



Introducing... Tina

Crystal Meth Awareness Campaign Launches in Toronto

For Immediate Release: May 29, 2006:

On June 7 at 6:00 p.m., the Toronto Gay/Bisexual Men's Crystal Meth Task Force will launch **Hi! My Name is Tina**, an innovative multi-media crystal meth awareness campaign, at **Woody's** (465 Church St.) in the heart of Toronto's gay village. City Councillor **Kyle Rae** will officially launch the campaign with opening remarks at 6:30 p.m.

The Task Force was initiated by the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) in response to an increase in the number of clients seeking counselling and treatment at ACT and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The campaign targets gay and bisexual men who use or are curious about using crystal methamphetamine.

Hi! My Name is Tina includes www.himynameistina.com, a website featuring information, support, and personal stories, as well as print and online ads. Largely funded by Health Canada, the harm reduction campaign involves a number of community stakeholders including, CAMH, Toronto Public Health, the Hassle Free Clinic, community businesses, as well as users, ex-users and non-users.

Although crystal methamphetamine is not a new drug, there has been concern about its use among gay and bisexual men in Toronto. Key to the campaign is the philosophy of harm reduction. "The 'Just Say No To Drugs' approach simply doesn't work. An effective campaign doesn't condemn or try to scare users; rather it informs, educates, and provides support." says Nick Boyce, Gay Men's Harm Reduction Coordinator at ACT.

There is no accurate data on crystal meth use among gay and bisexual men in Toronto. Based on comparisons with other cities and some local surveys, estimates range from 6 to 22% of men reporting crystal meth use within the last year, depending on the sub-group of men that were questioned.

"The age ranges and ethnic backgrounds of our most recent survey were extremely varied", adds Boyce. For this reason, the campaign will feature a diverse, multicultural selection of men from a variety of age groups.

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About Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine, a strong stimulant drug, is also known as: crystal; meth; Tina; and ice. The term speed may also be used, but historically, in Toronto, this has referred to just amphetamine – another strong but less potent stimulant drug.

Crystal acts like a large shot of adrenaline, speeding the body up. It can make people feel euphoric or less depressed, and it can boost confidence and lower inhibitions. People will eat and sleep less and their heart rate and blood pressure will increase. The high can last several hours and the come down is quite unpleasant. Many people will "binge" on the drug, staying awake for several hours or even days at a time.

Compared with other "party drugs" (i.e. ecstasy, GHB, ketamine), crystal is much more addictive and many more health concerns are associated with it.

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