

CRYSTAL CLEAR

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP

WINTER 2004/2005

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I WAS A LUCKY GIRL

I was a lucky girl who actually had a nice childhood, a loving family and a solid academic record. So I don't know why I was so curious about drugs. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that I was lonely and felt "less than" during middle school. I was mousey, awkward, uncool. I had frizzy hair and braces, and couldn't dress for the life of me.

By the time I got to high school, I wanted to reinvent myself. When a friend slipped a rave flyer into my hand, I jumped at the opportunity. I was 15 years old.

It was there I was passed my first pill of ecstasy, and I didn't hesitate for a heartbeat. I was never scared of drugs, only wide-eyed, fascinated and hungry. Soon, I was going to raves every weekend, and used tons of ecstasy, ketamine, cocaine, marijuana, and crystal on a regular basis.

In college, I moved from raves to circuit parties but stopped using crystal then—I knew I liked it too much. I graduated and established myself in career as a publicist that lent itself to heavy drinking and cocaine use, so I was able to justify it to myself and others.

About a year ago, I was out in the Hamptons at a couple of events for work. By the end of the day, I drove up to another party at someone's house on the beach. I had a good time dancing, but by the time we left, I was pretty drunk and had done the cocaine I had brought with me. We went back to my friend's house and wanted to go out further, but I was tired and wanted more coke. He didn't have any, and offered me some crystal.

I told him I didn't do that anymore, but still followed him into his bedroom.

I had never seen anyone smoke crystal before, and although I was slightly

horrified, the addict in me crept out and was intrigued and curious at the same time. I absolutely knew I shouldn't go near it. I made the decision to try it anyway. The next nine months were a bitter cycle of hedonistic weekends that became hazy weeks, and hazy weeks that became high strung months. I spent weekend nights at Splash or The Roxy, and weekend days sitting around my apartment with a bunch of guys smoking, chatting, "recovering," and proclaiming our commitment to "not do this next weekend." I ended up using every day, sometimes in the bathroom at work. I was embarrassed of my behavior. This was not normal. I was one mistake away from losing everything, and I knew it.

On a Friday, after an especially exhausting binge, I called one of my best friends, who I hadn't spoken to in about nine months because he had gotten sober. I was finally ready to ask for help.

He came to talk to me after work. He seemed so clear, so wise and so patient. He was so genuine and caring towards me—I didn't feel deserving of it. I brought the empty bag and the pipe to the Community Center, and ceremoniously threw it into the trash. Then I walked into the Sunday night CMA meeting, and was greeted by smiling, warm, friendly faces. I knew I was safe, and in the right place.

It's funny—I came to the program to get sober, but I stay to get spiritual. I am being introduced to an entirely new world of knowledge, spirituality, self-realization, and well-being. I respect every single person in the program, and their belief systems. I am filled with gratitude for their presence, and for their investment in my sobriety. I am so grateful for this program, for my sobriety, and for the ability to say: My name is Jamie, and I'm an addict.

—Jamie K.

THE SPIDER, THE BIKINI, AND ME

WHAT DID WE HAVE IN COMMON

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the waterspout.

Down came the rain and washed the spider out!

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, and the itsy bitsy spider climber up the spout again.

—Anonymous nursery rhyme

As the child of immigrant parents from Eastern Europe, my baby stories didn't include such North American cultural

staples as "The Itsy Bitsy Spider." By the time I had first heard this little gem, I was an overly precocious eleven-year-old who was compelled to ask several ground-

breaking questions. "Why did the stubborn arachnid climb up a spout? What in the heck was he doing by a drain to begin with? Why did he climb up again, knowing full well the disastrous results of his first attempt? How big is itsy bitsy, really?" I refused to accept the spider's grim lot in life, wanted desperately to grab him and say: "Stop that! It is dangerous! You're not getting anywhere, you know!"

I approached my parents with this earth shattering insight. I had the answers! Mom and Dad, for whom English is a third language and who still to this day do not use "itsy bitsy" in their vocabulary, looked at me as if I

had just come out of the pantry having sniffed too much of the laundry bleach, shrugged their shoulders, shook their heads, and took off for work. There I stood, alone, full of questions, visibly shaken by my thoughts and feelings, and left to come to my own conclusions.

After that fateful day, I stored my resentments, calculated my losses, and shelved the spider theory. Besides, I had many more pressing issues to deal with.

