

Methamphetamine treatment: what do users want?

Needs analysis summary

Access Point is a specialist service for stimulant users operated by Turning Point and funded by the Australian Government. As part of the establishment of the service a needs analysis was undertaken to ensure the service provides relevant services for stimulant users.

Summary of Findings

- Many methamphetamine users want treatment but some methamphetamine users don't know what treatment is available or how to access it
- Most methamphetamine users said they would contemplate formal treatment if specialist services were available

Who was Interviewed?

We interviewed 147 regular methamphetamine users. Among those who volunteered:

- 71% were men
- The average age was 35 years (range 18-55 years)
- 86% were unemployed
- Most lived alone (44%) or with friends (21%) or spouse/partner (14%)
- 71% used methamphetamine once a week or more
- Most used crystal or powder forms of methamphetamine.

Treatment seeking

People who said they wanted treatment but had not sought it said the main reasons for not seeking help were:

- They didn't know about treatment options
- They wanted to keep on using
- They didn't know how to go about getting treatment

Most people said that they would approach their GP for assistance first, probably for referral or prescription, and the most common first contacts with services was NOT with AOD services

Need for Treatment

Sixty eight percent of people said they had felt the need for some kind of treatment. When asked whether they would contemplate going to a treatment service 82% said yes. The most attractive treatments were

- Pharmacotherapy
- Specialist clinic for methamphetamine users
- Methamphetamine specific counselling.

Features of a good service

- being comfortable and non-judgemental
- offering peer support
- staffed by health professionals who understood that methamphetamine use is different to heroin and should be treated differently.

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