

TURNING TINA

A resource for queer men living
with HIV who use crystal meth aka tina.

**Please read no further. The following material
may trigger and/or elicit cravings if you have
or had an issue with substance use.**

People's reasons for trying or using tina are varied.

This resource outlines some of the facts about using tina, including what it does to your body and how you get it into your body. We also wanted to talk about some of the warning signs that might signal it's time to take a break or even get some help.

Turning Tina has been created to offer practical advice, tailored to HIV positive gay and bi men (including trans men), on reducing the harms that may come with using crystal meth.

However, we want to point out that stopping meth use may not be a realistic or achievable goal for everyone.

This resource has gathered practical risk reduction strategies and advice based upon survey responses and interviews with former and current tina users. Some information was provided by members of The Institute of Many, and the authors of this resource are very grateful for their honest contributions.

We want to minimise the risks to your health, if you decide to use crystal meth.

Let's talk about tina.

The Institute of Many (TIM) does not in any way endorse or encourage the use of illicit drugs and this resource emphasises the fact that the only way to totally avoid any of the risks associated with methamphetamine use is not to use methamphetamines.

The only way to avoid any adverse consequences from illicit and/or recreational drug use is not to use. However, a lot of guys have already made the decision to do so and they are no less deserving of support in seeking to reduce harmful consequences that can arise for themselves and for those who live and love with them.



IMPORTANT: The purchase, possession and supply (including 'gifting' or giving free of charge) of quite small quantities of methamphetamine is a criminal offence in all Australian states and territories and a conviction can create significant reputational, employment and international travel challenges and impediments.



IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT TINA

Whether you're a regular user of crystal meth, have dabbled once or twice, or know a mate that is struggling:

this HIV+ community-developed resource is for you.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS TINA DOING TO YOU?

WHAT IS TINA DOING TO YOU?	6
TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH & PHYSICAL HEALTH...	8
TO YOUR SEX LIFE...	10
TO YOU WHEN THE PARTY IS OVER...	12

CHAPTER 2

WHEN DOES PRACTICAL USE BECOME PROBLEMATIC USE?

WHEN DOES PRACTICAL USE BECOME PROBLEMATIC USE?	13
FREQUENCY	17
FINANCIAL	18
WORK	20
SOCIAL	21

CHAPTER 3

HOW CAN I USE TINA IN A SAFER WAY?

HOW CAN I USE TINA IN A SAFER WAY?	23
IF I'M SMOKING...	25
IF I'M BLASTING...	27
IF I'M SHAFTING...	30
PLANNING	32
EATING and DRINKING	33
HIV/HCV/STIs	35
MIXING TINA AND OTHER DRUGS	36

CHAPTER 4

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

YOU ARE NOT ALONE	37
WHERE YOU CAN GO FOR MORE INFORMATION, ADVISE OR SUPPORT?	40



CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS
TINA
DOING
TO YOU?

”

THE HIGH WAS INCREDIBLE, AND MY BRAIN SOUGHT THIS HIGH EVERY TIME I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, I WOULD HAVE PHYSICAL REACTIONS JUST THINKING ABOUT IT, MY HEART STARTS TO RACE AND THE ADRENALIN GETS GOING. I STILL HAVE THESE REACTIONS IF I START TO FANTASISE ABOUT IT AGAIN.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34+

Crystal methamphetamine is a man-made stimulant of the central nervous system, originally developed by chemists in the early part of the twentieth century. It's chemically similar to amphetamine (speed) which was developed a few decades earlier but stronger in effect.

It is actually less about how the crystal works and more about how the drug tricks the brain into doing much more work. Crystal triggers the brain to release huge quantities of the stress – or 'flight or fight' – hormone, noradrenaline and also floods the brain with the feel-good chemicals dopamine and serotonin.

In fact crystal persuades the brain to release up to ten times the amount of dopamine that you'd anticipate from snorting a line of cocaine.

No other chemical compound comes close to delivering on that scale.

The immediate effect is increased blood pressure, heart rate, mental alertness, and breathing rate and reportable by gay men in particular - a massive increase in sexual desire coupled with the sort of increase in stamina that can allow sexual play sessions to extend for many hours if not days.

Tina gets in your head, or rather it creates the illusion of “unlocking” it and the various intellectual barriers we put in front of sex and other social behaviours.

The short-term effects of the drug can include prolonged wakefulness, reduced appetite and a temporary drop in the responsiveness of your immune system. Mood and confidence may be elevated while using tina and then crash when it begins to wear off.