I was so out of it that I didn't even want to come out of my room during visiting hours.

There were people to please, places to drink and drugs to try. In fact, this became such an important project that I pursued it for nearly twenty

years. Little did I know that I was sharing my spout with thousands of other struggling spiders! We would all keep climbing up the spout, hoping to get really high, thinking that then, only then, we'd be happy and free. No one cared that the darn water would come suddenly, in a huge squall, bringing us down the spout and washing us out!

Clearly, this was counter-productive. I started to see that there were important keys to this apocalyptic nursery rhyme that I had overlooked. Hidden clues in the wording of this tale that I had

missed! I did a Netscape search for "itsy bitsy" and was immediately taken to a web page with a blonde woman standing on a beach. Then, out of nowhere, this song starts playing. It went like this: "Two, three, four, tell the people what she wore! It was an itsy bitsy teeny weenie yellow polka dot bikini."

Then, I started to think. Do Mr. Spider's repetitive, death-defying climb up the waterspout and Ms. Bikini's neurotic hiding in lockers have something in common? After many sleepless nights and much soul searching, I concluded that they're both in dire need of twelve-step programs. Our little web spinner could use a healthy dose of admitting he's powerless over the rain, and blondie needs to work on her isolation and fear by making a searching and fearless moral inventory of herself. Since they

There were people to please... places to drink and drugs to buy.

both feel they're terminally unique, I've asked them to make daily phone calls so I can keep you posted on their progress. It may be difficult, however, because

beach woman is afraid to pick up the telephone and our eight-legged friend, who lives in Mamaroneck, can't afford Verizon's roaming charges.

Blessings in sobriety to all! Pick up the phone, not drugs! —Sasha S.

CRYSTAL CLEAR

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CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS

CMA is a 12-step fellowship for those with a desire to stop using crystal meth. CrystalClear, the newsletter of NYCMA, is issued quarterly. We reserve the right to refuse submissions and the right to edit for clarity and space, and to avoid triggering the reader. No compensations will be paid for any submissions.

According to our Tenth Tradition, CMA has no opinions whatsoever on outside issues. All articles in CrystalClear reflect personal experiences only and do not necessarily speak for CMA as a whole.

The Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions have been adapted from the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

DRUGS SHATTERED ME CMA WILL MAKE ME WHOLE

Damn that fluid. It got to me again. I spilled my heart to the sweet, pale creature that lay beside me. The cool spring-approaching wind fluttered through the wooden shutters as the sunlight hit her face accenting rosy cheeks and slim nose. I wondered where and under what circumstances we first laid eyes upon one another. Snapshot images of the previous years danced in my mind. Blurred recollections of people, places, city streets in the early morning light, coffee tables littered with ashtrays and empty glasses of juice mixed with crystal, and the days “stuck in the barrel,” after week long binges, with my head barely peering out, straining to make it back to the land of the living. Maybe we met during the times I stay awake while dreaming? Maybe, just maybe, we have known each other all along? I stared deeply into soft, brown eyes trembling with desire like that of a baby butterfly adjusting to powder thin wings. One day, when I remember how to speak the universal language of my wildly free and joyous childhood, I will open my mouth wide with song in the sober light of the coming days and nights, and gaze at the reflection in the bedroom’s mirror without fear.

I don’t understand the chains of addiction that encompass me. I don’t understand the chains of addiction that try to take away my life, my dignity, my sanity. All my adult life I have been using, starting with weed

to Ritalin to vodka to acid to mushrooms to cocaine to opium to heroin to Valiums to Aderol to the last stop on my drug train’s trek—crystal meth. Now, it is time for me to say with this wonderfully caring fellowship. “Help! We are

powerless!” My spirit makes a scene—shows me how strong I can be to finally admit defeat to drugs. I pray to my Higher Power to release me from the grips

of this insanity and let me walk with my head high and arms locked with those on the road of recovery.

Drugs on my mind, everywhere I go, everywhere I turn. In the past, no matter how hard I tried, on my own, can’t get them out of my mind. I may not be able to exercise the thoughts of drugs from my mind. When I dream at night, it’s real. And that’s okay because I am no longer trapped in my own head. Others share that with me. When I’m feeling discouraged and all alone, I have to remember to keep my feet planted on the ground. No matter what I have

done in the past, I feel joy now when I think about what CMA has done for me today.

