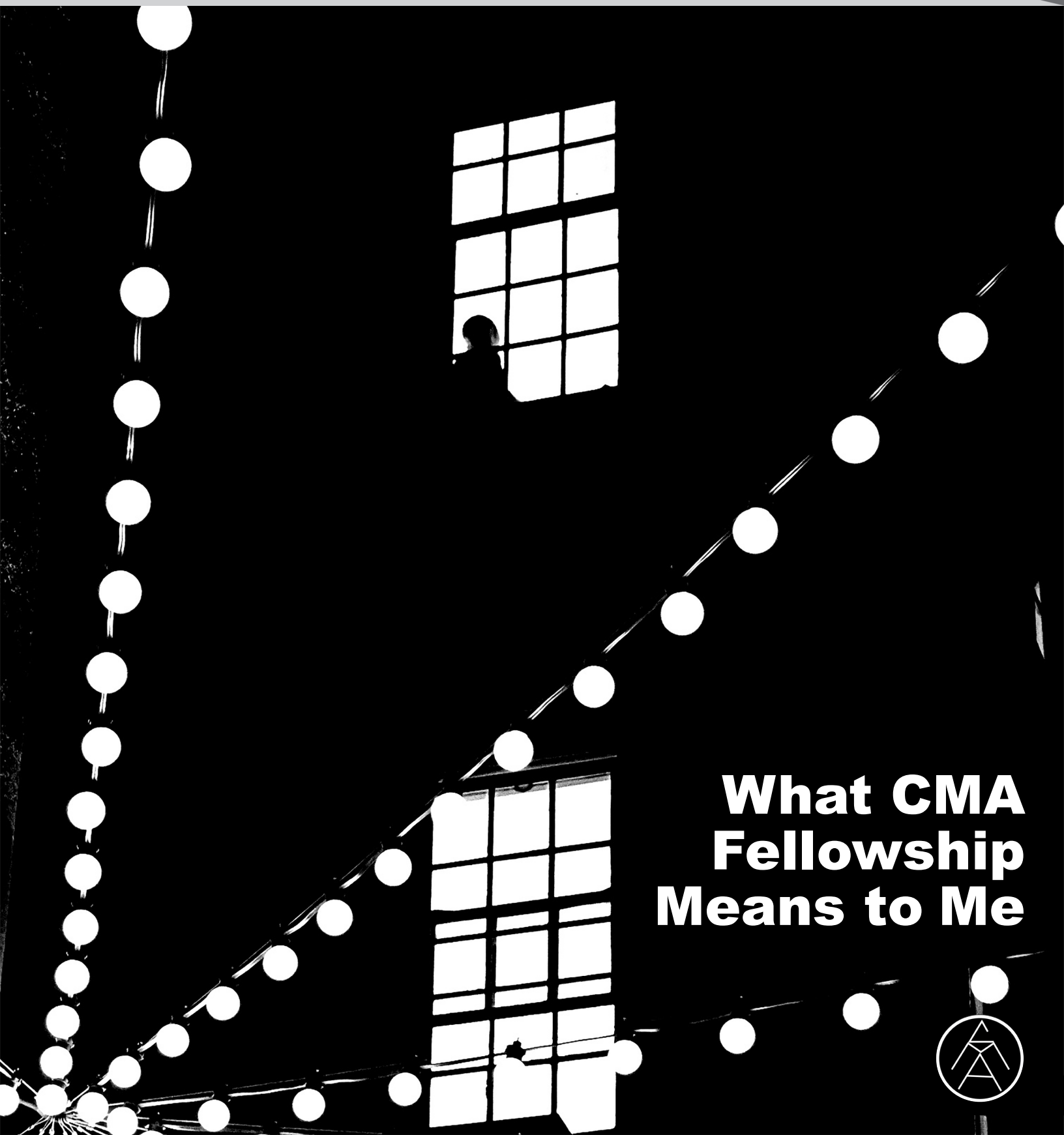


Crystal

clear

NYCMA
NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH
ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP

**FALL/WINTER
2017**



**What CMA
Fellowship
Means to Me**



I never dreamed of someday taking a seat in the rooms and saying, "I am an addict." My very first experience with CMA was during the summer of 2009. It was the Saturday 8 p.m. meditation meeting. To this day, that is my spiritual home group.

