

# DAVE'S PSYCHOSIS

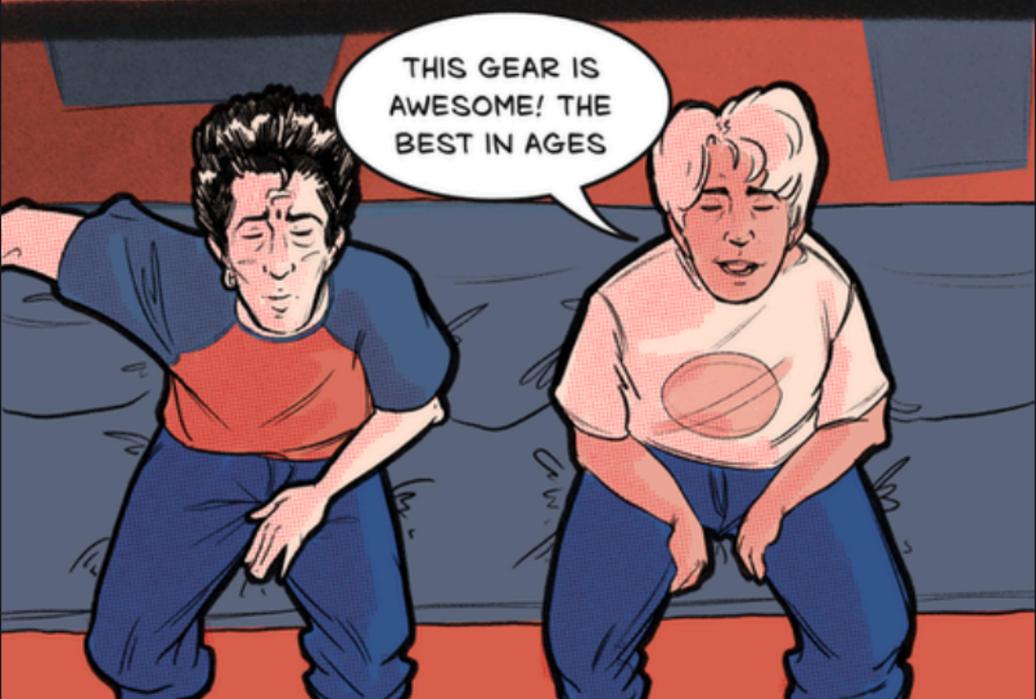
VOLUME 01 | WRITTEN BY WAAC | ILLUSTRATED BY KAI LYONS



R O C K   S O L I D   C O M I C S



This resource was developed in conjunction with people who are currently using or have previously used substances and participating in the Rock Solid Methamphetamine Peer Education Project.



THIS GEAR IS  
AWESOME! THE  
BEST IN AGES

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AWESOME! THE  
BEST IN AGES



THAT CAR'S GONE BY SIX TIMES I RECKON...  
IT'S DEFINITELY THE COPS

YOU'RE TRIPPING  
MAN. CHILL OUT

SOME TIME LATER\*



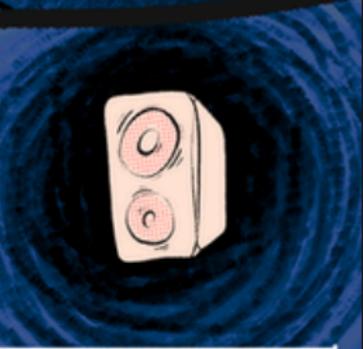
A MASSIVE DOPAMINE SURGE HAS TAKEN OVER  
DAVE'S BRAIN CAUSING POWERFUL DELUSIONS



THE WHITE CAR,  
IT'S THE COPS



THERE'S A MIC IN  
THERE. THEY'RE  
LISTENING



THE NOREPINEPHRINE RELEASED BY THE  
METH HAS PUT DAVE INTO FIGHT OR FLIGHT



DOPAMINE, THE CHEMICAL THAT'S SUPPOSED TO HELP US FEEL PLEASURE AND MOTIVATION, HAS GONE INTO OVERDRIVE, DISTORTING DAVE'S PERCEPTION OF REALITY.



SEROTONIN, USUALLY A MOOD REGULATOR IS NOW AMPLIFYING THE PROBLEM. COMBINED WITH HIGH DOPAMINE, IT'S BOOSTING DAVE'S HALLUCINATIONS.

