



Former Meth Addict Talks About Overcoming Odds

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Former Meth Addict Talks To Channel 2

ROCKMART, Ga. -- Traci Darnell said after the first hit, she was hooked.

"It gives you this great feeling of invincibility. I felt I could do anything," said the 24-year-old recovering meth addict.

A week after a record, half-ton meth bust in Norcross, Channel 2 Action News reporter Tom Regan wanted to learn firsthand about why meth is so addictive and how it can send young lives spiraling out of control. With the help of the Georgia Meth Project, a prevention program, he contacted Traci and sat down to hear her story.

"The longest I can remember staying up was for about a week. No sleep," said the Rockmart woman.

Traci said her 1 1/2-year addiction to meth began after she graduated from high school. She said she got high almost every day and would go on binges in which she would go without sleep for days and experience dangerous hallucinations.

One time she said she thought she saw a man crossing the road and swerved to avoid what was only in her imagination.

She said she nearly caused a terrible accident. Then there were the physical ravages of meth.

"My hair began to fall out, my cheeks sunk in, I had permanent dark circles under my eyes. I did damage to my teeth. It's horrible. It can take over your entire body," she said.

Meth is often cooked with caustic chemicals including ether, lye, acetone and phosphorous. Chemicals were found inside the Norcross home that police raided last week and seized \$44 million in meth which they believe was produced by associates of a Mexican drug cartel.

Darnell told Regan that meth is easily available to young people, including high school students.

"The way it's taken over small towns in Georgia, it doesn't surprise me that this has become a major place to ship it to and from," said Darnell.

Darnell said she's been clean for several years and credits her parents for getting her off meth and saving her life. She also is studying for a college degree. She said young people should never try meth, but those who are addicted have reason for hope and the promise of a new life.

"Just knowing I'm free from addiction. It's a great feeling," she said.

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