

"THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD...SUCCESS IS THE FEELING THAT WE CAN SUCCEED."

—Nelson Boswell

SPECIAL FOCUS ISSUE: METHAMPHETAMINES

Methamphetamine (meth) use, abuse, and addiction has plagued many communities throughout the nation and is a social epidemic on the rise. The 4th Judicial District of Colorado has not been an exception. According to Colorado Springs Police Departments' Metro Vice, Narcotics, and Intelligence (VNI), from January 2005 through May 24, 2005, there have been 31.4 grams of meth seized with a value of \$3,454 and 10,025.8 grams of Meth Ice seized (a form of meth washed with Acetone which is said to be more desired on the streets) with a total value of \$4,010,320. Furthermore, as of May 24, 2005, there have been 19 meth labs seized and

within these labs it has been reported there were ten children found around the labs at the time of seizure.

DVERT has witnessed the effects of this epidemic while providing intervention to families experiencing issues of family violence. Meth use, abuse, and addiction adds a layer of complexity to these situations that are, simply said, complex enough. The following newsletter has been put together by a number of DVERT frontline staff in an effort to highlight, describe, explain, and provoke questions to our partners and other communities experiencing some of the same problems with meth and domestic violence.



A DVERT CLIENT'S METH STORY

By Nicole Malyj, Advocate

The following is an interview with a current DVERT client. Names have been omitted to protect her anonymity and that of her family. The interviewed victim is 41 years old and has two teenage children with the accused offender. The victim very recently divorced the offender and has been battling his domestic violence and methamphetamine (meth) use for nearly two decades. This is a piece of her Survivor Story, in a voice she is still learning to use, with a freedom she is still exploring.

How long were you married to [offender]? Almost 20 years. Nineteen years and 11 months, to be exact.

Prior to becoming a DVERT client, had you ever heard about domestic violence, or been educated on the subject? No.

Just what I saw on TV.

When you were first married, how was your relationship?

Looking back, he was always in control. I didn't even realize it. He was very moody. He broke up with me a lot. I would always take him back. But at the same time, he had a

(Continued on page 4)

INSIDE

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Explosive Combination | 2 |
| Meth, Domestic Violence & Children | 2 |
| DVERT Spotlight On... | 3 |
| DVERT Partner Profile | 3 |
| Meth as a Tool for Power & Control | 5 |
| Listen to Her Voice | 6 |
| Staff Listing | 6 |

EXPLOSIVE COMBINATION

**By Julie Angene¹-Garrett, DVERT/
CSPD Detective**

Domestic violence in today's society is a problem that occurs in every community. Domestic violence affects a wide variety of people in every race and economic situation. Like domestic violence, methamphetamine (meth) use is a social problem on the rise that also affects a wide variety of people in every race and economic situation. The combination of domestic violence and meth addiction and/or use of meth within a relationship is a time bomb waiting to explode.

Domestic violence is a dangerous situation for law enforcement due to the emotions couples go through during this type of violent relationship. Increasing risks are posed to the parties themselves and those who attempt to intervene. It is not uncommon for domestic violence relationships to involve the abuse of alcohol or drugs. The alcohol/drugs can be abused by one or both of the couple, again increasing the problems in dealing with this crime.

Meth is the new drug of choice for many in today's society due to its availability and low cost for manufacturing. Meth is a highly toxic substance that has dramatic effects on the human body. Short term effects may include increased attention, sweating and respiration along with decreased appetite and elevated body temperature. Long term effects may include dependence/addiction psychosis, including intense paranoia, mood disturbances and out-of-control rages. Some visual and auditory hallucinations are also

common. Taking all of these issues into account, law enforcement experiences increasing dangers and more volatile safety issues when dealing with domestic violence calls mixed with meth. If both the suspect and the victim are under the influence, it is very difficult to get an accurate picture of what happened during a dispute. In some occasions after the drug addiction has set in, victims are dependant on their abusers to supply the drug. It is also apparent in dealing with several meth cases mixed with domestic violence, there seems to be a "lack of guilt" and sometimes a complete memory loss of violent incidents. In these situations arrests and prosecutions are very difficult to achieve.

