



Odyssey House is dedicated to giving people something addictions like drugs, alcohol & gambling never can: a future.

WHAT'S ON

Real Men Cook Luncheon
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Where are they now?

Aley's parents migrated to Australia from Chile and both worked hard to secure a future for their children. Aley found her activities as a young child limited due to her father's English language skills and his drinking.

At 15, Aley's life was to change significantly and forever. Her environment at home remained chaotic and insecure due to the increase in her father's drinking. Aley tried to escape by spending as much time away from home as possible. On one of these occasions she was sexually assaulted. Aley tried to cope with the assault as best she could, but eventually started to drink, take pills and engage in violent behaviour.

Amid the chaos, and adding to it, was the discovery her mother had cancer. Aley was 17 at the time and, due to the fear she might lose her mother, she descended into a spiral of further drunkenness. Her father said that if his wife died it would be due to Aley's behaviour. Aley attempted suicide on a few occasions before she was taken to a psychiatric unit where she was a self-



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described "mess". Her doctor recommended she contact the Odyssey House residential rehabilitation program to assist with her alcohol dependence.

At Odyssey House, Aley's confidence began to grow. She was given a job assignment in the kitchen where she had to learn to be responsible. "I didn't even know how to peel a potato!" Aley learnt how to communicate, negotiate and become responsible.

Since graduating in 2007 Aley went on to become a swimming instructor, then completed her Certificate IV in Drug and Alcohol. Working with clients in rehabilitation, it didn't take long before Aley made her way back to Odyssey - this time as a counsellor.

"I love being back at Odyssey and supporting others through their recovery journey - it is part of me now" Aley said.

Aley's biggest gift since graduation is her beautiful little one year old daughter - Ayyah. Aley faces many challenges as a single mum, though she is loving life and wouldn't have it any other way.

A message from the Chairman



Cathy Doyle

The Board of any Not for Profit Organisation can be a challenging yet rewarding one.

Five years ago I joined the Board of the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, and have spent the past 3 years in the role of Chairman.

Over the past five years, I personally and the Board have been pleased with the achievements of the program.

The dedication of the staff in receiving Accreditation was to be commended along with many other program improvements.

The Board has also worked diligently over this time to improve its processes and Corporate Governance to be a more efficient board for the foundation.

With regret I must step down as Board Chairman to face new challenges. I have enjoyed my time as Chairman and am confident the Board directors, Staff and residents will continue to exceed all my expectations in delivering a high quality service.

As we have since 1977 the Board looks forward to the future with confidence and I hope you will continue to support Odyssey House as I intend to.

Cathy Doyle
Chairman

Sallys Story



Sally is the oldest of three children in her family. Even though her parents had a somewhat turbulent relationship, the family remained quite close.

Sally did well at school and did all of the usual activities growing up, such as Brownies, Girl Guides and Netball. Little did she know that the boy she would meet in Year 12 would have such an impact on her life.

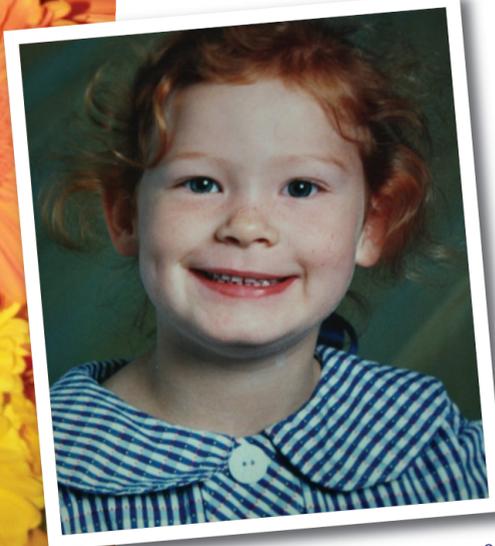
"When I was 17 I met Byron (he was 20). We started going out straight away".

"It all started so innocently, once every three to four weeks I started using Ecstasy, this then escalated to Speed and then Ice"

Sally was still determined to finish her school year though her attendance in class began to wither and she became more dependent on the drugs.

"While I was doing my HSC I discovered I was pregnant, I also knew that I was not ready to be a parent and I knew that I did not want to have a permanent attachment with Byron, so I had my first abortion."