CMA liberates me. Sobriety liberates me. Keep the faith. Don’t

hesitate to pick up the phone and call someone from the fellowship, call your sponsor, get up out of your misery, and go to a meeting to listen and share! Drugs shattered me, and CMA will help make me whole again.

—Ariel M.

Don’t hesitate to
pick up the phone
and call someone.

When I dream at night,
it’s real... but I am
no longer trapped in
my own head.

When I first reached Step Twelve, the words, “practiced these principles” appeared, and I wondered what “these principles” were. After revisiting each step to better understand this phrase, it came to me that the opposite of love is fear, and that for each step a “fear principle” is replaced with a “love principle.” Here is the change to look forward to as I approach each step, and indeed, life itself:

In Step One, denial is replaced with honesty.

In Step Two, despair is replaced with hope.

In Step Three, fear is replaced with faith.

In Step Four, cowardice is replaced with courage.

In Step Five, corruption is replaced with integrity.

In Step Six, intransigence is replaced with willingness.

In Step Seven, arrogance is replaced with humility.

In Step Eight, contempt is replaced with love.

In Step Nine, lawlessness is replaced with responsibility.

In Step Ten, unreliability is replaced with consistency.

In Step Eleven, isolation is replaced with companionship with God.

In Step Twelve, selfishness is replaced with service.

Trying to live these ideals each and every day is, of course, is a tall order. “We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines.” To that end, there are two phrases that allow for a more consistent attainment of these lofty goals or spiritual “love principles”:

“Love and tolerance is our code.”

“Our job now is to be of maximum service to others.”

—Lee L.

CRYSTAL METH, HIV AND ME I DIDN'T SEE THE CONNECTION

About two years after my first experience with crystal, my HIV test came back positive. This was after having tested negative for many years. That put me in an emotional tailspin leading to more drug use and more crystal-fueled sex. Seeing as I was already positive, it didn't seem like such a big deal to have unsafe sex if my partner wanted it like that. And usually he did.

My T Cells dropped to below 300. My viral load soared to over a million. I went on medications and had a hard time tolerating them. I had a bad reaction to Sustiva, and passed out in my bathroom. I woke up in a small puddle of blood from the cut above my eye. I still have the scar. Another combination made me really tired. Sometimes I just couldn't get out of bed and when I could, I had no energy. On top of that I got a few STDs, including syphilis, followed by those infamous penicillin shots. Yet I didn't think I had a serious drug problem.

Then I found these rooms. It was a lucky break or the grace of God. I just wanted to cut down a little. I figured I would go to a meeting once a week for a little while, just to get myself in check. Just to make things manageable. At that first meeting I saw something I wanted.

After about six months clean, I was still having trouble with HIV meds. I switched to a doctor recommended by someone in the program. Somebody else in the program who is a doctor suggested that the medications could be elevating the lactic acid in my blood. I asked the new doctor if we could check that out.

Sure enough, the levels of lactic acid in my blood were high. So my doctor took me off all the meds. We waited a few weeks and did some more blood work. The lactic acid levels were coming down. There was also an increase in my T cells and a big drop in my viral load. So I stayed off the meds. The acid levels continued to move closer to normal. The t cells stayed strong. The viral load

bounced around, but at much lower levels than when I was using. That's how I've stayed like that for over two years.

Sometimes it's still hard for me to connect my health problems with crystal meth. I am not sure why that is. The evidence is hard to refute:

1. I started using crystal and having more unsafe sex while I was high.
2. I got HIV because of sex I had while using crystal.
3. As my using increased, my numbers got worse.
4. I stopped using, and my numbers got better.
5. I stayed clean, and my numbers have remained good.

I guess it's part of the denial that went along with my active addiction. I just didn't connect my actions with their consequences. I was not able to live life on life's terms. I had no desire to do so. I had no capacity to do so. Now I can, thanks to this program.

—Anonymous

NYCMA RELAUNCHES WEB SITE



NYCMA has relaunched our informational web site. The site has an easy-to-navigate interface with an up-to-date meetings list. You can also find useful information like links to other CMA fellowships, literature downloads and important news. The site is at WWW.NYCMA.ORG

Just added to the site, is a link to CMA LA's upcoming Spring convention. Just click on the "LINKS" button for more information or visit WWW.CRYSTMETH.ORG directly.

online

DEATH BY CRYSTAL AND HONORING LIFE

Our last conversation, long-distance, was blissfully banal. We chatted about the weather; our first New Year's Eve together, a week before; something funny on TV. He said he loved me, and said good night. I said I loved him, said good night, hung up, and watched the news. It was 7:00 p.m.