We also know as a society that children are affected in many ways when they are exposed to domestic violence. Now let's add the abuse of meth. It is a fact that adult meth addicts often become so obsessed with the drug they neglect their children. Children are found naked and malnourished, experiencing extreme physical and emotional distress. In addition to general neglect, children living where meth is manufactured face a wider variety of dangers to include fire, explosions and toxic vapors. It is important we all teach our children about the dangers of drug abuse. We should educate ourselves, families and neighbors about meth and do what we can to stop this drug from taking over our neighborhoods. Meth is a mind altering drug that has no reason, no sorrow, no compassion and no responsibility.

METH, DV & CHILDREN

By Kelli Taylor, CASA Case Coordinator

The stories of methamphetamine (meth) and children have plastered the news for quite some time, but the long-term effects of meth on children will not be completely known for many years to come. According to the Colorado Regional Community Policing Institute (CRCPI), between 30-40% of children rescued from meth lab homes test positive for the drug. Once these children are removed they are evaluated medically and placed either in foster care or with a relative. These children come from homes that are normally not only plagued with meth use and manufacturing but domestic violence as well.

In these situations, domestic violence victims become an even tougher obstacle for child protection workers. Caseworkers are tasked with trying to find treatment for the meth use that will hopefully make the victim a placement option for the children again. The meth is an added risk factor as it contributes even more to the unsafe environment of the children. Many times with domestic violence victims who use meth the issues are not only the treatment of the addiction but how the system can be assured the victim will not stay with the perpetrator in order to continue the addiction. In many cases, victims use meth as a means of escape, but in turn, the offender can also encourage meth use in their victims as another means of control. At DVERT there have been cases such as these that have opened and closed with no real sure outcome for the children other than a future of uncertainty due to exposure to meth addiction.

According to CRCPI, children rescued from meth homes have increased risk for learning disabilities, behavioral disorders and future problems with law enforcement. With early intervention and treatment, some of these children can be saved from not only their current situation but a future that resembles the life of their parents.

DVERT Spotlight On...

JULIAN CORTEZ, PROBATION OFFICER

Would you like to contact Julian? Call 719.444.7750.

Name: Julian Cortez

What is Julian's DVERT Affiliation?

Julian is a Probation Officer in the domestic violence unit assigned to DVERT from 4th Judicial District Probation.

What does this mean? In this role, Julian supervises DVERT offenders who were granted probation. He also supervises other domestic violence offenders who are not DVERT clients.

How long has Julian been working with DVERT? Julian has been the DVERT Probation officer since August 2004. The four years prior to becoming a probation officer he was the program coordinator for a not-for-profit organization that served youth and their families hoping to divert them from becoming involved in the

judicial system. Before that he was "on the bottom rung of the corporate ladder going who knows where."

And outside of DVERT, who is

Julian? Julian is one of the few Colorado Springs natives left in this town. In his free time he enjoys spending time with his wife, Stephanie and three year old son, Shawn, golfing, inline hockey and basketball. In a perfect world Julian would be scuba diving in the Caribbean every other day but that's not possible living in Colorado.

On why he has enjoyed working at DVERT: Julian says, "DVERT gives me the chance to work with an extremely dedicated group of individuals from other agencies for a common goal, namely victim safety. The community is

very fortunate to have an organization in place like DVERT staffed with intelligent and passionate professionals trying to make a difference. The types of cases at DVERT are challenging and require the team to be creative and that is appealing to me."

Special Issue Question—How does methamphetamine (meth) use affect the job that you do?

"Meth has wreaked havoc on a lot of clients. When a client comes up positive for meth use it warrants much quicker intervention and treatment. Unfortunately, there are not really any common effective remedies for meth addiction. With meth, users often love the drug more than their freedom and children."