My love for CMA has gone through many ups and downs, like many relationships. At first, I loved the social-communal aspect of the program ... the fellowship. I was very shy, and had no real friends, so that definitely kept me coming back.

Then I struggled for many years, and I grew resentful toward the fellowship. Not ready to stop using, I became convinced that everyone was lying, so I decided to leave the rooms. I must say that leaving the program was the most honest thing I had ever done.

I continued to struggle. Once the struggle became too real, and my Higher Power opened my eyes to the truth, I realized that everyone was right. They were extending the hand of grace and freedom to me but I had decided that I didn't want it.

I came back and have stayed ever since. That's not to say that I haven't had some minor setbacks, but I have stayed. CMA allows me to love others the way I have always wanted; it allows others to love me. Through love and understanding we help one another; this, in turn, has allowed me to love myself, to love my life, to love my Higher Power and to be grateful.

-ANONYMOUS

I came into CMA in 2001, utterly defeated and willing to do whatever I was asked. CMA had not yet been founded in Atlanta, but meth was everywhere. It saturated our nightclubs and the gay scene. Four years, eleven white chips, two DUIs and much wreckage later, I found the gift of desperation. Today, my Higher Power is so much more than desperation. It's more than good, orderly direction. It's a connection to the universe that gets better and better with each sober day on Earth. I have a Higher Power that works in my life – otherwise I wouldn't still be here.

It was clear on that rainy Tuesday afternoon in 2005, coming down off of a four-day tweak, that either I was going to die from this thing or with this thing; the choice was mine to make. My mother – who recently passed away from cancer – came to me the night before in a vivid dream. She stood above me and asked, "What are you doing?" I replied, "Nothing!" "Well then get busy! Make something of

yourself before it's too late!" The following morning I picked up my final white chip and have been clean and sober ever since – this was her final gift to me.

Crystal Meth Anonymous has given me tools to process my fears, resentments, anxiety and critical thinking. Life is too short to be a hothead, fearful of people, places and things that cause me anxiety. We are sensitive people – we feel everything. By our very nature we are socially anxious people. CMA has given us tools to process this anxiety and be beautiful, happy, productive human beings who hold doors open for seniors, love deeply and live life with a new perspective. CMA is a simple program for complicated people, administered in a personal way.

The higher we evolve as recovering addicts, the more we pass it on and work with the newcomers who seek what has been given so freely to us. Service is love in action. Today, I love CMA more than anything or anyone. Thank you for my life, CMA!

-ROBERT R.

I have two months off crystal. I am laying here at 7 a.m. on a Saturday – on my bed, next to my dog – who has saved my life more than I could have ever saved hers. I lay here crying, in the same apartment in which I used for so long; in the same apartment into which I had invited so much darkness. These feel like tears of gratitude – as opposed to tears of wanting to die and praying/yelling at God, asking for him to put me out of my misery. I guess I am meant to be here.

I lay in the rubble of trauma and pain, trying to build my life back up, one day (sometimes one moment) at a time. I feel lost and I am in a lot of pain. I have felt "pink cloud" moments, maybe days here and there,

What is CMA?

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

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 lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers. (*From the CMA General Service pamphlet. "What is Crystal Meth Anonymous"*)

but my recovery is not so linear. I live in Brooklyn, and used to be a 'pop-in' member of Crystal Meth Anonymous – always struggling, counting days, angry and in pain. I don't quite know what happened – what that moment was. They say, "Play the tape until the end." In playing this tape, toward the end of my using, it was a nightmare from beginning to end. But I don't have to live that way anymore.

I know this is a vulnerable time, that I must be extremely vigilant. I never imagined that – of my own will and wanting to get better – I would have 60 days off crystal meth. It's a big deal for me. I am nowhere near where I want to be, or where I used to envision myself being at the age of 34.

I feel like a baby. I also feel hopeful and excited about what may come as long as I put in even a fraction of the effort I used to put in when I was going to score. My worst moments now are nowhere near as painful as they were toward the end of my using. A struggling fellow in my IOP asked me how I got clean. Yes, ME! I am not in a place to give magical words of wisdom. There are none, and that moment is different for everybody. The fact that somebody reached out to me gives me tears of joy. I need to remember where I come from – a dark, hopeless place. Now, I see the sun a little bit more every day.

