well being.

Meth is a neurotoxin, meaning it damages the nervous system. Meth use can cause dependence and addiction, psychosis, stroke, dangerously high body temperature, and cardiac arrhythmia. Withdrawal often results in severe depression and paranoia.

### **Weight Loss, Children, Enhanced Sexual Pleasure**

According to a 1997 study, “women’s motivations for using meth centered on weight loss, enhanced self-confidence, increased energy for dealing with the demands of childrearing and household activities, and enhanced sexual pleasure”.

(Source: Semple, Grant & Patterson, 2004)

### **Depression & Abuse**

For the most part, women who use Meth have depression issues, high rates of abuse, histories of trauma and violence, and they have children. Over 70% of meth dependent women report histories of physical and sexual abuse.

(Source: Gonzales & Rawson, unpublished manuscript)

### **Employment, Criminal Activity, Distress**

Meth abusers usually are facing problems in multiple key life areas, most noticeably employment, legal/criminal, parenting, and psychological distress.

(Source: Hser, Evans & Huang, 2005)

### **Depression Medications**

Some women may be choosing meth over prescription medications in an attempt to manage their depression or other psychiatric symptoms.

(Source: Semple, Grant & Patterson, 2004)

### **Do I Need Drug Treatment?**

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drug use?
- Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drug use?
- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drug use?
- Have you ever experience withdrawals?
- Have you ever had any legal problems due to using drugs?

### **Remember...**

*You are not a bad person trying to get good. You are a sick person trying to get well.*

*Addiction is a disease. Just as a diabetic or a person with cancer needs to be on treatment, so does the disease of addiction need treatment.*

*To break the cycle of addiction, the shame associated with addiction must be broke. There is hope with treatment.*