“

TINA WAS USED AS A WAY OF PUTTING ASIDE THE ANXIETY OF +MY HIV+DIAGNOSIS. I'VE ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM LOW SELF ESTEEM AND MY DIAGNOSIS MORE THAN AMPLIFIED THOSE ANXIETIES. ENTER TINA AND HER ABILITY TO WIPE ALL THAT AWAY.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34+

Sustained use can result in mental health issues, dependence (needing more drugs to get the same effect, and starting to need the drug to function normally) and disrupted sleep patterns . The mental health impact may include depression and mood swings, but for some, may include feelings of paranoia and hearing whispers/voices.

These symptoms, if/when they occur, may be mild in new or infrequent users and generally disappear when you end the session. If they don't resolve in a couple of days after last use, seek medical assistance without delay, as these symptoms are a result of a drug induced psychosis or could lead to a drug induced psychosis. If these symptoms are present in a fairly major way from first use: stop using immediately and don't use again.

WHAT IS TINA DOING TO YOUR MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH?



Some people should never engage with psychostimulant drugs under any circumstances. This is particularly so in cases where a pre-existing mental health condition like bi-polar or schizophrenia is present or where the reaction to consuming crystal is violent, uncontrolled or in any way frightening for the user and those around him.

Equally people with heart conditions, high blood pressure and similar conditions are at heightened risk of adverse consequences from crystal use and the older the user the more likely it is that this will be the case.

For HIV+ guys, tina might be used to escape the negative aspects of living with HIV, be it a reaction to being newly diagnosed or as a way of coping with living long-term with HIV. If tina is the only method you're using to deal with your feelings around being HIV+, it's potentially doing more harm than good in the long run.

WHAT IS TINA DOING TO YOUR SEX LIFE...

I HAD THIS OVERWHELMING FEELING OF HORNINESS AND THE STRONGEST DESIRE I'VE EVER EXPERIENCED TO PLAY WITH A MAN'S COCK. ”

WE HAD SEX FOR HOURS AND HOURS, OCCASIONALLY STOPPING TO HAVE SOME MORE TO SMOKE. I WAS THERE FOR 36 HOURS AND HAD NO CONCEPT OF TIME NOR DID I CARE. I WAS HAVING TOO MUCH FUN....

I LOVED THE FEELING IT GAVE ME LIKE I WAS THE MOST POTENT SEXUAL BEING ON EARTH.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34+

In our informal survey, guys who use tina report feeling like the sex they have on tina is the hottest they've ever experienced.

It's important to remember that tina doesn't actually turn you and your party partners into pornstars, just alters your perception to allow that fantasy to seem more realistic.

Tina's ability to lower inhibitions may also impede your judgement around safe sexual practices.

This isn't just related to HIV and STI safety.

Physical personal limits around sexually adventurous practices like fisting and kink can be ignored or overruled on tina, resulting in genuine harm.

Another potential consequence of regular sex on tina is sober sex becoming difficult. The heightened experience of sex on tina can make it seem like sex without tina is boring, or worse: that you're boring or unattractive without it.



WHAT IS TINA DOING TO YOU WHEN THE PARTY IS OVER...



It follows that intense highs from tina can come with equally intense lows and when that massive unleashing of 'feel good' neurotransmitters starts to slow down (generally round 12 hours after you last used) that the urge to use again 'to maintain the moment' can become pretty overwhelming.

It is important to understand that the 'come down' period experienced as the drug leaves your body over time is a normal and essential part of transition back to normality. You might feel down for a few days (the effects vary pretty widely) but it is important to understand why you feel blue and that it is only for a few days, not forever.

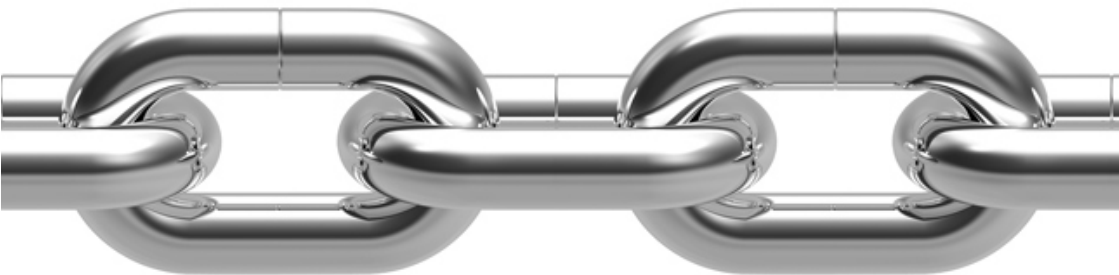
Remember that intense pleasure from crystal has to be rationed in order to maintain the intensity.