-ERIC S.

FELLOWSHIP

In the summer of 2013, while I was in the middle of my last drug run, I had finally had enough. I texted a good friend who had notified me a year prior that he had gotten clean and sober. I asked for help. I hadn't realized it at the time, but he had carried the message that would later save my life. He asked if I could call him instead of texting. Although my full memory of the conversation is vague, one thing he said was crystal clear: "I know a great group of people that go to meetings and fellowship in NYC." I remember suddenly feeling -- for the first time -- some sense of hope and relief. I wanted to be introduced to this group.

I started outpatient and CMA meetings. During my second meeting, Wednesday Solutions, I raised my hand and for the first time said, "My name is Ken and I'm an addict." It was also the first time I was invited to fellowship. Scared and unsure, I quietly followed the crowd. I sat there with my cup of water, uncomfortable. My first sponsor, in discussion, told me two things:

(1) "You don't have to like everyone – and everyone doesn't have to like you." (2) "Please go to as many fellowships as possible."

I followed that second suggestion like my life depended on it – because it did. I started getting numbers and texting fellows. It was a slow, scary process, but now I realize that for me, the opposite of addiction is connection. I have so many people in my life that I met in this fellowship, people that I now call friends – close, special people whom I love. Friends I can talk to about anything, go with on vacations, connect on a daily basis even without the phone call or text, simply because we know in our hearts that we have each other. A large group of us go skydiving together. Now, at three-plus years sober, I have found that "great group of people that go to meetings." That was you, the fellowship of CMA. Thank you for saving my life. I believe there is a miracle with all of your names on it!

- KENNETH N.

*What tools do you use to get through long weekends and holidays?
Has it worked for you? We want to know.*

Contact a member of the Literature Committee. You may also send an email to newsletter@nycma.org

An Addict's Testimony

I stood for nothing and fell for everything. That was once my life. My name is Jaime and I am an addict. I used crystal meth since the age of 19, for nearly 16 years. By some miracle, I am still alive today and grateful to have a different outlook on life.

I grew up with two loving and caring parents. My dad showed me tough love and how to be a man. My mom made up for his sometimes insensitive ways. I had two older sisters who also loved me unconditionally. No one ever spoke about drug use because it wasn't something that any of us had ever experienced, until I came along.

At a young age, I was not okay with being gay. After high school classes were over, I would sit in church and ask God to help remove my attraction to men. I tried dating beautiful women, some younger, then some older. This never worked. At the end of the day I was just a scared, young, gay man.

My disdain for myself led to suicide attempts. I felt scared and completely alone because I knew no one gay like me. I would sit, crying, on my bathroom floor with a knife in my hands. I eventually built up courage to cut my wrists, but feared the pain so much that I never went deep enough. Admitting this feels surreal, but it is important. I was never okay with myself because I was different. As time progressed, focusing more on school and getting a job at age 14 kept me busy and out of my head.

At 19, I met a beautiful man

and began a serious relationship that lasted two years. We moved together to West Palm Beach. He was patient with me, loved me unconditionally, and taught me that love is possible. He taught me the kind of man that I wanted to be. This did not last and I found myself yet again alone, sad, and scared.

My love for music, dancing, and nightlife took over. With that came crystal meth. I came to know way too many people, paid for nothing, never waited in lines; everyone wanted me to hang out.

I realized that I could not sustain this lifestyle, and moved to NYC, where I did not know anyone of this nature. Within weeks I was hitting the major nightclubs in Manhattan, five nights a week. I danced my feelings away and masked myself in a world where nothing really mattered but having a good time.

I enjoyed my years under the disco ball. I felt as if I fit in – but this wasn't reality. I really knew nothing of these people and they knew very little of me. I was always under some chemical influence, never making real connections.

Keeping people at a distance felt safe for me. I was afraid of letting anyone know the true me. I thought that it wasn't cool to

show emotions or exhibit caring or love – that it was better to have attitude, confidence, and no feelings. How naïve I once was!