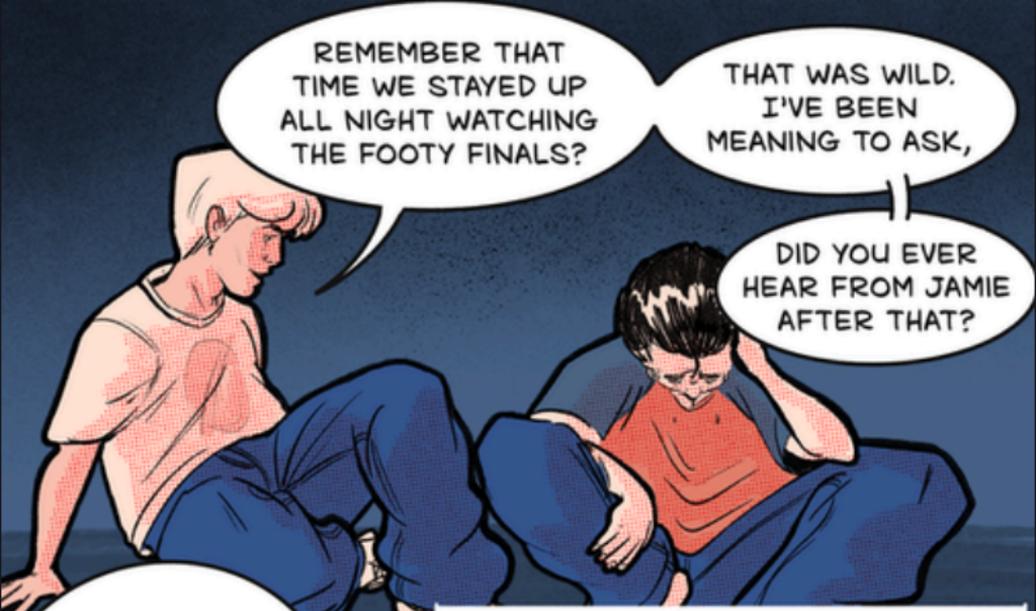
HEY DAVE, IT'S  
ALRIGHT MATE. I'M  
HERE WITH YOU

WE'RE SAFE  
RIGHT NOW.

LET'S GO INTO  
THE BEDROOM  
BRO, LIGHTS  
OFF, QUIET IN  
THERE.

IT MIGHT HELP  
YOUR HEAD  
SETTLE A BIT.

WE DON'T NEED  
ALL THIS NOISE  
RIGHT NOW.



REMEMBER THAT  
TIME WE STAYED UP  
ALL NIGHT WATCHING  
THE FOOTY FINALS?

THAT WAS WILD.  
I'VE BEEN  
MEANING TO ASK,

DID YOU EVER  
HEAR FROM JAMIE  
AFTER THAT?



HERE, HAVE A BIT  
OF THIS MATE.  
YOU'LL FEEL  
BETTER WITH  
SOME WATER IN  
YOUR SYSTEM.

STEVE DISTRACTS DAVE  
BY TALKING  
ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE



YOU'RE SAFE IN  
HERE MATE.

I'LL BE  
RIGHT BACK



GET THEM SOMEWHERE COOL AND  
GET THEM TO SIP ON WATER.

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, stands against a dark blue background. He has a worried expression, with his right hand raised to his ear as if listening intently. His left arm is crossed over his chest.

OOO -- WHAT'S  
YOUR  
EMERGENCY?

MY MATE HAD  
SOME METH AND  
I THINK HE'S IN  
PSYCHOSIS

I THINK HE  
NEEDS AN  
AMBULANCE.

CONTINUE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
**PSYCHOSIS**

# WHAT IS PSYCHOSIS?

Psychosis is a mental health issue where people can lose touch with reality.

It can happen to anyone at any time and can be triggered by substance use (gear), a mental health condition, like schizophrenia, or other medical conditions.

Once a person experiences psychosis they may experience prolonged poor mental health and ongoing or recurring episodes.

Methamphetamine-associated psychosis (MAP) is a serious but temporary form of psychosis that can occur with regular heavy use of meth.

Someone who is experiencing an episode of psychosis can experience a range of delusions, hallucinations and/or obsessive compulsive behaviours.

They may be confused about what others are doing and why they are doing it.

- **Auditory Hallucinations:** hearing voices.
- **Tactile Hallucinations:** feeling things in/under your skin.
- **Visual Hallucinations:** seeing things that are not there.
- **Delusions:** holding a strong belief that is not true, even when there is clear evidence against it.
- **Thought Disorder:** jumping from one topic to another without any logical connection.



**WHAM!**

# PREPARING WITH STEVE AND DAVE

Before preparing, Steve and Dave choose a spot where you feel safe and will not be disturbed or hurried. To help minimise the risk of bacteria, viruses and other microbes they make sure their preparation surface is clean. This means wiping it down with spray and wipe, warm soapy water, or swabs.