It can never become or replace 'real' life.



CHAPTER 2

WHEN DOES RECREATIONAL USE BECOME PROBLEMATIC USE?



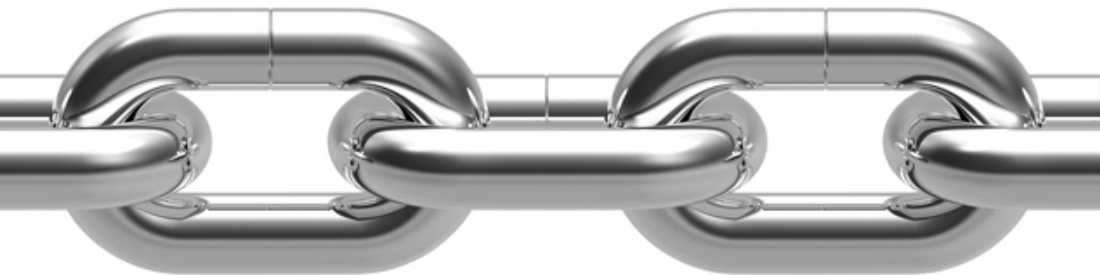
Only you can answer when your tina usage is becoming a problem, but before that happens, friends, family, and fuckbuddies may ask you before you're ready to answer. It's estimated that around 15% of tina users will develop dependence on the drug, though it's generally agreed that users who regularly inject are much more at risk of doing so than others.

I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS ONE OF THOSE ULTRA-STRONG PEOPLE WHO WAS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO ANY FORM OF ADDICTION. THEN YOU GET NEAR SOMETHING LIKE TINA AND YOU REALISE ACTUALLY, THERE ARE LIMITS.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

Is it possible to be honest with yourself when tina is affecting your judgement? What signposts can you establish with supportive friends/peers to help signal that for you, if it's becoming 'too much'?

In this chapter, we'll take a look at some of the ways recreational use of tina might become a problem.



I MANAGED MY RECREATIONAL USE PERFECTLY. I BLAST ON A FRIDAY NIGHT, AND THEN HAVE THE BEST SEX WITH MY HUSBAND. WE ARE MONOGAMOUS AND THEN REST ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY. BY MONDAY, IT IS MOSTLY OUT OF MY SYSTEM, AND TUESDAY I'M BACK TO NORMAL, READY FOR ANOTHER WEEK AT WORK.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

I HAVEN'T REALLY WITNESSED RECREATIONAL USE WITHOUT SOME KIND OF NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34





How often is too often?

Check out the Drugsmeter's online anonymous survey that helps establish where your usage fits.

W [drugsmeter.com](https://www.drugsmeter.com)



FREQUENCY

Some guys who use tina told us that if felt as though that “before they knew it”, they were using tina more regularly.

Whilst everyone’s journey is different, there was a common thread of tina usage beginning with seasonal use (i.e. every long weekend).

Then after 6-12 months or less, users progressed to using monthly, then weekly (often weekends), and then mid-week plus weekends, to finally every day.

For many of the guys we spoke to, going from occasional partying to every month was a turning point, after that they needed some form of assistance to alter their usage (i.e. relying on friends, therapy, a doctor, or a support service).

This ‘once a month’ warning signal isn’t in any way scientific and not all users are the same in terms of the effects that sustained use may have in any set time frame.

If you notice your use frequency increasing over time from the ‘long weekends/special occasions only’ goal you’ve set yourself, it could be time to reassess your use.

FINANCIAL

Getting to payday with nothing in the bank? If you observe that tina has become one of the primary expenses in your life, you might be heading towards problematic usage. If tina comes before rent, bills, and food, then you're probably already there.

If your financial situation is comfortable/affluent, you may not be missing that weekly outlay on a few points. However, it's helpful to keep track on how your spending habits are changing over time.

How are you using tina to negotiate sex i.e. "got favours to share"? Are you into the tina or the guy? Ask yourself that question when you're negotiating sex and PnP, and if you find you're starting to fuck guys because they have tina to share, your usage might be problematic.

If every payday is more like PnP-day, ask someone you trust to hold onto your essential money for rent/bills etc. If you're heading out for a session, think about taking the cash you need to get home and leave your bank cards behind.