DVERT PARTNER PROFILE: FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT PROBATION

"Colorado Probation is committed to public safety and victim and community reparation through offender accountability, skill and competency development, and services to the communities of Colorado."—Colorado Probation Statement of Common Ground

Fourth Judicial District Probation currently has approximately 91 employees to include 72 probation officers, administrative support staff and volunteers. Probation has been working to address issues of domestic violence for the last five years through a specific unit of seven dedicated officers (TI Probation officers from a private agency also work with the unit from time to time) and a victim advocate. Through this unit, a case management style sensitive to the dynamics of family abuse has been developed giving more individuality to treatment plans for cases that don't always conform to

cookie cutter solutions.

In this unit offenders are supervised based on risk. After an offender has been sentenced to Probation he/she meets with the Probation officer approximately 5-10 business days later. To prepare for this meeting the officer will have reviewed the police report, domestic violence screening instrument, application for probation, and compiled data to assess further treatment needs. If an offender is not adhering to treatment plans the officer is likely to schedule more appointments, have drop-in home visits, more frequent UA's, and can ultimately sanction the offender in court. Cases are treated as individually as possible.

This unit provides a team atmosphere in which to staff cases with other Probation officers working with similar situations as well as providing a forum

in which cases are staffed monthly as a group. Each officer has access to a sounding board of professionals acutely aware of the dynamics of domestic violence which helps to ensure consistent treatment of offenders and provides an additional safety net for the community as offenders are held accountable on multiple levels. Currently Probation and various treatment providers are working to establish similar consistent meeting times with one another to help further address the treatment needs of offenders—further proof of how Probation is working to treat cases as individually as possible. This unit has proven ultimately successful for Colorado Springs 4th Judicial District. This has much to do with the dedication and commitment these officers have shown to their profession, the fight against family violence, and the community.

A DVERT CLIENT'S METH STORY, CON'T.

(Continued from page 1)

loving side to him. It was always like a love/hate relationship. I would never be able to say that to you then, though.

You said he broke up with you a lot and that you would take him back. Why would you take him back? Because I had a low self-esteem and thought that I had done something wrong. I wanted to prove I was a good person. Now, recognizing, I think it had a lot to do with when I was younger and not having a dad. I was not about to have this happen with [the offender], my kids not have a dad. I felt, it must be me, because my dad did this kind of thing, too.

When did the violence start? He started having a lot of temper tantrums about two years into the marriage. I was going to leave him. My son was one year old at the time. He's always yelled and thrown things. He called me names when he was mad. You knew you had to walk on eggshells all the time.

When did you suspect [the offender] was using meth? I knew he used meth on occasion, about five years into the marriage. I knew he used when he went camping or on New Year's or other times. I didn't know he started doing it every day. It wasn't until our divorce hearing this year, when I heard how much money he blew through, that I realized just how bad it was.

Did you ever try meth? Yes. I used with him and other friends in 2002. In October of 2002 we separated because of meth. I stopped using it then. In 2003 he went to get counseling, and he stopped using for a while, I believe, maybe three months. He was living at his mom's house, and it was probably easier to put on an act and

hide he was still using.

Why did you try meth? The people I associated with were using it. I wanted to fit in and have fun. But I didn't like it. I was very paranoid and thought everyone knew. I became ashamed. So I stopped using to save our marriage and for our kids' sake.

Why do you think [the offender] kept using? That is what is a mystery to me. He seemed to feel better on it. He said he felt that's the only way he could feel happy and get up and go to work. In 2002, he admitted to using a lot more than I knew. He felt he needed it to survive. The [coming] down [off of the drug] was too much for him.

When did meth really start affecting your family? In 2001 he fell working on our house. I really noticed a change in him after that. It affected our whole family. I thought maybe it was because he was hurt, but he spent all of his time in the garage, not with [his family]. He stopped playing golf with our son. We never got him back after that. He became so paranoid. For hours he made me and my daughter look at receipts with a magnifying glass, trying to make us see a secret message from my non-existent boyfriend. He became crazy, like an animal. I would sit, awake, in my closet at night with the phone, afraid that would be the night he killed me. I lived in constant fear when he moved [back] in after we separated. My kids have had to deal with their father threatening suicide and blaming me for it all.