Still with Byron, by the time Sally finished the HSC she was using on a daily basis and now she was injecting ICE.



Sally Age 6

"At first Byron would do it for me, and then I figured I could do it myself. That was worse as I had the control to over use. After my first injection I was always chasing the 'rush' of that first time".

The relationship continued for another two years in which time Sally had her second abortion. "Our relationship was toxic. Byron had stopped using and did not want to be around a drug user any more". The relationship finally ended.

Sally had started at University in Newcastle. Focusing her interests more on the social scene, Sally didn't actually attend any classes and soon found herself back in Sydney.

Sally had managed to hold down a full time job at a bottle shop; eventually Sally lost the job due to her addiction.

Feeling lost and not having any control all Sally could think of was her next hit.

"I started dealing drugs so I could support my own habit, and ended up in another toxic relationship with my drug supplier".

In July 2010 Sally was arrested for 'Possession and Supply' and was granted bail. While the case was going through court in November Sally was arrested for a second time for 'Possession of multiple substances' and was fortunate to be granted bail once more.

Sally was not so fortunate in December when she was arrested for her third drug offence, and this time the judge was not so lenient and

refused bail. Sally was sent to Silverwater Correctional Facility where she spent her birthday - not what she had planned.

While in jail, Sally's Drug and Alcohol worker contacted Odyssey House. Sally was accepted and became the last Christmas induction on 23 December into the program.

"I loved the program from the start, I was happy to be anywhere than jail. I knew when I got to Odyssey that this was my chance - I had to do something"

"My family was very supportive. In fact my mum virtually did the program with me as she supported me through every step of the program. I never realised the pain that I caused my family, the people who love me; addiction is not worth it".

"The later stages of the program were hard for me; I had a few 'hiccups' but the hard work was all worth it. Now I have found the zest for life that I had lost during my addiction as I chased a fake happiness".

Sally has recently completed the program and is now looking into furthering her education. In the meantime Sally continues to be a support and a mentor for other women who are in the Odyssey House program.

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

This is the season for change, and I am reminded of that as I look out my window and walk to my office each day. We are in the throes of autumn when temperatures fall, fashions rotate and state governments change. The Liberal and National parties have taken office and due to their resounding victory in the last election have a clear mandate for change.

That change includes policy decisions which are relevant to alcohol and other drugs services, and consequently Odyssey House. We have participated in a couple of briefings hosted by the government at which they articulated their focus on alcohol and other drugs policy.

The Premier, Mr Barry O'Farrell, at a reception for Non Government Organisations (NGO's) held at Parliament House, reiterated the government's plan to utilise the services of NGO's, more widely, to deliver alcohol and other drugs services. The government plans to look at the possibility of NGO's providing residential services for clients on methadone who wish to pursue a pathway of abstinence. The other major policy shift is to implement an alcohol and other drugs service in a prison setting with a bed capacity of 300.

We look forward to the finalisation of the government's policy initiatives. We feel as an organisation we are well placed to participate in and support the changes in alcohol and other drugs policy proposed by the newly elected government.

James A Pitts, MA
Chief Executive Officer

The facts on Ice

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug which is manufactured from readily available chemicals. Stimulants speed up the function of the brain and the nervous system. Methamphetamine is available in three different forms which we know as speed, base and ice.

They are all the same drug, but they differ in their purity. Ice is about 80 per cent pure and speed is usually between 10 - 20 per cent. The purity of the ice makes the effects stronger but also more addictive with worse side effects.

Ice is also called crystal, crystal meth, meth or shabu. These names are generally derived from the appearance of ice which is usually white crystals or a coarse like powder.

Ice is usually smoked or injected; this form of intake enters the brain more quickly which makes it more addictive.

Ice can also be sniffed through the nose or swallowed.

There are a number of serious short and long term effects of using ice. Anyone can develop a tolerance to ice, where you take more of the drug to feel the same effects you used to have with lower amounts.

These effects of using ice include: Becoming dependent on the drug; becoming violent for no reason; Depression; Psychosis; and numerous health complications including serious heart issues.

People who are dependent on ice find it difficult to stop using or cut down because of the withdrawal symptoms. While the symptoms are usually fairly short-lived users should seek support for this process.

Source: NSW Health