

65 Primary and Supplemental Participants



Primary Data Source: 35 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who used meth for at least six consecutive months in the past but who have not used for at least one year. The interviews lasted between 2 and 5 hours, while the average length was 2 hours 46 minutes (The average length of the 6 testimonies was 1 hour 8 minutes). Beginning with 7 ex-meth users known to the author, a 'snowballing' method was used to make contact with 14 ex-meth users not known to the author. Additionally, 13 interviewees were found through advertisements posted on two online meth support groups, while 1 interviewee was found through a treatment and recovery service.

To gain a deeper understanding of having to contend with a loved one who uses meth, 6 interviews were conducted with 3 of the interviewees' wives, an ex-wife, an ex-partner and a mother of ex-meth users.

Supplementary Data Source: 6 testimonies given through a 5,000+ member online meth support group were transcribed to help supplement the 35 interviews. In addition, 20 topic-based live chats conducted through this online meth support group were also transcribed. 18 individuals contributed substantively to these approximately hour-long discussions (they shared their experience on: how they got into meth use; how they desisted from meth use; how they maintain the state of desistance; relapsing; hitting rock bottom; how they deal with their past and the role of forgiveness; the importance of self-care in recovery; dealing with feelings and conflict in recovery; rebuilding relationships post-meth use; and what tools they use to deal with triggers post-meth use).

n	Primary Data Source
35	In-depth semi-structured interviews with ex-meth users (100 hours of recorded data)
6	In-depth interviews with significant other of ex-meth users (10 hours of recorded data)
	Supplementary Data Source (from online meth support group)
6	Transcribed testimonies of ex-meth users (7 hours of recorded data)
18	Transcribed live online chats with ex-meth users (20 hours of recorded data)
65	Approximately 1 million words of transcribed empirical data

Of the 35 in-depth interviews and 6 testimonies, 23 (56%) are male and 18 (44%) are female, while 68% are either Pākehā/European/NZ European/New Zealander/Kiwi, and 27% are Māori or have one parent who is Māori (over-representation of males and Māori reflect the characteristics of meth users). 30 were born between 1962-1980, while 11 were born between 1981-1995. Almost half (46%) were born in the 1970s. They have lived in New Zealand's villages, towns and cities as far north as Dargaville, as far south as Dunedin, as far west as New Plymouth and as far east as Napier (including periods living overseas). One interviewee grew up in South Africa, while another grew up in Germany (requiring their different historical contexts to be accounted for).

Gender and Ethnicity for interviews 1-35 and testimonies 1-6

n	Gender	n	Ethnicity (self ascribed)
23 (56%)	Male (3 homosexual)	28 (68%)	Pākehā/European/New Zealander/Kiwi
18 (44%)	Female (2 bisexual)	11 (27%)	Māori (including one Māori parent)
		1 (2%)	German
		1 (2%)	South African

Year of Birth (Interviews 1-35 and Testimonies 1-6 sorted from oldest to youngest)

I-1	1962	I-2	1962	I-3	1965	I-4	1967	I-5	1968	I-6	1968
I-7	1969	I-8	1969	I-9	1970	I-10	1970	I-11	1970	I-12	1971
I-13	1971	I-14	1971	I-15	1972	I-16	1972	I-17	1972	I-18	1973
I-19	1973	I-20	1974	I-21	1975	I-22	1975	I-23	1975	I-24	1976
I-25	1977	I-26	1979	I-27	1979	I-28	1980	I-29	1980		
I-30	1982	I-31	1984	I-32	1987	I-33	1987	I-34	1989	I-35	1995
T-1	1979	T-2	1981	T-3	1985	T-4	1985	T-5	1985	T-6	1986

The Interview Process

The semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts:

1.	Life in Review
2.	Methamphetamine Use

In **Part 1**, interviewees were asked to review their life from the beginning to the present, including the following main life domains:

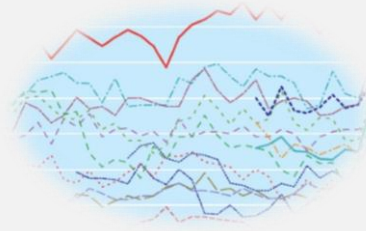
family	school	work
friendship	romantic relationships	marriage
parenting	psychological & physical health	religion and/or spirituality

I focused on the significant relationships, experiences and events in each of the above main life domains in order to understand the turning points and role transitions in their life. I also asked them about their legal and illegal drug use history (except meth), and at the end of each life domain I asked whether, for example, family (or school, or work, etc.) has influenced their drug use, and, conversely, whether their drug use has impacted on family relations (or their schooling, or work, etc.). At the end of part one I asked them to identify the key influences (whether positive or negative) that have impacted on their own development. By re-envisioning episodes or long sequences from their past, interviewees are providing a “subjective, retrospective report of past experiences and their meaning to that person” (Clausen, 1998: 192).

In **Part 2**, I turned specifically to their meth use, again going back to the beginning and tracing it over time to the present. I asked:

1.	How and why they started using meth
2.	How and why their meth use changed over time
3.	How meth use impacted on their psychological state, physical health, personal relationships, professional life and morality
4.	How their control over your use changed over time
5.	How and why they stopped using meth
6.	How their life has changed after they stopped using meth
7.	What advice they have for those thinking about trying meth for the first time

The Life Satisfaction Chart



The 35 interviewees completed a '*Life Satisfaction Chart*', which is designed to subjectively evaluate the major sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at each age period of their life, thereby revealing turning points or decision points (Clausen, 1998). This chart is also designed to help provide clues about which events and circumstances have impacted upon interviewees' subjective state, and so serves as a reference point to the interview data. This task was also designed to better help them retrospectively recall important events from their past, because the more accurately they can recall past events - using their imperfect memories - the more reliable the data. But the life-course view recognises research respondents are "not disinterested observers of their past" (Scott and Alwin, 1998: 125). Instead, it must be acknowledged that reviewing and reflecting upon one's past life is filtered through one's current state of mind (Scott and Alwin, 1998). Thus, retrospectively reviewing one's past may be conceptualised as the "presently understood past" (O'Rand, 1998: 73), because they can report their present reaction and reinterpretation to events and experiences from their past (e.g., if they thought at the time they had control of their meth use, reflecting back now do they still hold this view?).

Bibliography

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