My drug use escalated. I would use every time I went out – also to get through my days at work. I began to do things that I am not proud of. At work, I had access to numerous financial accounts. I would borrow from one account to buy drugs, and would pay it back when I got paid. I did this for a while until I couldn't catch up. In 2004, I lost my job and was arrested for petit larceny.

In 2006, I was arrested again for possession. I was mandated to go into an outpatient drug program in which I stayed for almost a year. I remember thinking at a meeting, "These people are insane. I am not an addict. I am better than they are." Meanwhile, I would use the urine of sober friends whenever I was drug tested.

In 2007, I progressed to intravenous use. Within six

"I would get random text messages from unknown numbers: 'Never let go of the light within!' 'Life will be okay if you don't give up on it.' 'Please go home and get some rest.'"

months I had lost everything. Emaciated, I would disappear for weeks on end. I would only stop when I physically could not sustain the pain. Then I would crash for days or weeks.

As I walked aimlessly around this city in the freezing weather at night, looking for my next fix, I would get random text messages from unknown numbers: "Never let go of the light within!" "Life will be okay if you just don't give up on it." "Please go home and get some rest." When I got these messages I would get so upset at people's audacity: "They don't know me! How dare they judge me!" I used to think they were so far from the truth. But they were so right. Until this day I have no idea who texted me; perhaps my higher power was trying really hard to help me.

I kept on using. Friends found me sitting on stoops around NYC in the freezing cold and brought me home to watch over me. At times, I couldn't even walk because of neuropathy pain. My arms were full of bruises; my veins had collapsed. My circulation was so bad that my lower extremities and hands were in constant pain. Not even this stopped me – it just slowed me down.

I found the courage to see a doctor. My frail body was covered in welts. I couldn't use the restroom without pain and bleeding. I thought I had AIDS. I shared everything with this handsome gay doctor. He looked at me and just started to cry with me. He ran all sorts of tests on me. He revealed that he once had a similar condition. He asked if I wouldn't mind going

to a meeting with him that day – hence I was introduced to CMA.

I was afraid to admit that I was an addict. I was so hurt and scared that it took me five years to make my first connections in the rooms. I sat in the back and didn't want anyone to see me. I kept coming to meetings. I changed my thinking and my life changed.

I met a man in 2011 who later became my boyfriend. He was more extreme with his partying than I. We partied together



and separately. We tore each other to shreds emotionally: cheating, verbal and physical abuse. I am not proud of this, but this happens when two active users try to create a life together. The number of hospital visits and suicide attempts was unreal. We loved each other so much, but our desire for meth was far stronger than we could control. Within this relationship I realized how much of an addict I truly was. Today, we are both sober, and I consider him a gift in my life.

This program and others are not perfect. I have had ups and downs, yet I have grown

spiritually into the man that I am today: humble, caring, honest, loving and present. That is only possible because I have given this program a chance. I am now the happiest I have ever been. I owe that to being sober. I have friendships that matter, family that loves me, a beautiful dog and home, and a good job.

I came from an extremely dark place; my mindset was that if I were to die a young tragic death, it would be okay. I no longer think this way. I want so much out of life. It is attainable but only by staying sober and working a program.

I trembled during my first share in a meeting – scared of revealing the true me. Once I had shared, I felt a part of. I felt love from others. Sharing not only helped me, but others, who heard their story in mine. I found a sponsor, and life started to get better. I still have moments of struggle, but life is better than ever before.

Fellowship is vital. Getting to know people with similar goals helps me stay accountable. Not to mention that we are all one big family. I can't begin to explain how much love I receive from morning until night, in the form of text messages, phone calls, and emails. There are so many of us trying to be sober that I often see a fellow or two during my daily routines. Sometimes it happens when I need it the most.

I write all this to give hope to someone who has none. Please know that we, as addicts, are resilient, powerful beyond measure, compassionate and empathic. We recover together.

-JAIME L.