I'D ALWAYS HAVE MY RENT AND BILLS PAID AND FOOD IN THE PANTRY BUT EVERY SPARE CENT AFTER THAT WENT TO TINA. IT WASN'T UNTIL MY HOUSEMATE CALLED ME AN IRRESPONSIBLE METH HEAD THAT IT CAUSED ME TO TAKE STOCK AND DECIDE TO GIVE IT A REST FOR A WHILE IF I COULD.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

ULTIMATELY I LOST MY JOB AND MY LIVELIHOOD DUE TO TURNING TO THE CRYSTAL/SAUNA SCENE AS A WAY OF, WHAT I THOUGHT WAS COPING WITH MY DIAGNOSIS BUT WAS REALLY JUST ABSOLVING RESPONSIBILITY, AND USING HIV AS AN EXCUSE FOR BECOMING A PROBLEMATIC USER.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34



Coming down from tina at work?

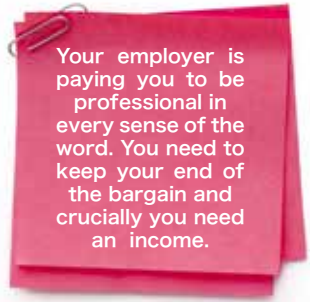
Going to work still buzzing?

Needing a hit throughout the day?

You're definitely not operating at full capacity in this state, and if you're high at work you are possibly creating an unsafe workplace environment and will be unreliable in decision-making.

Crystal can give guys false confidence about appearing to be professional and 'on to it' but workplace colleagues will often be seeing a very different picture.

A pattern of calling in sick, particularly Fridays/Mondays, will ring alarm bells in the workplace and can also result in your colleagues having to cover for you as well as doing their own work.



I MISSED WORK, APPOINTMENTS, SPECIAL DATES, IT DESTROYED RELATIONSHIPS THAT WERE IMPORTANT TO ME, I DID THINGS I REGRET, I HURT PEOPLE AROUND ME.

THE FINAL STRAW WAS TURNING UP TO WORK STILL HIGH. I LEFT SOON AFTER REALISING I WAS IN NO STATE TO BE AT WORK.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

WORK.

SOCIAL

When was the last time you had a weekend of seeing friends at brunch, or spending time with family?

Tina can isolate us from those parts of our life very quickly. If you can't remember the last time you prioritised social/family/cultural engagements over tina, your usage might be problematic.

Do you avoid making weekend plans with people because you know you it's likely you'll be partying? Try and make some alternative plans for your weekend several days in advance.

To prevent that urge to cancel at the last minute because you'd prefer to be partying, get your friend to meet you outside work when you finish, or pick you up from where you are, or have them sleep over/stay at their place.

Certain holidays can be an isolating time for some queer men if they are emotionally or physically removed from their families. In this instance, it can be easier to just write yourself off than acknowledge that loneliness.

Recognising this can be the first step to finding a place where you feel welcome, and safe, be it with friends, a support service, or somewhere you can volunteer to help those who have less. Never feel embarrassed to ask a friend what their plans are if you have none.

MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS ARE STRAINED BECAUSE I'D RATHER GET HIGH WITH MY PNP BUDDIES. I GET REALLY, REALLY IRRITABLE FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34





A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and nose area. The image is heavily overlaid with a teal or cyan color, creating a monochromatic effect. The text is overlaid on this background.

CHAPTER 3

HOW CAN I USE TINA IN A SAFER WAY?



“

**I'M BEING DESTRUCTIVE,
AND I KNOW IT.**

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 45 - 54

Let's point out the obvious and say that the only way to avoid any adverse consequences from tina is not to use it at all. However, some guys in our community have already made the decision to do so, and they are no less deserving of support.

If people who use drugs feel free to openly discuss their recreational behaviour and their friends approach that behaviour without judgement, that honesty informs an ongoing dialogue. The opposite is a community who are using drugs, but are too ashamed to tell anyone and thus may not get the answers they need to do so in a safer way.

The following chapter is by no means a how-to bible for using tina, but it does contain practical advice and information gathered from the community.

One of the ways you can use tina in safer way is to help others stay safe, too.

I HAD HEARD ABOUT A DRUG THAT MAKES ONE UNINHIBITED AND TO DO THINGS THEY MAY NOT NORMALLY DO... WE HAD SEX FOR HOURS AND HOURS, OCCASIONALLY STOPPING TO HAVE SOME MORE TO SMOKE. I WAS THERE FOR 36 HOURS AND HAD NO CONCEPT OF TIME NOR DID I CARE.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25-34

[THE FIRST TIME I SMOKED TINA]
I FOUND IT OVERRATED. I WAS WITH A CLOSE FRIEND IN A HOTEL ROOM AND SHE HAD BEEN GOING FOR DAYS. SHE FELL ASLEEP SITTING UP AND WHEN I WOKE HER TO GET INTO BED SHE GROWLED LIKE AN ANIMAL.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 35-44

“ WILL I EVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO FEEL THE WAY I FELT BEFORE I EVER USED IT? ”

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 35-44

HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFER WAY

IF IM SMOKING?

