

DBSA Chapter Start-Up Guide and Tool-Kit



Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Chapter Leaders,

Welcome to the DBSA Chapter Start-Up Guide. This document is distributed to individuals and groups that show interest in starting a DBSA chapter in their community. As an established DBSA chapter leader you can utilize this as a tool for:

- Expanding your support group services
- Helping others in your community start additional chapters
- Sharing the information with interested individuals from other parts of the country, or other parts of the world!

This Start-Up Guide is provided to assist you and others that are committed to expanding DBSA services to everyone in need. If you do help start new support groups or chapters, please be sure to let us know so that we can provide the appropriate support for each group.

Thank you for your assistance as we work together *to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.*

Sincerely,
DBSA



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Dear Future Chapter Leader!

Thank you for your interest in establishing a local chapter affiliated with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, or DBSA (formerly National DMDA). You've taken an important first step in partnering with us to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders in your community.

After proper diagnosis and treatment, the support of others is vital to a lifetime of wellness. DBSA chapter-run, peer-led support groups provide the kind of caring and sharing that is crucial for sustained recovery. Participants report that DBSA support groups:

- Help them rediscover strengths and humor they may have thought they had lost
- Provide a forum for mutual acceptance, understanding, and self-discovery
- Help them understand that a mood disorder does not define who they are
- Offer an opportunity to reach out to others and benefit from the experience of those who have “been there”
- Motivate them to follow their treatment plans

Our shared mission – *To improve the lives of people living with mood disorders* – is clear and simple. This Chapter Start-Up Guide is meant to be equally as clear and simple for your use. Having a local DBSA support group is an incredibly important way of improving the lives of all of us living with mood disorders, it literally changes lives!! We need your skill to make this a reality in your community. We will do all we can to support you as you make this happen.

Welcome to an immense network of passionate, dedicated and caring people. As you work to provide support and education for people in your community, remember, *we've been there, we can help*. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
The DBSA Chapter Relations Team

Starting a DBSA Chapter

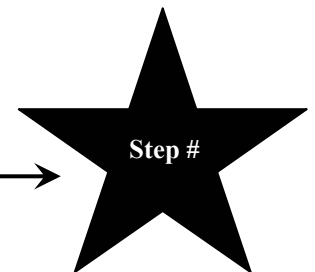
You've received this guide, now what?

Starting a DBSA Chapter to host support groups, provide education, and advocate on behalf of people affected by mood disorders is a simple, three-step process. This Guide will lead you through the three simple steps to starting your own chapter. With that foundation, you can grow your chapter as much, or as little as will fill your needs, vision and dreams.

As mentioned, there are three simple steps to starting a DBSA Chapter:

- ★ Step 1: Learn the Basics
- ★ Step 2: Start your Support Group(s)
- ★ Step 3: Affiliate as a DBSA Chapter

You'll find these steps noted throughout this book with this symbol



These three steps do not all have to be done immediately. Work at your own pace, and feel free to take your time. Use this Start-Up Guide to get started, and later on, to refer back to for answers to questions that will come up along the way. Also remember that DBSA staff is just a phone call or E-mail away for guidance and support.

Different chapters take different amounts of time to accomplish their idea of success. These three steps should be completed within about 12 months, so you have plenty of time. Within the second 12 months some extra responsibilities will be expected of your chapter, so it is important to take care of these basics first. What you do from there is up to you.

There are hundreds of DBSA chapters already established in communities just like yours. These chapters started – and have succeeded – because of the dedication of people just like you. These chapters will serve as a great example for you to follow as your chapter develops.

Let's get started!

Step 1: Learn the Basics

There is some basic information any new chapter leader needs to know to be successful. This includes:

- ★ What is DBSA?
- ★ What are the basic expectations of a chapter?
- ★ What does a DBSA chapter do?
- ★ Who can I contact for assistance?



What is DBSA?

