



# Methamphetamine use/ Tioata whakaihi: A guide for whānau

Adapted from **Interventions and Treatment for Problematic Use of Methamphetamine and amphetamine** [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

This resource is for people wanting to support someone to reduce or stop methamphetamine/tioata whakaihi use. It includes information on resources and support available for whānau.

Although methamphetamine use and possession is illegal in New Zealand, it is used by some people and has some risks.

You can support people to achieve their goals when they are ready to change methamphetamine use, alongside health professionals and others who have been on the same journey.

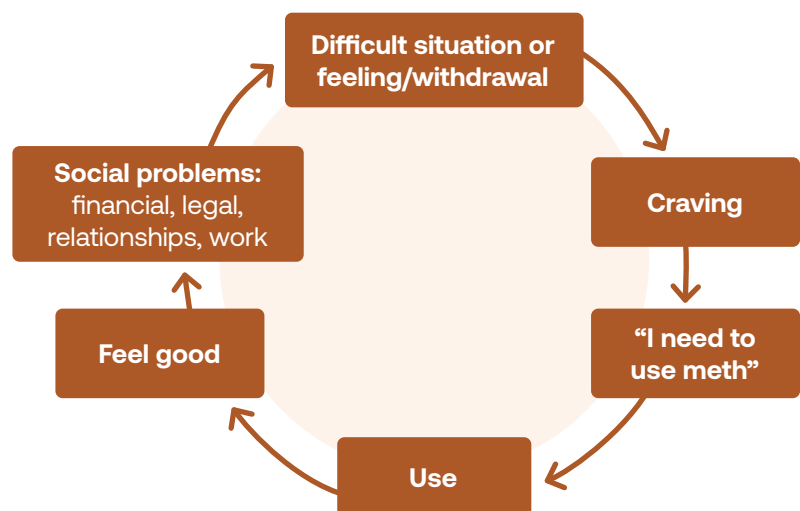
You don't have to do this alone, if you are feeling overwhelmed about supporting someone who uses methamphetamine, call **0800 337 877** or check out the support options at the end of this resource.

## Understanding methamphetamine use

Like many substances, most people start using methamphetamine socially, for fun, or to gain extra energy. For some people, it becomes a way of coping with life's demands, difficult situations, or feelings. Using methamphetamine can create new problems in a person's life.

Repeated use of most substances can lead to changes in the body and brain. Methamphetamine can affect people's memory and concentration, mood, and lead to irritability/āritarita. Use can sometimes lead to intense feelings of fear, suspicion, or changes in their perceptions of reality.

Reducing or stopping methamphetamine use can lead to withdrawal/maunuwara. This is because over time, people only feel "normal" when they are using. When people stop using methamphetamine, they can experience a range of unpleasant physical and emotional reactions. Withdrawal can also create a strong urge to use again, called cravings.



## Supporting someone deciding to reduce or stop

People can find it hard deciding to reduce or stop methamphetamine use. They may want to stop, but it may seem difficult doing so.

Whānau may feel frustrated by this indecision and interpret it as evidence the person does not really want to slow down or stop.

Telling people to stop using, threatening them about what will happen if they do not, or withdrawing affection does not help. This will often make it more likely that people continue using.

It is helpful to talk to people about their use, ask what they think are the good things and not so good things about stopping or not. This helps people become clearer in their own minds about why they want to change.

If the person has cut down or stopped methamphetamine before, even for a short while, remind them of this and ask how they did it.

## Helping people through withdrawal

Withdrawal/maunuwara is the body's way of getting used to working "normally" without methamphetamine. People experience withdrawal differently, including the effects, intensity, and duration. While it can be unpleasant and may be distressing, it does come to an end.

Some ways you can help are outlined below. If you have concerns, talk to your GP or health professional, or check out the support options at the end of this document.

## Practical help

Practical things can make a big difference to people.

- › People who use methamphetamine often have no appetite. Support them to eat healthy kai, including fresh fruit, vegetables, and lots of protein.
- › During the first 2 to 3 days of going without methamphetamine, people may feel exhausted and sleep a lot. This is called a crash. After the crash passes, encourage them to exercise (like going for a walk) or do it with them. This helps distract people from the unpleasant withdrawal effects and feel better.
- › Encourage people to do activities they previously enjoyed. This can distract them from withdrawal effects and gives them other interests. While the first few days it may be hard for people, their energy will increase.
- › As sleep is often difficult during withdrawal, spend time with people at night. Even just a few minutes can help.