Smoking, or puffing, is usually done through a glass pipe (or sometimes off aluminium foil). Smoking tina is the most common way guys use the drug.

Tina enters through the lungs and is absorbed into the body, resulting in a high that is tempered by the amount smoked, and at what frequency.

If you're going to smoke tina, bear this in mind:



Smoking is the easiest way to consume large amounts of crystal over an extended period of time, as the higher you get the harder it is to monitor usage.



If you're looking to cut down, or be better at monitoring use, keep a record in your phone of when you last picked up the pipe. Experiment with setting limits e.g. every hour etc.



That glass pipe gets very hot when being used. If you're using it during a long session, it can be easy to drop when you're high. Try and keep your pipe in a designated part of the room, preferably away from lube/phones/water.



If you're smoking off foil, the contact high is greater than glass, so bear that in mind and adjust usage accordingly.

Also referred to as slamming, injecting crystal requires proper knowledge to be done safely. Blasting results in an immediate, overwhelming 'rush' and associated high which can last for a prolonged period of time: don't expect to be sleeping any time soon after you blast.

There are a range of potential harms associated with injecting drugs, including the spread of HIV, Hep C and other blood-borne virus if needles are being reused or shared.



HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFER WAY

IF IM BLASTING?



NEVER share injecting equipment: Hep C and HIV can be spread this way



Are you both using your own fresh, sealed syringes and other injecting equipment?



How long have you been partying?
Injecting is a precise skill, requiring a steady hand and clear vision: the very things crystal and other drugs can affect.



There are safe injecting tutorials on YouTube. If you are going to inject yourself, or want to feel more comfortable with being injected by a party partner, do your research. Your doctor may also be helpful.

Users who are new to blasting are often reliant on their sex partners to inject them. If so, consider the following:



How well do you know the person injecting you? Have you just met? Do they appear to know what they are doing? Don't be shy in asking them how often they've done this.



Some guys deliberately refrain from learning how to inject on the basis that acquiring the skill will enable more frequent injecting. The downside of not acquiring the skill is your reliance on others to do it for you and the skills offering in others can be highly variable.



Also important to bear in mind that if you are injecting your fuckbuddies with tina for them, you are criminally liable if anything goes wrong.



How hydrated are you? Use of crystal rapidly dehydrates users and dehydration can, among other things, make veins very difficult to find. Up your fluid intake and drink consistently throughout a play session. Remember that alcohol simply adds to the dehydration effect and stick to non-alcoholic drinks, preferably ones containing an electrolyte replacement ingredient.



How much lube are you using? Given the dehydrating effect you'll need increase the standard amount of lube and more if you're older. Crystal can dull pain from friction grazes and tears so you might not feel it at the time it occurs but you will eventually. Up the amount of lube you apply to reduce the possibility of damage and greatly enhance pleasure.



“ I NEVER MADE IT KNOWN THAT I WAS INJECTING DUE TO THE STIGMA.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 35-44

”

THE FIRST TIME I BLASTED WAS SIMILAR BUT INSTANTLY MORE EFFECTIVE THEN SPEED IN THE SENSE THAT I WAS BLINKERED IN THE PURSUIT OF ANY FORM OF DICK, SIMILAR TO SPEED BUT WITH MORE OF A DEFINITE BARRIER DRAWN BETWEEN THE HUMAN AND BESTIAL SIDE OF MY NATURE.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 35-44

“ I WAS HAVING TO WEAR LONG SLEEVES IN THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER TO HIDE MY TRACK MARKS.


- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 35-44



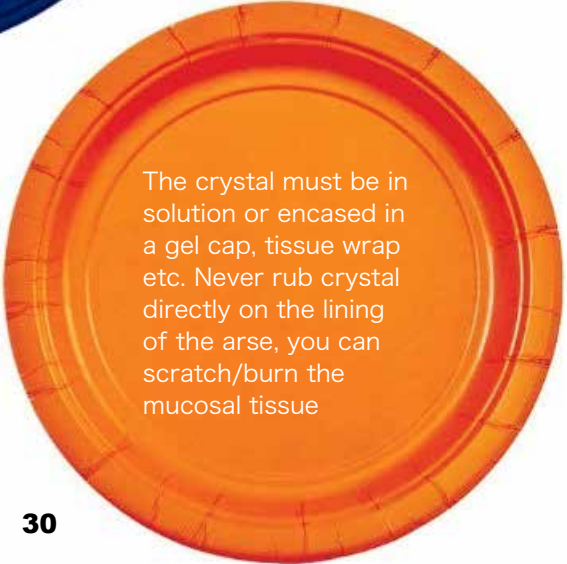
HOW CAN I USE TINA IN A SAFER WAY IF IM SHAFING?