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading patient-directed national organization focusing on the most prevalent mental illnesses – depression and bipolar disorder. The organization fosters an environment of understanding about the impact and management of these life-threatening illnesses by providing up-to-date, scientifically-based tools and information, all written in language the general public can understand. DBSA’s mission is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Assisted by a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA has a grassroots network of approximately 1,000 peer-run support groups across the U.S. and Canada. Millions of people request and receive information and assistance from DBSA each year.

As an organization, DBSA takes the lead from people with mood disorders:

- People living with mood disorders have been an integral part of operations since the organization’s founding by two patients, supported by a professional.
- More than half of our Board of Directors, committee members, chapter leaders, and staff are diagnosed with a mood disorder, making our statement, “We’ve been there. We can help,” a powerful reality.
- All DBSA support groups are peer-run, which means that persons living with mood disorders facilitate self-help support group meetings and manage group operations.

DBSA Chapters are only one aspect of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance’s mission. To learn more about what DBSA does nationally, visit www.DBSAAlliance.org, or call the DBSA staff.

What are the Basic Expectations of a Chapter?

First, some DBSA Definitions:

Chapter: (chāp'tēr)n.

DBSA Chapters are independent local affiliates of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. The selection of services offered differs among the hundreds of DBSA chapters, depending upon the needs of their participants.

Support Group: (sə-pôrt', -pērt' grōp)n.

DBSA chapters offer approximately 1000 peer-run support groups where you will find comfort and direction in a confidential and supportive setting, and where you can make a difference in the lives of others.



DBSA Chapters vary greatly in their level of performance, resources, size and activity. Each chapter has the potential for incredible achievement, and each chapter should do all that they can to support the mission of DBSA, *to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders*. The highest achieving chapters are always expanding their services in support of the mission of DBSA, and continue to grow and prosper in new and creative ways. However, DBSA chapters are also successful when they are performing the very basic necessities of chapter existence. There are 4 baseline standards in order to exist as a chapter.

Basic Necessities: The 4 baseline standards to be a chapter

1. Run at least one peer-led, public, free support group for people affected directly or indirectly by depression or bipolar disorder.
2. Enlist one professional advisor who is a certified or licensed health care professional.
3. Complete all necessary paperwork provided by DBSA for official affiliation and incorporation, and submit the \$40.00 affiliation fee. *(see step 3 of this Start-Up Guide)*
4. Act in support and accord with the mission and policies of DBSA.

Other basic items to consider:

- ★ You will need a telephone number for interested participants to call when inquiring about the support group and chapter (see step 2).
- ★ You will need a location for your support group to meet (see step 2).
- ★ Soon, you will need to organize a “Board of Directors” to lead your chapter’s activities, and sign your chapter’s paperwork. (see step 3).

What does a DBSA Chapter do?

DBSA Chapters exist *to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders* on a local level. These chapters engage in four major functions to achieve this mission. Again, chapters operate at different levels, and a new chapter does not need to be overly active in each of these function areas. However, as you are planning the long-term development of your chapter, keep these four function areas in mind.



- Advocacy
 - Some DBSA chapters, and many individuals associated with DBSA actively advocate for legislation, policy and legal actions that improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.
- Community Outreach
 - Many DBSA chapters receive and actively reach out to community members in need of chapter services. The chapter publicizes community and chapter illness-related opportunities, and maintains communication lines for interested parties.
- Education
 - Most chapters provide scientifically sound, illness-based educational programs and resources to community patients, and do not promote a specific medication, business, treatment or provider.
- Support
 - All chapters offer at least one consistent, comfortable, welcoming peer-led support group to their community that serves as an important part of the recovery process (*most chapters begin offering more than one support group after they have established themselves for a while*).

Who Can I Contact for Assistance?

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Chapter Relations Team
730 N. Franklin St., Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-7224

Phone: (800) 826-3632
E-mail: chapters@DBSAlliance.org
Web: www.DBSAlliance.org

Step 2: Start your DBSA Support Group(s)

One of the basic expectations and major functions of a DBSA chapter is to run at least one peer-led support group. Empowering individuals just like you to run a support group is one of the most effective ways that DBSA has found to work toward its mission.



Your support group truly can *improve the lives of people living with mood disorders*.