Fellowship is an important part of my ongoing recovery. There's "fellowship" after a meeting – when people go out to eat together, usually at a diner. I felt shy and awkward at first, but I was grateful that I felt welcomed to attend. Some of the meetings I attended in early sobriety were small. It was apparent that everybody was welcome to come to fellowship, and many nights everyone did! I had a hard time connecting with people, struggling to find conversation, but the more I attended meetings and got to know people, the more I could open up and participate. Eventually fellowship gatherings were full of laughter for me, and I began to look forward to them. With larger meetings these days, fellows normally break off into smaller groups and go to multiple locations. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

There is also fellowship in a broader sense – being part of the community of Crystal Meth Anonymous. We are now a large and vibrant group and we connect in many ways through a plethora of regular meetings, gatherings, and social media. This aspect of recovery is essential for me. Although it wasn't clear to me at first, much of my using behavior was driven by loneliness, the challenges of fitting in and the lack of healthy relationships. The connection I thought I was seeking by using crystal meth and having sex was part of my addiction. Abstaining from using left a big gap. With sobriety, I have the clarity to see that being part of an active fellowship fills that gap, which crystal meth could never fill anyway!

- MICHAEL L.

I am certainly not Superman, not made of steel. But I do have super powers, in the form of the fellowship. In my eight months sober there have been moments in which I felt torn down, left with no self-esteem. I felt like I didn't belong in the CMA fellowship. I have had the honor of finding out what fellowship really is. When I summon the support system of the rooms, I am given super powers.

I have taken burning desires, for instance, because I ran into my drug dealer, or over family issues with my mother. Some days I just couldn't outrun the trigger and the gun was about to fire. After I took those burning desires, the fellowship formed a protective shield around me. Fellows asked questions like, "Are you alright?" and "Is there anything I can do?" Fellows offered to go for a walk and talk, and most of all, exchanged phone numbers and invited me to call. It wasn't until recently – my last burning desire – that I actually got it: the fellowship is an army of soldiers, a supernatural force, who will stand next to you, not behind you, to protect you from outside harm. The men and women of the rooms share with you their skills and tools so that you are left with a suit of armor.

What's amazing about fellowship is that we come from all walks of life – different backgrounds and personalities – but we share this

common denominator of addiction. People who are perfect strangers at first want to protect you from harm. Today, I run over to the newcomer in the meeting and say, "Please just keep coming back." More than anything, when I walk into that room – when I see all those folding chairs – I get a feeling of peacefulness, serenity, and security; this is the feeling of fellowship. The fellowship is a heartbeat of recovery, my lifeline. I am so very grateful to have felt the power of fellowship on so many occasions.

I owe a big part of my sobriety to you, the fellowship. Thank you!

- THOMAS D.



Last October, a fellow and I were honored to represent the New York area fellowship at the CMA World Conference in Chicago. All attending members were tasked with building and maintaining the structures and committees that keep our shared global fellowship strong. We exchanged ideas, had debates, voted on policy, held meetings, and learned of CMA sobriety and procedure in other parts of our country and world. All the while, we were spiritually and administratively unified by our primary purpose of helping the suffering crystal meth addict who seeks our solution.

And we had too much deep-dish pizza.

Though we were the esteemed officers of a major organization, we had in our hands a basic humbling reminder that we were all, at our core, just recovering junkies, doing service as best we could, just for today. This reminder was my simple Green Voting Card.

All fellows who were granted voting privileges, such as delegates and trustees, were issued a simple green index card when they registered at the conference – basic office supply, no logo, no fuss. The card was raised to vote for or against a motion. It's easier to count

crisp, colorful cards than a sea of waving addict arms in a conference hall. We were told to guard our card: "Please don't lose it. A flood of reissued lost cards might influence a true vote tally. Try not to crumple it. The card is yours. It represents your voice in a vote."

As your delegate, my card truly represented our fellowship's voice in a vote. I can report that we took that representation very seriously. And so, during motions to alter official language in a pamphlet, approve a budget, or elect new trustees, more than a hundred green cards would go up and down – a forest of green leaves representing the sober voices of thousands of CMA fellows across our country and the world. It was powerful, orderly, and humbling in its school room simplicity.

And it was silent: the room went completely still as the cards went up. Designated counters – three non-conference Chicago fellows, who independently tallied and compared their results to confirm accuracy – surveyed the room with focused eyes.

Our fellowship is undergirded by simple yet powerful traditions of inclusion. Anyone who wants to stop using is welcome. Our willingness is our "green card". With it comes freedom and progress, if we humbly remind ourselves daily that we must work for it. We earn our green card of sober "membership" each day we work to decide that we deserve it. It is a daily decision, a daily reprieve. Then we can help someone else believe, just for today, that they deserve it too.