Shafting, or booty bumping, involves squirting a solution of tina and sterile water inside your arse, allowing it to enter the bloodstream through the anal walls (which are very absorbent, commonly how most guys become HIV+).

If you're booty bumping, keep these tips in mind:



Do not engage in anal sex for at least 15-30 minutes after you've shafted crystal. Fucking may result in tears to the anus if the crystal isn't fully dissolved.



The crystal must be in solution or encased in a gel cap, tissue wrap etc. Never rub crystal directly on the lining of the arse, you can scratch/burn the mucosal tissue

”

I WENT ROUND TO A GUYS PLACE AND HE HAD NO PIPE OR NEEDLES. I WAS SO DESPERATE FOR A HIT, I STUCK SOME ROCKS OF CRYSTAL STRAIGHT UP MY ARSE. NEVER DOING THAT AGAIN.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25-34



”

THE FIRST TIME I SHAFTED CRYSTAL WAS AT A GROUP THING. THE GUY DOING IT TO ME EXPLAINED THE WHOLE PROCESS, AND TOOK HIS TIME. MADE ME FEEL A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE ABOUT IT.+

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25-34

HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE

PLANNING?

Before you set off to party, try and set yourself some limits:

DURATION

How long would you like to party for? If you set off on a Friday night, do you want to be home by dawn VS home by Wednesday?

COMEDOWN

Remember that when you stop partying it isn't the end – your comedown cycle (including difficulty sleeping, lack of appetite and mood alterations) can last several days, depending on your intake. Make sure your fridge is stocked.

BUDGET

How much are you willing to spend on this party session? Have you already spent your budget collecting your supplies? In 12 hours or more (or less!) you might want more, and now lack the self-control to say no. Set yourself a budget, and if you can remove temptation. Take out the cash you need for taxis etc. and leave your card at home.

INTAKE METHOD

Is tonight kicking off by smoking crystal? Once you start partying, you might be tempted to up your high and blast, or do a booty bump. Set yourself a limit on the intake method, as well as the amount.



Share these limits with friends you can trust or your party partner(s).

If you're partying with someone and they're trying to keep to a limit: help them, don't try and persuade them to do the opposite just because you want to keep the party going.

If someone says they've had enough, respect their decision just as you'd expect them to respect yours



HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE EATING AND DRINKING?

Whether you think you're just off for a quick play or a number of days, eating enough pre-partying is vital. It's important you kick off a session having eaten throughout the day. Trying to eat throughout your session too, especially if it goes past 8-12 hours.



Focus on carbs and protein, not sugar. A piece of toast with will serve you better than a handful of lollies. A can of tuna is also a great way to quickly replenish....



Obviously you're going to want to brush your teeth afterwards! If this sounds more than a little bit disgusting try some liquidised energy drinks.



If you notice your party partner(s) are fading, ask them if they need to eat. A piece of toast goes a long way – especially if someone is feeling their latest dose of G.



Whether you think you're just off for a quick play or a number of days, eating enough pre-partying is vital. It's important you kick off a session having eaten throughout the day. Trying to eat throughout your session too, especially if it goes past 8 -12 hours.

I KNOW THAT IF I BLAST TINA ON AN EMPTY STOMACH, I AM GOING TO FEEL SICK RIGHT AWAY AND BE NO USE TO ANYONE. IF I'M GOING TO BLAST FOR A SECOND OR THIRD TIME IN A SESSION, I ALWAYS TAKE TIME TO EAT BEFORE I GO AGAIN.+

”

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34





”

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIV IS SLOWLY GETTING BETTER AND MORE GUYS ARE WILLING TO PLAY WITH BOTH POZ AND NEG MEN. LOTS OF GUYS ARE SCARED OF HEP C THOUGH, AND DON'T KNOW THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 45-54



HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE

with HIV/HCV/STIs?

Most probably you'll be on HIV treatment, maybe with an undetectable viral load. Once upon a time, you'd likely be playing with guys in a similar situation, but with the advent of treatment as prevention and PrEP, that's not always the case. If you're playing with guys on the other side of the sero-divide, condoms and/or gloves may be required.