What are DBSA support groups?

At DBSA support group meetings people share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully with these illnesses. These are the six key elements of DBSA support groups:

1. **Focus on self-help**

The DBSA self-help process is based on certain assumptions:

- Each person has the ability to make appropriate use of available resources to meet their own needs. Some persons may utilize this ability more fully than others, but it is present in everyone.
- All of us together know more than any one of us. Everyone has value and has something to add to a group process.
- Each person is the ultimate authority on what s/he needs and on what will work for her or him.

(Adapted from *Leading Self-Help Groups* by Lucretia Mallory, 1984)

2. **Peer-led**

Discussion at DBSA support group meetings is facilitated by a group participant, and this is important to the group's smooth functioning. If at all possible, group discussion should be facilitated by a person with a mood disorder; friends or family members may also serve as facilitators. The facilitator guides discussion, provides focus to the group, and helps ensure that the group's guidelines are followed.

3. **Safe & accepting**

Participants make the DBSA support group a safe place by fostering a supportive, trustworthy, respectful, non-judgmental, and nurturing

atmosphere. All those attending share experiences that can help others deal successfully with depression or bipolar disorder. People use information they've gained from others at the meeting to make their own judgments about correct strategies for themselves.



4. Confidential

Open and honest communication is important to a positive group experience. DBSA support groups operate on the premise that “What we say here, stays here.” No one may publicly reveal information about the people attending the group or what is said during a meeting. Exceptions to this policy are made only when the safety of an individual is in danger. Participants are not required to be members or provide personal contact information if they do not wish to do so. DBSA and its affiliated chapters and support groups never make public or sell/rent group membership lists.

5. Meet regularly

The group determines how often, when, and where it meets. It is suggested that DBSA support groups meet at least once every month; many groups meet weekly or twice monthly.

6. Free of charge

DBSA support group meetings are open to the public and free of charge. No fee is required to attend. Groups may request optional donations to defray meeting costs such as refreshments or may establish optional group dues to be used for group-related purposes (for example, to place an advertisement in a local newspaper or publish and mail a newsletter).

Remember, DBSA support groups are:

- *NOT therapy or treatment*
Group discussion is not led by or directed by anyone in a professional capacity. Groups are peer-led
- *NOT a place to diagnose or a substitute for professional care*
Most people attending a support group meeting use the group as a supplement to their professional care, whether that care includes medication, therapy, or other treatment methods. Group participants do not seek to diagnose, and DBSA support groups do not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatment or medication.



- *NOT a 12-step group*
The 12-step formula, although valuable, is not the basis for DBSA support groups.
- *NOT a “pity party”*
While acknowledging the difficulty of life with a mood disorder, DBSA support group meetings are focused on mutual aid and strategies for living the fullest lives possible. Participants continuously seek to provide hope, reassurance, and encouragement.
- *NOT an expert giving a lecture*
Groups may periodically invite a professional or other expert to speak, but a DBSA support group’s main focus should be on peers helping one another. No one participant is regarded as knowing more than another, or as the person with “all the answers.”

Who can participate in a DBSA support group?

The primary participants in DBSA support group meetings are persons diagnosed with a mood disorder and those who believe they may have a mood disorder. Support groups may also include family members and friends of such individuals.

DBSA chapters are expected to provide services equally to all persons in need, and should not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other irrelevant criteria.

Starting a DBSA support group

This is what you will need to start:

- *A commitment to self-help.* You don’t have to be experienced in leading groups or an expert on mood disorders. You simply need to be committed to your own recovery and willing to learn, with a sincere desire to help and cooperate with others.
- *Support of other people with mood disorders and their family members/friends.* The idea for a group may start with one individual, but



that person should quickly seek out the help of other interested individuals. Assemble a small group of two or three individuals who share your interest in creating a support group. These individuals must be willing to invest their time and energy, just as you are, to help develop the group.

