

phone calls to our sponsor and fellows. And we continue to make phone calls until we find someone to talk to and the desire to use begins to subside. Other fellows can remind us of the end result of picking up the first drug or drink, and help us apply spiritual principles to whatever is making us insane. As we continue to recover, we find that our sober network of connections grows and we develop true friendships where we don't only use the phone when we're in crisis.

Playing the DVD As we move through life in recovery, there will be situations that catch us off-guard. We may see an ex or an old dealer, or something on TV sets it off. However strong that urge may be to pick up, we take a deep breath and quickly work Step One: We think about the whole event, not just the excitement of getting the drugs and taking the first hit. Honest reflection tells us that if we use, we will end up all alone again, isolated from the world and even from ourselves. The disease of addiction makes us think we can get high just this one time, but we cannot. Honestly looking at our history, we find our best option is to call our sponsor and find a meeting of other recovering addicts who will listen to our thoughts and cravings.

Sharing At this point, we might simply enjoy this state. When we have the urge to use or life is becoming difficult, we share about it in a meeting or with our sponsor or a fellow addict. It's not a bad thing to talk about our thoughts and feelings, no matter what they are. A thought is only a thought; a feeling is not a fact. Talking it out, we quickly see that we don't have to act on all of our misguided plans and the pain passes. We also share about when our lives are progressing well. Sharing this type of experience reinforces the notion that the program works and our lives do get better when we stay sober.

Smart Feet Within the first few months of continuous recovery, especially if we're working a ninety in ninety, we start to develop what we call "smart feet." We have the meeting schedules, we

know where all the club houses, church basements and community centers are in addition to all the diners and cafes where recovering people hang out. We've gotten in the habit of avoiding dangerous streets where old dealers lived. In short, our feet know where to take us even when our heads tell us to go elsewhere.

Suggestions If we earnestly desire to be sober, we have a chance to live a new life. Some people try to get sober on their own willpower and fail, but in CMA we are encouraged to reach out and get help from recovering people. We came to the fellowship because our willpower alone had failed us, leading us back to crystal meth or other mind-altering substances. We had a history of bad decisions; the answers we came up with did not work. Taking suggestions—such as reading pamphlets, using some of the tools here, and working the Steps—is central to our recovery.

We have found that any addict's successful recovery is based in working the Twelve Steps. These suggestions are presented as additional tools to complement the Steps based upon the experiences of our fellows in recovery. Just for today, we choose to stay sober by continually working our programs and using these tools. ■



CMA Interim Approved Literature

The General Service Committee has approved this literature to be used widely by the fellowship, and encourages feedback and comment so that it may be considered in the future for approval by the General Service Conference.

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EXPERIENCE OF THE FELLOWSHIP

SUGGESTIONS THAT HAVE COME FROM THE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF MANY MEMBERS
Crystal Meth Anonymous

All of the suggestions here represent behavioral changes that align with working the Twelve Steps of Crystal Meth Anonymous. But they are not a substitute for finding a sponsor and starting on Step work. Once we have made the choice to remain sober—just for today—and cleared a bit of healing space for ourselves, we continue to turn ourselves over to the program. No acceptance of powerlessness is truly complete until we have pushed forward with the real work of recovery: the Twelve Steps.

These suggestions have been taken from the experiences of addicts who got clean—and stayed clean. All of the concepts presented here complement working Steps One, Two, and Three. When we accept our powerlessness over drugs, we will certainly avoid “people, places, and things” that remind us of using. As we are coming to believe that a Higher Power can restore us to sanity, it gets easier to “act as if we have a higher power” we can overcome the day’s sober challenges. And what could be more in keeping with “turning our will over” than willingness to take suggestions? So think of these as step One-Two-Three habits—strategies many of our sponsors and fellows have passed on to help us stay honest, open-minded, and willing.

A.B.C. “Alcohol becomes crystal.” A drink will impair our judgment and often lead us back to a dealer. Besides, alcohol is a drug and today we are trying a new way of living that doesn’t require chemical escapes and fantasies.

Acting As If We are powerless over drugs. It’s a problem that many of us have tried to think our way out of, but found we could not. However, we can learn to act our way into right thinking. We take sensible suggestions from our sponsors and our fellows. We do the next right thing. We show up for life at long last.

Bookending As addicts, we were used to seeking immediate gratification. If we have to attend a social gathering or event where there

will be alcohol; or if we have a court date, job interview or some other especially triggering appointment, we check in with our sponsor or another recovering addict before and after. This keeps us honest and gives us a chance to unload any feelings that might come up and defuse any cravings that might arise.

Counting Days Nothing beats the cheerful moral support of a warm round of applause as we count up to thirty days, sixty days, ninety days, and so on. Apart from feeling a sense of achievement and connection, we are getting something much more practical: experience living sober. Each passing day, week, and month represents many challenges we have overcome in sobriety. More importantly, achieving a milestone shows the newcomer that sobriety is possible.

Fellowship Within CMA We learn to develop relationships with other members of the fellowship. We look forward to them sharing their experience, strength and hope with us. We ask them how they did it, and they help us learn how to live life in recovery. We join them for the meeting after the meeting to socialize. You may feel a little crazy at first, and that’s okay—we all did! When we were using some of us sank deeper into misery than others; some sought help before things spun out of control. But beneath our differing exteriors, we are all the same. And if we can stay sober, anyone can do it. Ask us how—we can help.

H.A.L.T. We don’t let ourselves get too “hungry, angry, lonely, or tired.” We learn to take care of ourselves in recovery. With our screwed up wiring, natural impulses to eat and sleep can easily morph into drug cravings. Feelings like anger and loneliness can appear intolerable. Our sponsors taught us early on to check ourselves any time we had an urge to use and ask, “Am I in H.A.L.T.?” Nine times out of ten, we don’t really want to get high. We just need a friend to talk to, a good night’s sleep, or even a cookie.

Make The Bed This little habit and others like it help us learn how to show up for ourselves, something we aren’t used to doing. One good habit leads to another.

Ninety in Ninety Many of us used daily, so we took the suggestion to attend ninety meetings in ninety days to heart, replacing the environment of the dope house, sex club or prison cell with the rooms of recovery. Ninety days is also a useful period because it takes us through three months—a season—of being sober. By the time we reach that first milestone and get our ninety-day chip, we’ve developed a routine we want to continue since we’ve built a new life full of wonderful sober experiences.

Outside Help Inside the rooms of recovery, we are all just addicts helping one another to get and stay sober. However, as we are recovering, we may need to seek some professional advice or outside services, such as those from a lawyer, doctor, financial advisor or psychiatrist. Though we may know such professionals inside the rooms, we must keep in mind that we are only in the rooms to recover. When we do need legal advice, medical attention, or help with any other “outside issue,” we go get it. Today we take care of ourselves.

People, Places, and Things We often hear in the rooms: “If you go to the barber shop often enough, you will get a haircut.” We do our best to avoid people, places and things that may trigger us. But sometimes, we do not have a choice. If we have to live or work around people or things that tempt us, we take care to keep in close contact with our fellows and sponsors. It is important to be honest about our motives. Whenever possible, we stay away from anyone or anything that triggers thoughts of using—a certain ex-lover, a particular street, or even a special song.

Phone Numbers Whenever we start to feel the urge to pick up, we start making