Check with people present. When was the last time you asked the HIV status of a guy joining a play session?



Your daily treatment regime can go out the window on a big weekend. Make sure you bring a few doses of your HIV meds out with you, and set a reminder alarm to take them. When you take yours, check with the guys you're with in case they need to take some too.



Hepatitis C transmission is a very real possibility in an extended play session, and that risk increases dramatically if you share injecting equipment. Condoms and gloves do provide protection from sexually acquired Hep C. If you don't want to take the risk it's a decision you're perfectly entitled to make. Nobody can guarantee being HCV – or STI - free past the 1st sexual encounter following their last negative test.



If you're playing in these scenes you should be testing for STIs (including HCV) at least four times a year. If you do contract an STI ensure that the guys you've been playing with are informed (they'll be grateful for it) and don't start playing again until you have the all clear from your doc.

HOW CAN I USE TINA THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE

MIXING CRYSTAL & OTHER DRUGS?

Often, party sessions on crystal can involve other drugs. If so, be mindful how these may interact with crystal or require their own monitoring:

THE FIRST TIME A GUY ”
G'D OUT ON ME WAS
TERRIFYING. HE THREW
HIMSELF AROUND HIS
APARTMENT AND DOWN
THE STAIRS. I DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT TO DO.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

TINA & VIAGRA/CIALIS or LEVITRA

A common side effect of using crystal is 'crystal dick' – the inability to maintain an erection. Be mindful of not overdoing erectile dysfunction pills, they put additional stress on your heart (already working overtime in your heightened state). Mixing Viagra etc. with amyl can cause a rapid drop in blood pressure and is not recommended.



TINA & G

This is one of the most common mixes of party drugs. Being on crystal can impede your judgement or memory when it comes to keeping track of your G doses. Keep a running tally on your phone of when/how much you and your party partner(s) dosed.

G is crucially dose dependent. A smidgeon over the limit can render someone unconscious and in need of medical assistance. If your party partner is having a bad reaction to G (from passing out to acting forcefully/erratically) look out for them. Get them to lie down in the recovery position (on their side) and keep checking on them. If in any doubt about their wellbeing call an ambulance **immediately**.

TINA & OTHER RECREATIONAL DRUGS

Mixing tina and other recreational drugs like cocaine, MDMA, or speed isn't very common in the party'n'play scene, but it can happen. Be mindful of how mixing too many drugs at once, and the extreme pressure you're placing on your heart (and other parts of your body).



CHAPTER 4

**YOU ARE
NOT ALONE**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Whether you're thinking about trying tina, use recreationally, or find your usage is getting away from you, it's really important to have people you trust and are willing to discuss these issues with you.

If you have none in your social circle, look online at some of the peer user networks associated with various HIV sector organisations.

It's important to understand that there's a lot of stigma around drug use, particularly in relation to tina. Some queer men who have no issues with recreational drug use may be deeply disapproving at any hint of crystal use and you should be careful to avoid disclosing to anyone until you've established that you won't be judged, or have your recreational or problematic usage discussed without your consent.

One side effect of crystal stigmatisation has been the creation of a 'hidden' tribal network of men who use and they can be an incredibly valuable source of harm reduction information. However, it is also important to recognise some guys experiencing problematic use of tina may enable each other to keep using instead of getting help. Even if you've just started using, consider disclosing to your doctor (especially if you're HIV+).

They will of course advise against it but most doctors who have significant caseloads of gay, bi and trans men are also very aware of the realities of LGBTIQ life and your doctor can end up being a useful touchstone throughout your relationship with crystal and help you realise when things are getting out of hand. If you are experiencing problematic use, there are a number of organisations that have programs to help.

”

TO BE HONEST IT'S GIVEN ME
COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE WHO I USED
TO JUDGE AS BEING WEAK WILLED OR
LACKING SELF-CONTROL. IT'S ACTUALLY
POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO LOSE IT A BIT.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34



”

I'M WEIRDLY GRATEFUL FOR THAT
EXPERIENCE, IT'S MADE ME LESS
JUDGEMENTAL AS A PERSON.

- HIV POSITIVE GAY MAN, AGED 25 - 34

WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE, OR SUPPORT?

To help stay in control of your tina, to connect with the HIV+ community, to talk to someone, or learn more about harm minimisation.

Please note these organisations have not necessarily endorsed or approved this resource or its content. Their contact information may have changed since publication.

AROUND AUSTRALIA

THE INSTITUTE OF MANY

TIM offers a confidential peer-run space on social media, connecting people living with HIV from around the world. We also run social events around the country.

