

## Meth Use Goes Hand in Hand with Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse

Last month, the White Earth Department of Public Safety sponsored a conference on "Community and Law Enforcement METH Awareness and Response" at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. First of all, thanks to the people who worked on bringing that conference to our area, the information was very useful and eye opening. It is nice to have updated information on such a continuously evolving epidemic that is hurting our communities.

The statistics from that conference are enough to really make a person think about the effects that meth has on our people. From 2003-2006 there has been a 131 percent increase in child neglect/abuse that has been linked to meth. A 218 percent increase in spousal abuse has been linked to meth as well. The problem with these numbers is the fact that child abuse/neglect and spousal abuse are highly unreported in meth cases. In many cases, people do not want their family members to get involved in the system because of their meth addiction, or in some cases...meth is their source of income. Because of this, these percentages are in reality much higher. On average, there are 36 incidents of violence in a meth home before law enforcement is called.

Meth users exhibit two side effects that are related to abuse. Hypersexuality and aggression increases immensely with the use of meth. It is common for meth users to become hypersexual while using meth. This results in the person becoming extremely active, lowering their inhibitions, having artificial feelings of intimacy, having high risk sex, and in many cases the inability to control their sexual behavior. Increased aggressiveness is also exhibited in many people who use meth. It is apparent due to the increase of abuse/neglect cases. Meth is linked to many other crimes as well, including burglary and identity theft.

Please be aware of the devastating effects that meth not only has on its users, but the innocent people who suffer from their actions. The meth problem in our communities has taken its toll on our families.

If you or someone you know has an addiction to meth or any other substance, please call White Earth Chemical Dependency at 218-983-3285.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault/abuse, stalking, or general crimes, please call the DOVE Office at 218-935-5554 or toll free at 1-800-763-8629. Our 24 Hour Crisis Line number is 1-877-830-DOVE.