

## Working collaboratively to manage comorbid mental health and methamphetamine use

### Andrew's story

Andrew is a 23 year old, second year engineering university student who lives and studies in a regional NSW town. He also has a part-time job packing shelves in a supermarket at night. In high school he dabbled in recreational drugs and sometimes used methamphetamine to stay awake to study for exams. At parties, Andrew often drank alcohol until he passed out, and was not afraid to try new drugs, experimenting with GHB ( $\gamma$ -Hydroxybutyric acid), Ecstasy and Marijuana.

Andrew is the second sibling in a family of five children and has working professional parents (father is an engineer and mother is a legal secretary). His family life is generally happy, and he often goes camping and fishing with his siblings and parents. Andrew still lives at home and has had the same girlfriend (Amy) for the last two years. Amy is also a university student and studies nursing. Exam pressures have meant that Andrew has not been able to attend many of the families' recent activities. He has not been keeping on top of his assignments, and is thinking about deferring his studies. His parents are becoming increasingly worried as he has lost quite a bit of weight, does not look healthy, and is distant and aggressive. They constantly ask him what is wrong, and if he is okay. Andrew just storms off to his room or goes for a drive to get away from having to deal with what he feels is his parents' badgering.

Lately Andrew has been feeling increasingly stressed about keeping up with all of his studies, and he has been partying a bit harder than usual. He has also started taking methamphetamine every few days, as he feels it helps him to cope with the pressures of study.

He is picking fights on a regular basis with Amy, which often result in him shouting at her. At a recent party, he was high on meth and thought Amy was being overly friendly with another man. This started a vigorous argument. When she told him he was being paranoid he became very angry, so much so that a party guest called the police when it looked like he was going to fight those who were trying to intervene and calm the situation down. After assessing the situation, the police called an ambulance and Andrew was taken to the local hospital's Emergency Department. Enroute the paramedics noted that Andrew didn't appear to be aware of his surroundings and was displaying signs of paranoia. He was very aggressive toward paramedics and lashed out whenever they tried to ask him questions.