At 7:11 p.m. he killed himself.

For years, I never fully understood Antonio's death—until now, in sobriety, when I put it all together. I remember that there was always a sadness about him. That he mentioned drugs a few times when he talked about his life away from me, in a very dark, sinister way, but that was long before I myself started using, so I had no clue. His moods changed often. One moment he was brooding. The next moment he was the life of the party. Come to think of it, I was exactly like him that way, only I never saw it, and years later, my life torn to pieces by crystal meth, I'd find myself staring into that same abyss ready to jump, except I didn't have a gun, just some pathetic sleeping pills.

Death sucks, for those who die unready, and for those who are left behind. This summer several members of our fellowship passed away—illness, suicide, overdose. Every time, it's like a death in the family. When they were "out," we kept praying for them, holding hands during that awkward moment of silence "for the sick and suffering in and outside the rooms." But they didn't come back. No matter how well we knew them, we were bound to them through shared experiences, and that's what makes it so hard if their end is so dark and lonely.

Death—especially death by crystal—doesn't just make me sad. It makes me scared, guilty, helpless, and angry. Scared because it reminds me

where this disease can lead. Guilty because I'm still here and they're not. Helpless because I couldn't stop it. Angry because I feel let down and abandoned—by them, by God, by life.

I hadn't allowed myself to feel those feelings for years. They're the same feelings I had after Antonio's death, and later during the rampage of AIDS. I drowned them in alcohol and sex, then in drugs and sex.

My life is so endlessly better and joyful these days, yet reminders linger. I can't save anybody, unless I'm Jesus. And I will die, too. But at least I can do my part to honor life. All else is really out of my hands.

Grief, compassion, fury, fear. I can allow myself to feel, finally. I can feel these feelings, then release them, then let them go to strip them of their power. We say this a lot, but we forget easily: Addiction is not a moral issue, it's a disease that kills. Indiscriminately.

So here's the thing: save yourself. That way, you might also save someone else. For me that means: don't pick up; go to meetings; do your stepwork; flex your spiritual muscles; be compassionate without getting caught up in the drama; be your best; live by example, even when no one's watching. (That's a hard one.) Through my sponsees, through every newcomer, through every friend who relapses I find that serenity and happiness cannot be taught to others, but they probably can be learned from others. Ever been to a meeting and felt that spark?

Once I heard someone say that those who go back out and then die keep him sober. I need to remember not only their lives, but their deaths and the ways of their deaths, so that I can learn from both. At least that's what Antonio would have wanted.

—Marc P.

Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth and all other mind-altering substances.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to live free of active addiction and to carry that message to the addict who still suffers.

STEPFORD LIVES

MY BRIDGE BACK TO LIFE

The “program of recovery” as it is so often referred to in meetings is supposed to be a “bridge back to life.”

These slogans from the rooms are something that I myself have at times found to be irritating.

Yet in all honesty—“the program of recovery” is saving my life. Why saving? Because without it I have no control over my life or what I thought to be living for so many years.

As a newcomer—again—in the rooms of CMA, I was reminded of things I had learned in other recovery programs before. I was too willful, however, to hear what was being said, and really apply those lessons.

I’ve been part of the CMA fellowship in New York City for over two years now. I have relapsed several times, and seen friends that I made in the rooms relapse as well. But after my last relapse this past New Year’s, in Miami, I decided that I could no longer afford to be only 90 percent “in,” and leave the other ten percent

for reservations (which means reservations for disaster to happen). Those ten percent would take me out, as they always have.

Instead, I called my sponsor immediately and asked him if he would “really work with me.” He agreed but also asked me, “But are you really ready to do the work, Michael?” I replied, “Yes!” I have no choice. If I don’t do the work, I will die.

Some of us addicts need that gift of desperation to finally get it, that realization that “there is no other way for me.” I am one of those addicts.

I wake every morning to brush my teeth and see in front of me my calendar, where I have written on each month, “ENOUGH—YOU ARE DONE USING!” I need that, and I continue to say that silently

every day.