When did the kids find out he was using drugs? In October 2002 when he told them he and I were using meth. He said we were going to separate.

What was their reaction? They were very upset, but hopeful. They were so sick of us fighting, and they thought

that once we separated, we'd get our act together.

What do you think about meth? It's the devil. It makes you lie. Your temper is out of control. Your emotions are out of control. It's horrible. I can't think of anything worse. It robs you of your identity. You don't have a conscience anymore. He didn't care what others thought of him. I have always cared what others thought of me. Maybe that's the difference.

Do you think he'll ever stop? (crying) No.

Was it hard for you to stop using meth? No. I hated it. I hated when he did it. I was mad when he tried it, so I used [meth] to get it gone quicker. Then I'd hate myself after. My sister was also a meth addict. She lost everything. The drug was using her. She lost her son and lived with strangers. I don't understand that. I never wanted meth in my life again.

Do you think meth use increases domestic violence? Yes. He was way more violent, physically violent. He started talking about killing me. The anger and rage became so strong.

What do you think are the warning signs of meth addiction? [Meth users] become scattered. [The offender] would start things and not finish. He became paranoid. It's in their eyes, too. Their [pupils] will be dilated. Their skin looks bad. They lie. They steal. You have a change in temperament- you go up and way down. And it was always everyone else's fault. He has never blamed himself for his own drug use. He believes he is the victim. He has threatened suicide more times than I care to recall.

How do you think we can better help meth addicts? Somehow we have to make it easier to get help. We need

(Continued on page 5)

METH STORY, CON'T.

(Continued from page 4)

more advertisements, more support groups and more information. There has to be an easier way. Just talking to a counselor isn't going to help. Maybe there should be stiffer penalties if you're caught with it.

What else do you want to say? To this day I am heartbroken that [the offender] has chosen that drug over his family. He's lost me and the kids. (Crying) What's sad is when he seems to be crying for help, no one will help him. He's always high when he asks for help, and no one will treat him when he's high. He's not able to get help because he's high, and that makes no sense. I don't know why he doesn't ask when he's sober. And I don't know if anyone could help him, even then. I wish I could warn people, tell them not to do it. I'm just glad my kids aren't doing it.

What message do you have for families dealing with a loved one addicted to meth? Learn the warning signs of meth use. [The meth addiction] won't get better. Don't live in denial. [Meth] is a monster, you'll always lose, you'll never win against it. You just have to get help. You have to learn to trust strangers, professionals, for help. It's hard to believe [DVERT team members] over him. That's been the hardest thing to do. I never would have gotten help if an officer hadn't told me to go to T·E·S·S·A. I'd be dead [if I hadn't gone to get help.] It wasn't until I went to T·E·S·S·A, got the restraining order, and got help that I began to not live in constant fear. And without all of [the DVERT team members'] help, I'd never have made it through.

METH AS A TOOL FOR POWER & CONTROL

Identities of those involved were changed to protect the innocent.

During their more than seven year relationship, John introduced Jane to severe physical and emotional abuse and to the drug methamphetamine (meth). If Jane thought about leaving because of the violence or because of fear for their children, her drug addiction convinced her to stay.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) intervened when both were arrested; John for domestic violence, drug possession, and violations of restraining order and Jane for theft and child abuse. The couple's three children were placed outside the home. Jane was released but John remained in jail for around five months. The DHS caseworker assigned quickly uncovered the extent of Jane's domestic violence victimization. Even while he was in jail, John continued to try to contact Jane by letter. Learning of this, the DHS caseworker referred the case to DVERT. John was charged with additional violations of protection order for each attempted contact, keeping him in jail even longer.

