

## **Stuart Fenton**

B.A. Dip. Ed. Grad. Dip. Couns, Master of Gestalt  
Certified Sex Addiction Therapist  
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Stuart Fenton (Stu) was most recently Programme Director at R12, an LGBT+ dedicated destination rehab facility, part of The Cabin Addiction Services Group located in Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand.

Stu is a qualified clinical psychotherapist and counsellor with over 15 years of experience working in the addiction treatment field. Since joining R12 at The Cabin in 2017, Stu and his team developed a world leading clinical program that fostered long-term recovery including the R12 Alumni Project, which included ongoing one-to-one counselling online and continuing-care groups.

Stu also developed CAP - the ChemSex Abstinence Project, an intensive new programme that helps gay & bisexual men break free of the problematic sexual behaviour combined with Crystal Meth, GHB and online 'dating' apps.

Stu achieved sobriety from Crystal Meth and other drugs in 2003. At the age of 20, Stu came "out" and soon enough found himself amongst the Melbourne gay scene. Travelling the world Stu became exposed to 'party' drugs such as speed and ecstasy, but it was only when he returned to Melbourne that he started experimenting with heavier drugs.

Stu moved to Sydney and started studying for a B.A. in English Literature. He then moved to Montreal and lived as a functioning addict. While studying at McGill University Stu would have periods of solid study then partied heavily in New York. He started to experience drug induced psychosis and knew he needed to get sober but this vicious cycle lasted over 6 years. After a terrible relapse resulting in being scheduled into a psyche ward. He then got help. He completed 11 months in rehab and attended many 12-step meetings. He learned coping mechanisms to prevent him from turning back to drugs.

Stu was a High School teacher before entering psychotherapy. After rehab he completed a Graduate Diploma in Counselling at the Australian College of Applied Psychology specializing in Addiction, Self-esteem and Group Work and then completed a Masters qualification in Gestalt Therapy at the Sydney Gestalt Institute and Gestalt Therapy Sydney.

He has worked in a range of settings from residential long- and short-term rehabilitation, public and private sector rehabilitation, community health centres in both Addiction and Family violence, outreach and GLBT+ services whilst for the last 12 years simultaneously building a private psychotherapy practice mostly working in the areas of chemical and process addictions, GLBTI issues, co-dependency issues, family interventions, and sex & love addiction.

From 2011 to 2013 Stu facilitated ongoing drop in process groups in Sydney for gay men. One was a discussion group focusing on Alan Downs well known gay text "The Velvet Rage."

Stu has been a regular spokesperson in the media in both the UK and worldwide; he has been quoted in numerous newspaper articles in Australia particularly in reference to the crystal meth crisis and in LGBTQ+ press in the UK including Gay Times, Attitude Magazine, INTO, TransLiving, Fyne Times, Gscene, QWEERIST and Gaydio. He has been interviewed by ABC several times for being the first psychotherapist in Australia who has rehabilitated from crystal meth and gone on to become a knowledgeable worker and professional in the field.

Stu presents at conferences worldwide; he was a regular contributor in 2017-2018 at the AUSMED Conferences in Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart, Newcastle and Creswick, discussing his own personal story "From Addiction to a New Life - Stu's Crystal Meth and Recovery Story". In 2018 he presented on R12's LGBT+ Treatment in Thailand at the Addiction Disorders and Alcoholism Summit in

Singapore and in Sweden Stockholm Stu discussed Aftercare at iCAAD. This year Stu presented on behalf of The Cabin Group at iCAAD events in Stockholm and Paris as a Resilience through Adversity Keynote speaker. In October 2019 Stu spoke at The VCAL Student Forum in Geelong on Mental health and LGBT+ issues.

During 2020 STI produced a series of four in house staff training videos for Swedish company HIV SVERIGE called "The ChemSex Education Series" and also collaborated with

Maylis Audrey Djikalou formerly from ICAAD in London to create content for their LGBT+ "Creative Space Retreats Project called "Who am I?"

Currently Stuart is the team leader at Windana therapeutic community Ballarat which is a mixed treatment facility for people recovering from alcohol and drug addictions. Stu also see clients in Melbourne face to face in Toorak.