I have applied myself, calling my sponsor and working the steps. I have

read that damn Big Book, and I listen at meetings. I am not perfect by any means nor do I ever want to be. There is “no perfect program.”

Some people work good

programs, others need to be reminded occasionally why they are here. I was one of those. That is why I kept relapsing over and over for the past 15 years of my life. At 41, I no longer have the “energy” for another relapse. No f****g way!

I deserve to be happy. My family and my friends deserve that, too. I say myself first because I have to do this for me first. I have to be the reason, not my lover or my job or family but me.

I goof around but I listen, too. I have to apply myself to the program, and I remain sober when I do that. It is just that simple. For me, it is not about memorizing a text and being able to quote from that. Instead, it is about doing the “work I need to do for myself.” Applying myself honestly—100 percent—each and every day.

It hasn’t always been easy, and still isn’t, by no means. I just live honestly each day. That is all I have to do.

I do not judge nor want to be judged. I help others as those have helped me. I listen, I love myself, and I love my life.

I have to “re-program” myself each day because the addict in me has controlled my since I was 13. So at 41, I take charge and fight for my life on a daily basis. And so I live to love my life daily.

—Michael K.

That’s why I kept relapsing over and over for the past fifteen years.

I just live honestly each day. That is all I have to do.

TRIGGERS

As a person living with AIDS, I sometimes feel like a Vietnam veteran. I’m battling a war that never seems to end.

TRIGGER.

In the trenches of my mind, I challenge my enemies: AIDS, alcoholism, depression, drug addiction, and homophobia. This is life or death.

TRIGGER.

I feel like a prisoner of war, my own ego holds me hostage. Flashbacks constantly remind me that I have been in hell.

TRIGGER.

Rising above the battlefield, I transform my battle scars into lessons. I accept that they will always be a part of me.

TRIGGER.

I don’t die today, I choose to live. I surrender. I begin to view myself not as a victim but as a survivor of war.

TRIGGER.

I let go of my survivor’s guilt. I let God. I now realize that I must be fearless in order to heal. I humbly acknowledge that I am recovering.

—HENRY M.

LOOKING FOR LOVE TODAY I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY

One of the great things about being in a 12-step program is that we can learn from the experience of others. Which helps, but it doesn't change the simple fact that, being sober, we now have the undeniable opportunity to live life, learn from our own mistakes and experience the trials and tribulations that come naturally. One of the things that I know is that my higher power is full of surprises. Just when I think that there's no one out there for me, for my tastes, for my life, someone opens the door. How to give and receive love, dating and romance is something that my HP has set as a course full of rich learnings and ultimately an opportunity for growth in my life. Note: When talking about opportunities for growth, get your spiritual tools ready, cause it's gonna get bumpy.

When I was using crystal, I was too beat down and destroyed to think that I deserved anyone's love. When someone did show more than a passing interest in me, I didn't have the capabilities or even the motivation to make something more out of it. Years of putting all my energy into maintaining my daily habit had exhausted me, and the energy and faith necessary to put into a relationship was well beyond my reach. Crystal dulled my emotions by making it impossible for me to truly care about another person, care about being rejected by another person and especially, to hope for a future with another person.

Today, I cannot be indifferent to the slings and arrows of love or even to the promise of love. This story is not the "pink cloud" of someone who has just found love in sobriety. It's a tale of how I have applied the spiritual tools of this program to take risks and ultimately walk through the pain associated with the attempt.

Fear can be a killer. Fear of rejection, fear of being alone and fear of being judged forced me into solitude and

addiction. Today, I have means to deal with that fear. I have faith in a higher power that will get me through the fear. This faith exists because I have taken time to work the program laid out in the 12 steps. I've seen the effect directly in my life and in the lives of others. Step three tells me to turn my will and my life over to my higher power. When I initially worked this step I took a leap of faith. Today, I know from my experience that everything will be all right. Faith has turned into fact. If I hurt, if I am in a tough spot, or ultimately if the love gambit does not net out in my favor I know I'll be all right.

In sobriety, I've taken a leap of faith towards love three times, I've dated more than that, but three times in the last two and a half years I really opened myself up to the possibility of something significant. Three times it did not work out. Even though it is disappointing and discouraging, each time has provided me with an opportunity for growth. An opportunity to take a look at my character defects and work steps six and seven around them. An opportunity to

practice prayer and meditation to right-size feelings. An opportunity to be open to the love, compassion and support of friends in the fellowship that understand the pain and disappointment that comes when you decide to live your life, take a chance and walk through the feelings that are intrinsic to the experience of finding love.

