

QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO REGULARLY USE METHAMPHETAMINE AND THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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Dichotomy of the influence of methamphetamine on sociability

- peers play a big role in initiation to methamphetamine use
- motivations to use are increased confidence and social acceptance
- with continued use, shift to using alone rather than in party settings
- some became increasingly socially withdrawn as their use escalated

Methamphetamine and:

- Friendships

- camaraderie in shared experiences, including of stigma
- can be superficial relationships if they are drug-focused

- Romantic relationships

- enjoy using together but can become 'toxic'
- conflict can arise if hiding drug use from a non-using partner

- Family relationships

- after discovering the drug use some families provided support, others were dismissive or cut contact
- conflict over family concern and desire for drug use to stop
- some family try to force into treatment against participant wish

*All I wanted was [for other people] to **accept me for me** ... The **hardest thing** is with [being] a drug addict, you're **labelled for the rest of your life**. It doesn't matter what good you do ... And that's **pretty sad because I'm not hurting anyone**.*

- Harvey, male, aged 43

Stigma and social isolation

- as Harvey says above, being labelled impacted participant's social interactions
- others lost trust in them and everything became about their drug use
- felt the need to hide drug use from others
- stigma led to feeling excluded from society

CONCLUSIONS

- Highlights the bidirectional influences of methamphetamine use on close relationships and how they change over the drug use journey
- Reducing stigma can help people who use methamphetamine to develop deeper social connections and improve their wellbeing

BACKGROUND

Previous research focuses on peer role in drug use initiation and recovery

AIM

Explore the positive & negative bidirectional influences of methamphetamine use on close relationships

METHODS

N=20 semi-structured interviews
70% phone
30% Zoom



INCLUSION CRITERIA

Adults living in Australia with at least weekly methamphetamine use



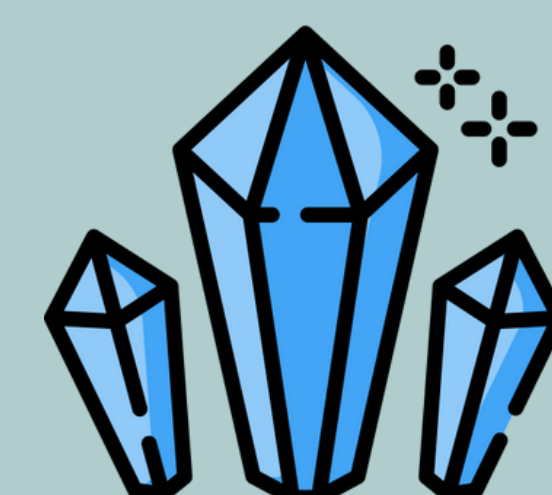
RECRUITMENT

Harm reduction services
Word of mouth
Tina Trial participants



DEMOGRAPHICS

30% female, 45% LGBTQI+
35% daily use of methamphetamine
85% polydrug use



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