I need to do this, and I need fellows to do this for me, when my faith falters, or my third step gets rusty, or I start to forget the misery I endured. I need the lone delegate from Wyoming as support; he said he needs us. Cool guy, he's a new dad! I need every CMA fellow from Phoenix to Duluth to London to Brooklyn.

And I need the strong eloquent delegate from Sydney. Speaking

of the American legacy of the founding of CMA World, and how Sydney fellows cherish their sober coins delivered from our side of the world, she declared on the conference floor: "We need you to lead. Your fellowship has the structure and the experience. We want to be led and be guided by you." The strength and humility of her statement leads and guides us. She finished her share and elegantly slipped her green card back into her fashionable hat, ready for the next vote. She wore it well!

- JONO M.

The Twelve Steps of Crystal Meth Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives have become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us back to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to a 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 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 have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people whenever 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 other crystal meth addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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Need help or someone to talk to?

CMA HELPLINE: 212-642-5029

HOW IS CMA DIFFERENT FROM OTHER TWELVE STEP PROGRAMS?

We found that we relate best to other crystal meth addicts because they understand the darkness, paranoia, and compulsion of this particular addiction. The Twelve Steps of CMA are adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. We do not believe we are better or worse than any other twelve step programs. At the same time, many of us fail to identify with "a falling-down drunk" or, in the case of a heroin addict, "a nodding-off junkie". The hyper-extended length and intensity of crystal meth's effects, be it compulsive cleaning or sexual activity, were unique. Many of us have attended other Twelve Step programs, but the feeling of identification in the rooms of CMA has helped us to keep coming back. After all, who but another meth addict understands the insanity that accompanies the high, and, finally, that seemingly bottomless drop into depression that makes us desperate to still use more? – *Excerpted from the CMA General Service pamphlet, "What is Crystal Meth Anonymous?"* Copies may be downloaded for free of charge at crystalmeth.org

CMA MEETINGS

SUNDAY		
Sunday Solutions	11:15am	LGBT CENTER
Step Meeting	6:00pm	LGBT CENTER
Beginner's Basics	7:30pm	LGBT CENTER
MONDAY		
Good Morning, Higher Power	7:45am	GMHC
Relapse Prevention	6:00pm	LGBT CENTER
CMA Literature Meeting	7:00 pm	St. Jean the Baptiste
NA Book Study	8:00pm	Realization Center
TUESDAY		
Good Morning, Higher Power	7:45am	GMHC
Long Term Sobriety/Advanced Beginners	6:45pm	LGBT Center
Beginner's Meeting	7:30pm	St. Veronica's Church
WEDNESDAY		
Good Morning, Higher Power	7:45am	GMHC
Harlem Renaissance	6:30pm	Ephesus Church
Solutions in Recovery	6:45pm	LGBT Center
Conscious Contact	8:00pm	LGBT Center
THURSDAY		
Good Morning, Higher Power	7:45am	GMHC
Agnostics' Meeting	6:30pm	GMHC
Book Study Meeting	8:00pm	LGBT Center
CMA en Espanol	8:00pm	Manhattan Club Plaza
FRIDAY		
Good Morning, Higher Power	7:45am	GMHC
Living with HIV	6:15pm	Hudson Guild Elliot Center
Crystal Clear	7:30pm	LGBT Center
New Tooles	8:00pm	Church of the Holy Apostles
SATURDAY		
Saturday Solutions	11:15am	LGBT Center
Promises Meeting	5:00pm	Manhattan Club Plaza
Meditation	8:00am	LGBT Center
Intimacy, Sex, and Relationships in Sobriety	9:00pm	LGBT Center

Meeting Locations

The LGBT Community Center	208 West 13th St
GMHC	446 West 33rd St
St. Jean the Baptiste Church	150 East 76th St
Realization Center	19 Union Square West #17
St. Veronica's Church	149 Christopher St
Ephesus Church	101 West 123rd St
Manhattan Club Plaza	482 West 43rd St
Hudson Guild Elliot Center	441 West 26th St
Church of the Holy Apostles	296 9th Ave

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