

# 'Meth monster' creeping into homes, taking families by storm

By Whitney Brummett, LMSW

There is a monster that is creeping into our families and taking them by storm. This monster is metamphetamine (meth). The drug has become an epidemic and is not only destroying our communities, but, more importantly, our families and our children.

Meth alters the brain and creates a mind framework that leads to many destructive behaviors. One of the most destructive behaviors is parenting and the way it affects children.

Individuals who use meth have their behavior altered by the drug, and that behavior can last up to an entire day. As we all know, children can become disobedient and at times defiant; and when the person using the drug is a parent, the potential for disaster is evident.

The drug has psychological affects such as anger, panic, confusion, irritability and aggression; and when coupled with an altered state of mind

and a child who is not cooperating, the potential for abuse or neglect is increased.

In a recent survey of Child Welfare Workers in Minnesota, 69 percent of the respondents stated that meth was the reason that children were placed outside of the home.

Children need stability and consistency, and when they are placed in foster homes, for whatever reason, their lives and futures are already being shaped for them with inevitable negative consequences.

When children are born, their personalities and lives are shaped and changed by the individuals who come in contact with them. They have an "internal chalkboard" that people write on throughout their lives. Some will be good and some will be bad.

But whatever is written is permanent. So when parents are writing on their children's boards and the writing consists of drugs, abuse, neglect and addiction, then the child's

board is no longer what it was before. Parents are the most influential people in their children's lives, and when you mix drugs with parenting, the results are catastrophic.

According to Lutheran Community Services, Families for Kids Recruitment Resources Washington, 60 percent of children removed from meth lab homes where the drug was produced needed long-term treatment.

How unfair to a child — to allow them to live in an environment that will eventually cause the child to receive treatment. The home could either explode or they will be removed. Any of the scenarios is grim for a child.

Children not only have effects from living in a meth lab home, but children born to addicted mothers face problems such as birth defects, low birth weight and ADD among other behavioral and physical obstacles.

Meth is taking our families and annihilating them, and the

main ones being affected are our children. We as adults need to be the voices for the voiceless and the village that raises a child.

Our children need us, and as long as this epidemic continues to grow, families will be destroyed and children will be affected with devastating results. Let's help our children; let's beat meth.

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