## Some ideas to support someone

- › Help people see their success by celebrating small steps forward. Each day a person uses less or goes without methamphetamine is a success! Show them aroha and acknowledge how far they have come.
- › Withdrawal can be tough. When it feels difficult for the person, remind them why they chose to reduce or stop using methamphetamine.
- › When things get tough, reassure people it will get better. Seek positive stories of recovery to provide hope. Having a list of agreed distraction activities ahead of time can help.

## Keeping an eye out

- › If the person you are supporting starts experiencing changes in their perceptions of reality, becomes very paranoid (not just angry/riri or irritable/āritarita) or experiences ongoing hallucinations, they should talk to their GP or health professional.
- › Contact their GP or a local crisis team listed below | <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services/crisis-assessment-teams>
- › During and after withdrawal, people can feel sad or down/matapōuri. This is normal. If this goes on too long, the person is really down, or you are fearful for their safety, talk to their GP or the local crisis team.
- › If they are in a crisis, call **111** and ask for an ambulance.

## Further support and information

Below are support services and information available for whānau and people.

### Support

- › Family Drug Support provides support for whānau | **0800 337 877** | [www.fds.org.nz](http://www.fds.org.nz)
- › The Methamphetamine Help Counselling Service offers free, confidential phone support for anyone in New Zealand Monday to Friday | **0800 METH HELP (0800 6384 4357)**
- › Narcotics Anonymous offers in-person meetings for peer support, call them if you or someone you know would like to attend | **0800 NA TODAY (0800 628 632)**
- › The Alcohol Drug Helpline has trained counsellors available 24 hours a day | **0800 787 797** or text **8681**
  - › Pasifika Line **0800 787 799**
  - › Māori Line **0800 787 798**
- › If you speak Chinese, Korean or Japanese, this page provides information in your language | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/initiatives/asian-language-resources>
- › There are mental health crisis teams throughout Aotearoa, New Zealand, that can help when someone is struggling. The Ministry of Health provides a list of crisis teams | <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services/crisis-assessment-teams>

### Information

- › New Zealand Drug Foundation offers tools and advice for people who use drugs, whānau, friends and communities impacted by substance use | [www.drugfoundation.org.nz](http://www.drugfoundation.org.nz)
- › Kina Families and Addiction Trust offer advice and resources for whānau who are supporting people with substance use issues | [www.kina.org.nz](http://www.kina.org.nz)
- › Te Pou has a booklet for people thinking about stopping or wanting to stop using substances | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/managing-your-own-withdrawal>
- › Drug Help provides information and tools for people concerned about the harmful effects of their substance use | <https://www.drughelp.org.nz>
- › The Level offers practical advice for reducing substance use | [www.thelevel.org.nz](http://www.thelevel.org.nz)
- › If you are in Auckland, Community Alcohol and Drug Services (CADS) provides free treatment and support to those experiencing problematic substance use | <http://www.cads.org.nz/>

- › Addiction 101 by Blueprint for Learning is a one-day workshop for everyone designed to increase awareness and reduce the stigma associated with substance use. They offer both online and in-person workshops | <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/9-addiction-101/>
- › Te Hikuwai – Resources for wellbeing provides information on a range of topics from anxiety, depression, methamphetamine, cannabis and alcohol to sleep, stress, relaxation and wellbeing | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/tehikuwai>

## Further resources

- › ‘P’ Pull is a national, community-driven movement supporting people and whānau to reduce the negative impacts of methamphetamine. Their Facebook group provides information, practical advice, and support to methamphetamine users and their whānau | [www.facebook.com/groups/116256735497059](http://www.facebook.com/groups/116256735497059)
- › P\*\*d off is a booklet for people thinking about stopping or reducing methamphetamine | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/uploads/files/resources/pd-off-self-guided-methamphetamine-and-ATS-withdrawal.pdf>
- › Living Well is a booklet with strategies for whānau and friends of people who use substances | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/uploads/files/resources/KINA-living-well-brochure-web-1.pdf>
- › Health Navigator NZ offers information, advice, and resources for people and their whānau affected by methamphetamine use | <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/m/methamphetamine-addiction/>

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***Iti nei, iti nei***

***Take small steps to achieve your goals***