While John was in jail Jane did pretty well. She was working with a counselor at T·E·S·S·A, and was complying with the DHS treatment plan. She actively sought out services for herself and her children. Jane was open to working with DVERT and developed a good working relationship with the DVERT/CASA Coordinator who helped her with education about the effects of domestic violence on children and help with referrals to services for her children. For months, Jane tested negative in her twice weekly drug screens. DHS was still involved, but she was making good progress and finally re-

gained custody of her children. She found a good job and she and her children were able to move from the home of a relative into a home of their own. Jane seemed to understand the dynamics of her victimization and her addiction and was making real changes in her life. She was a success.

After about five months, John was released from jail. Jane tried to stay away from him but he wanted her back and Jane's meth addiction was a convenient tool to help him regain control. Suddenly Jane began testing positive for meth. In a matter of weeks she lost her job, her apartment, and her children who were again placed in foster care. She knew she was making bad choices, life and death choices for herself and her children, but she couldn't stop. From that point nothing mattered to Jane but the drug. She slid further and further into the depths of her addiction as all of those who had worked with her and celebrated her former success watched, helpless.

Months later, John is back in jail and once again Jane is moving in the right direction. She continues to work with DHS, and although she is a long way from regaining her children and may have her rights terminated, she does spend time with them regularly. The concern she may lapse back into drug abuse once her batterer is released from custody is high. John and Jane's abusive relationship is complicated by all of the usual elements victims struggle with: she cares for John, they have children together, and financially it is difficult to get along alone. Like all abusers, John knows how to use these factors in his efforts to control Jane. But John has another tool that he knows how to use to his advantage; methamphetamine.

LISTEN TO HER VOICE

This was written by a young girl who was addicted to Methamphetamine while she was in jail for drug charges. As you will soon read she fully grasped the horrors of the drug as she tells in this simple yet profound poem. She was released from jail but true to her story the drug owned her. They found her dead not long after with a needle still in her arm.

I destroy homes, I tear families apart,
I take your children, and that's just the start.
I'm more costly than diamonds, more precious than gold,
The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.
If you need me, remember I'm easily found,
I live all around you, in schools and in town.
I live with the rich, I live with the poor,
I live down the street, and maybe next door.
I'm made in a lab, but not like you think,
I can be made under the kitchen sink.
In your child's closet, and even in the woods,
If this scares you to death, well it certainly should.
I have many names, but there's one you know best,
I'm sure you've heard of me, my name is crystal meth.
My power is awesome, try me you'll see,
But if you do, you may never break free.
Just try me once and I might let you go,
But try me twice, and I'll own your soul.
When I possess you, you'll steal and you'll lie,
You do what you have to - just to get high.
The crimes you'll commit for my narcotic charms,
Will be worth the pleasure you'll feel in your arms.
You'll lie to your mother, you'll steal from your dad,

When you see their tears, you should feel sad.
But you'll forget morals and how you were raised,
I'll be your conscience, I'll teach you my ways.
I take kids from parents, and parents from kids,
I turn people from God, and separate friends.
I'll take everything from you, your looks and your pride,
I'll be with you always, right by your side.
You'll give up everything, your family, your home,
Your friends, your money, then you'll be alone.
I'll take and take, till you have nothing more to give,
When I'm finished with you, you'll be lucky to live.
If you try me be warned, this is no game,
If given the chance, I'll drive you insane.
I'll ravish your body, I'll control your mind,
I'll own you completely, your soul will be mine.
The nightmares I'll give you while lying in bed,
The voices you'll hear, from inside your head.
The sweats, the shakes, the visions you'll see,
I want you to know, these are all gifts from me.
But then it's too late, and you'll know in your heart,
That you are mine, and we shall not part.
You'll regret that you tried me, they always do,
But you came to me, not I to you.
You knew this would happen, many times you were told,
But you challenged my power, and chose to be bold.
You could have said no, and just walked away,
If you could live that day over, now what would you say?
I'll be your master, you will be my slave,
I'll even go with you, when you go to your grave.
Now that you have met me, what will you do?
Will you try me or not? It's all up to you.
I can bring you more misery than words can tell,
Come take my hand, let me lead you to hell.

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