Today, I am grateful that I have listened to the experience of others and related enough to ask for the solution that is the 12 steps. Today, I am grateful that I have tools that give me an alternative to the

heart-numbing effects of daily crystal meth use. Today, I am grateful that when I let go of something that I had hoped would be something special, I can rest assured that it was a divine lesson and an opportunity for me to "grow in understanding and effectiveness."

Today, I have an opportunity to look for love because I am sober, I have an opportunity to fail and I have an opportunity succeed. The simple point is, today I have the opportunity.

—Corey M.

When I was using crystal, I was too beaten down and destroyed to think that I deserved love.

THE 12 STEPS

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

meeting list

DAY	TIME	MEETING	LOCATION
Monday to Friday	7:45 AM	GOOD MORNING, HIGHER POWER (Closed)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Monday	6:00 PM	RELAPSE PREVENTION (Open)	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Monday	7:30 PM	JUNTOS EN SOBRIEDAD Spanish Language Meeting	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Tuesday	Noon	TUESDAY'S TOPIC (Closed)	Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Tuesday	6:00 PM	RECOVERING TOGETHER (Closed)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Tuesday	7:30 PM	BEGINNERS' MEETING* (Closed)	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Wednesday	6:30 PM	TOOLS FOR BEGINNERS (Open)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Wednesday	6:30 PM	"FROM THE INSIDE OUT" (Closed)	Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Wednesday	7:00 PM	CMA UPTOWN (Open)	The William Ryan Community Health Center
Thursday	6:30 PM	"AS BILL SEES IT" (Open)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Thursday	8:00 PM	BOOK STUDY MEETING (Open)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Friday	6:15 PM	LIVING WITH HIV (Closed)	Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Friday	8:00 PM	CRYSTAL CLEAR* (Open)	Gay Men's Health Crisis
Saturday	8:00 PM	MEDITATION MEETING (Closed) <i>Please arrive on time so as to not interrupt the silent meditation period</i>	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Saturday	9:30 PM	INTIMACY, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX IN SOBRIETY (Closed)	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Sunday	6:00 PM	STEP MEETING* (Open) <i>Last Sunday of Each Month is a Traditions Meeting</i>	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Sunday	7:30 PM	Beginner's Basics (Closed)	The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

Gay Men's Health Crisis

119 West 24th Street, Between 6 & 7th Avenues

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community Service Center

208 West 13th Street, Between 7 & 8th Avenues

Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

356 West 18th Street, Between 8 & 9th Avenues

The William Ryan Health Center

110 West 97 Street, Between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues

Visit WWW.NYCMA.ORG/MEETINGLIST for new meetings or changes.

WHAT IS CROSS TALK?

Cross Talk is conversation between individuals during sharing or speaking time. This includes: Offering advice, directly speaking to an individual member instead of the group, or questioning or interrupting whoever is speaking.

Cross Talk is not referring to someone's share if you are moved by it or if it reminds you of your own experience. Nor is sharing your own experience in response to a share.

We try to avoid offering unsolicited advice or instruction. Therefore, many meetings discourage Cross Talk.

Specific Examples of Cross Talk:

A member shares, "I drank alcohol and I don't know whether or not to start my day count over." The next share cross talks, "You need to start your day count over or you are going out."

A member shares, "...and then I went to rehab and it changed my life..." Another share asks, "Excuse me, can you tell me where you went? I need a recommendation."

Examples which are not Cross Talk:

Referring to the content of a share: A member shares, "I drank alcohol and I don't know whether or not to start my day count over." The next share says, "When I was counting days, I drank some a beer. My sponsor and I fought about it. I started my day count over, because I didn't want to question it in my own mind."

Another example: John D. shares, "I am having a really hard time not picking up." Another shares, "It was good for me to hear John. It helps me to know other people feel like I do." That is not Cross Talk.

Since NYCMA doesn't make any rules for meetings, each group is autonomous and decides for itself how to address Cross Talk if it occurs. If a group does not allow Cross Talk, the chair can intervene. The chair can advise the member that we would like to hear about the member's own experience and specific questions can be asked after the meeting.