W theinstituteofmany.org

AUSTRALIAN DRUG FOUNDATION

Facts & Resources about Alcohol and Drugs.

W druginfo.adf.org.au

DRUGSMETER

A 4 minute anonymous survey to determine where you may fit in the recreational/problematic spectrum.

W drugsmeter.com

TOUCHBASE

Information, Support & Services for LGBTI Australians.

W touchbase.org.au

THE NOFFS FOUNDATION

Provides comprehensive life management programs designed to equip youth at risk with the skills to better manage their own lives.

W noffs.org.au

BLUELIGHT

An online forum on different harm reduction strategies.

W bluelight.org

AUSTRALIAN INJECTING & ILLICIT DRUG USER LEAGUE (AIVL)

The national organisation representing people who use/have used illicit drugs and is the peak body for state and territory peer-based drug user organisations.

W aivil.org.au
R Safer Injecting Guide

UNHARM

Drug-use Advocacy Group

W unharm.org

STATEWIDE SERVICES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SA MOBILISATION + EMPOWERMENT FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

W samesh.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA AIDS COUNCIL

W waaidcs.com
P (08) 9482 0000

NORTHERN TERRITORY

NT AIDS & HEPATITIS COUNCIL

W ntahc.org.au
P (08) 8953 3172

STATEWIDE SERVICES & NZ

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACON

W acon.org.au
P (02) 9206 200
E aod@acon.org.au

ACON's STIMULANT HEALTH CHECK UP

W stimcheck.org.au

POSITIVE LIFE NSW

W positivelifenewsw.com.au
P (02) 9206 2177

NSW USERS & AIDS ASSOCIATION

W nuaa.org.au
P (02) 8354 7300

NEEDLE & SYRINGE PROGRAM DIRECTLINE

P (02) 8354 743

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

AIDS ACTION COUNCIL of the ACT

W aidsaction.org.au
P +02 6257 2855

CANBERRA ALLIANCE for HARM MINIMISATION and ADVOCACY

W cahma.org.au
P +02 6279 1670

VICTORIA

LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA

W livingpositivevictoria.org.au
P (03) 9863 8733

VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL

W vac.org.au
P (03) 9865 6700

HARM REDUCTION VICTORIA

W hrvic.org.au
P (03) 9328 1500

TASMANIA

TASMANIAN COUNCIL ON AIDS, HEPATITIS AND RELATED DISEASES

W tascahrd.org.au
P 1800 005 900

QUEENSLAND

QLD POSITIVE PEOPLE

W qpp.net.au
P (07) 3013 5555

QLD AIDS COUNCIL

W quac.org.au
P (07) 3013 1777

QLD INJECTORS HEALTH NETWORK

W quihn.org
P (07) 5443 9576

HIV FOUNDATION

W hivfoundation.org.au
P (07) 3054 6100

NEW ZEALAND

BODY POSITIVE

W bodypositive.org.nz
P +64 800 448 5463

NZ DRUG FOUNDATION

W drugfoundation.org.nz
P +64 800 801 6303

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (ADIS)

The Alcohol and Drug Information Centres are state and territory-based services that offer information, advice, referral, intake, assessment and support 24 hours a day.

They offer services for individuals, their family and friends, general practitioners, other health professionals and business and community groups.



QUEENSLAND

P 1800 177 833

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

P 1300 131 340

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

P 02 6297 9977

NEW SOUTH WALES

P 02 9361 8000
1800 442 599 (Rural)

VICTORIA

P 1800 888 236

DRUG INFO

P 1300 858 584

FAMILY DRUG HELPLINE

P 1300 660 068

YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE

P 03 9418 1029
1800 014 446 (Rural)

NORTHERN TERRITORY

P 1800 131 350

DARWIN

P 08 8922 8399

ALICE SPRINGS

P 08 8951 7580

TASMANIA

P 1800 811 994

HOBART

P 03 9416 1818



This resource was developed in partnership with Living Positive Victoria, who engaged The Institute of Many to conduct an informal survey of their membership and present the findings at a community forum in 2014.

Those findings have directly informed the development of this resource, along with other community consultations facilitated directly by Living Positive Victoria with its members, and other organisations.

Victorian AIDS Council provided support for the printing and distribution of this resource

© 2016 by The Institute of Many

All rights reserved. No part of this resource may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the copyright owners. Every effort has been made to ensure that credits accurately comply with information supplied. We apologise for any inaccuracies that may have occurred and will resolve inaccurate or missing information in a subsequent reprinting of this publication.





Design by
Emil Ganita