



Centre for Gender Research and Health

## Episode 2 - Cultures of Care: Conversations with people who provide support to crystal users

### VOICEOVER

*Crystal Clear: Negotiating Pleasures and Risk around Sex on Crystal.*

### TOBIN

Crystal is commonly used in combination with sex among gay and bisexual men in Australia.

Today, we will be talking to people who support gay and bisexual men with their crystal methamphetamine use, looking at some of the ethos of care that can exist in crystal using

supporters faced, and how we might model support on the best practices that the project has identified.

Like the last podcast, we have three guests who will each respond to current gaps identified in the support needs of friends, lovers and family members of people who use crystal. We will hear today from Joe, Craig and Nate, who have all supported other people with their crystal use.

B



**JOE**

I think being able to talk about the experiences! And that was something that my friend that was really hard was being able to open up what happened over that bender and being able to have an honest conversation. And it was hard for me, because, you know, as gay men, we like to brag

whole time, so is that really fun or were you just going  
?

Being able to talk about those experiences really allowed me to understand what is going through his head through that journey. I think the best way to be able to provide support to people is to listen.

**TOBIN**

maybe moving from that area of having fun to it maybe being a little bit challenging or problematic?

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reWhBT  
f102652525242525252r2525atic?

**NATE**

, like the participant said, around being non-maybe people

have to speak to them.

Also, trying to normalise the experience for them. G his thing you  
. S  
. Because if you feel like you are getting into some problems  
with crystal is that you feel really isolated, that you feel really alone. I know I experienced that  
myself.

**TOBIN**

and now supports other men with their crystal use. Craig, you have a different perspective based  
on your experience?

**CRAIG**

I support men who have sex with men through SMART Recovery, which is at Thorn Harbour  
Health. SMART Recovery runs all through Australia, up in Sydney and over in Perth, Adelaide.  
A o have substance issues to then take control and make  
set goals.

S realistic about things - expecting people to be  
. But they want to get their use under control, so if I

**TOBIN**

So Joe, you are not going to be there the whole time always for these people that use crystal,  
do you  
really invest and stay with that person for a journey?

**JOE**

I have stayed with person and it has been a journey.

So we write down and I have a journal in my phone, you know,  
activities are happening. Is there a gap in the week? Because we know that when you get bored  
that that becomes a better possibility to use.

A ing right now. What is the goal and how can I support  
you? And understanding that as a loved one, support has to change and you have to be flexible.  
A  
provide support.

**TOBIN**

? You may get  
that from various places and sources?

**NATE**

? And so that was a really good lesson for me. A  
the most important thing. Like, if I am supporting someone else and I give them a referral or I say,





myself, asking the same question over and over. So we have that plan in place.

**TOBIN**

to have

support networks and relationships?

**NATE**

in supporting others. A

**TOBIN**

Joe, what are your thoughts on this?

**JOE**

When I had somebody else that was outside of the circle and was able to talk to them about this, it really helped me communicate better with my friend. And allowed me to understand the correct words to use a , their use. They can be a free person, but I can be a support person as well.

**TOBIN**

depth, and feel confident to refer that person your supporting on to an organisation or an institution, just to help out?

**CRAIG**

Most of the time!

. A

, say, feeding my ego. I

. A

two-thumbs up, win/win situation.

**TOBIN**

So Nate, how does institutional support intersect with the type of peer support that you provide?

**NATE**

do. Like, where my expertise starts and ends and when I need to refer someone onto professional support. Certainly,

reassuring them that, you know, they are doing the right thing, that extra help is on its way. Being present, again ma



If you are currently supporting someone who uses crystal, you are not alone. So please seek assistance when supporting others, and take care of your own needs as a support person. Self-care is important.

circumstances, then try another because there are different models that service different needs. This is what we will cover in the next podcast.

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This podcast is produced by the Centre for Social Research in Health at UNSW Sydney in partnership with ACON, Thorn Harbour Health, South Australia Mobilisation + Empowerment for Sexual Health and Western Australian Aids Council.

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formation on the website for help. Support is available should you need it.

**END**