## INJECTING:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser. If you don't have either, use swabs to clean your fingers.
2. Clean your spoon using a swab, one wipe in one direction to remove dirt and wait 30 seconds to let the alcohol dry.
3. Put your drugs in the clean spoon and add sterile injecting water or water that has been recently boiled and cooled.
4. Use a swab to clean the injection site, wipe in one direction to remove dirt and germs. Wait at least 30 seconds for the skin to dry before injecting.

*To prevent the spread of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, or other infections never share your equipment, including syringes, tourniquets, spoons and water.*

## SMOKING:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser. If you don't have either, use swabs to clean your fingers.
2. Always use a bowl pipe as makeshift pipes can release harmful fumes, and may cause cuts or burns.
3. Always hold the pipe halfway down the stem to avoid burnt fingers as it can get very hot.
4. The vapour should be exhaled immediately to prevent burning the lungs.
5. If your pipe is scratched, chipped, cracked or burnt you should replace it before the next time you use.

*To prevent the spread of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, or other infections never share your pipe with anyone who has burnt, cut, cracked or dry lips.*

*Never tap or hit your pipe to clean it as this may chip or break the pipe which can cause injuries when using.*

## STEVE TO THE RESCUE

After using this time, Dave is acting out of character - he is starting to experience psychosis. Steve knows this is not safe for Dave and swoops into action.

- Do not dismiss or laugh off their delusion - Steve tells Dave, “You’re tripping”, when Dave notices the white car. This is not helpful to Dave as this could escalate his behaviour.
- Don’t tell them that their experience is not real – Steve knows it is important to remember that what Dave is experiencing is very real to him and telling him it is not may upset him further. Steve removes the speaker from the room without fuss, by putting it outside, which removes it from Dave’s sight.

Meth makes brain cells release a big rush of dopamine (the “*feel-good*” chemical) all at once. This can raise dopamine levels up to **10 times higher than normal**.

It also stops dopamine from being reabsorbed, so those intense feelings last much longer.

But when there is too much dopamine for too long, it can overload the brain and increase the risk of psychosis.





**BANG!**



**KAPOW!**

Dave is now in a heightened state of alert. The meth has released huge amounts of noradrenaline into his brain and body, putting Dave into fight or flight mode. Dave is now in full alert and thinking danger is very real outside the window.

- Do not leave them alone - Dave has dived behind the couch for safety. Steve does not chase Dave but stays close enough to keep an eye on him.
- Do not put yourself in danger - If Dave becomes aggressive or unpredictable, Steve keeps a safe distance while still keeping verbal contact and reassuring Dave.

He might say something like:

***“I am not here to hurt you or stop you, man. Just making sure we are both alright. I have got your back, but I will give you a bit of space if you need it.”***

Methamphetamine releases large amounts of noradrenaline — the body’s “fight or flight” chemical. This can cause anxiety, irritability, and difficulty sleeping.

*High levels of noradrenaline keep the body on high alert, which can be exhausting both physically and mentally.*

## **REMEMBER...**

If someone is in psychosis what they are thinking, seeing and feeling are very real to them at the time.

**Use their name and communicate calmly. Steve approaches slowly, keeping his voice soft and steady.**

**Reassure them they are safe. Steve does this very clearly while approaching Dave.**

**Take them out of a stimulating environment, to a calm, quiet place with fewer people around - no lights, TV, music, traffic. Steve gently guides Dave away from the lounge.**

**Once they are in a quieter spot, distract them by talking about something else. Steve talks about footy and Jamie.**

**Get them somewhere cool and get them to sip water. Steve grabs a cold bottle of water and passes it to Dave.**



## IF IN NEED...

If you or someone you know is in need of support, please see a list of services below who specialise in alcohol and other drugs harm reduction:

**WAAC - Needle and Syringe Exchange Program**  
664 Murray Street, West Perth - (08) 9482 0000

**Hepatitis WA**  
2/134 Aberdeen St, Northbridge - (08) 9227 9800

**Peer Based Harm Reduction WA**  
Suite 22, 7 Aberdeen Street, Perth - (08) 9325 8387

**Palmerston Association**  
134 Palmerston Street, Perth - (08) 9328 7355

**Cyrenian House**  
318 Fitzgerald Street, Perth - (08) 9328 9200

**Note:** A lot of these services also provide regional support! Look up the service online for more details, or head to the **WAAC website** and check out the **Support Hub** page for more information.



**WAAC**

664 Murray Street, West Perth  
[hello@waac.com.au](mailto:hello@waac.com.au)  
(08) 9482 0000