Look first to family, friends, and acquaintances for possible assistance. If you know other individuals with mood disorders, tell them of your desire to start a support group and share these materials with them. Ask your therapist, psychiatrist, or nurse if they have any patients or clients who might be good candidates for a start-up committee. (Note: health care professionals may be reluctant to help in this way because of confidentiality concerns. If this is the case, suggest that the professional ask any interested individuals to contact you directly.) Hospitals, mental health centers, community counseling services, and religious organizations and leaders are also good sources of interested individuals.

You can also find interested persons by asking permission to leave flyers (DBSA has brochures and information available) in waiting rooms of local health care facilities and providers. Or you can advertise in your local newspaper that a support group is forming, and that interested individuals should contact you. (And remember, these are also good ways to find support group participants; keep these strategies in mind when it comes time to publicize your group.)

- *Meeting location.* The location of your meeting should be easy for people to find, with sufficient parking and near public transportation, if this is available in your community. The site should offer privacy and access to restrooms and be accessible to persons whose mobility is impaired. For reasons of personal comfort and security, we recommend that your group meet in a public site and not in a private home.

For A Guide for Meeting Sites, see Start-Up Toolkit.

- *Telephone number.* This is a local number where people can get information about the purpose of the group and meeting information, not a crisis line (DBSA suggests that you leave crisis resources on your outgoing voicemail/answering machine message, such as 1-800-SUICIDE). A group's contact telephone number can be an answering machine, the personal number of a group leader, or that of a local agency or professional.



- *Professional support from a local advisor.* A DBSA professional advisor does not run the group or facilitate support group meetings but offers assistance to the support group as mutually agreed. It is critical that your advisor understands the mission of your support group and how self-help groups differ from therapy groups.

An advisor may occasionally speak to the group or answer questions from the group at a meeting. They may offer advice to group leaders on dealing with particular individuals or group situations. This person also promotes the benefits of support group participation to patients and among area mental health professionals, and helps give your group legitimacy. Ultimately, your group will determine its needs and discuss these with potential advisors.

For Professional Advisor Guidelines, see Start-Up Toolkit.

How to publicize support group meetings

Even the very best group cannot succeed if the public doesn't know it exists. If you want people to attend, they must know about your meetings, their purpose, when and where they happen. Places you can do this are by seeking a listing in meetings sections of community papers, local radio/television community announcements. Contact the newspaper/radio or television station to determine what information they need and how they want to receive it (Filling out a form? A press release? A letter?) and the deadlines to receive this information for publication.

To seek additional coverage, consider sending out a meeting announcement or press release to area newspapers, radio and television stations (commercial and cable access).

Other ways to announce your meetings and chapter events:

Flyers: Photocopy and distribute a flyer to hospitals, community mental health centers, doctors' offices, libraries, houses of worship, grocery stores, and other highly visible locations. Remember to ask for the location's permission before posting or distributing a flyer. Information and referral sources like your local human services council or United Way are always pleased to know of community resources for people in need.



Letters: Send out an announcement describing your group and its services to local mental health agencies, psychiatrists, and therapists.

Personal invitations: Invite friends, neighbors, people at work, and members of groups to which you belong. You can do this in person or by sending a version of the letter sent to local professionals and organizations.

The first meeting

Getting ready

- Announce your meeting to the public via press releases, flyers, and other announcements.
- Determine who will facilitate the first meeting.
- Order or download pamphlets and other educational materials from DBSA (www.DBSAAlliance.org) and sources such as the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (www.nih.gov).
- Prepare a sign-in sheet to gather participant names and contact information (participants should not be required to give their name and/or contact information).
- Gather basic meeting supplies to have on hand for the meeting: name tags, tape, thumb tacks, paper, pens, and markers.
- If your meeting might be difficult to find, make signs to direct individuals to the location, so that it is clear to those arriving that they are in the right place. Make signs as generic as possible (for example, “Support Group Meeting, Room B”) to be sensitive to concerns of people attending.
- If there is a receptionist or security guard at the entrance to your meeting place, make sure that they know your group is meeting and the location.
- Set the room up with comfortable chairs in a circle. Have a table near the entrance and a literature table for your informational materials. Offering water, tea or coffee, or other light beverages would be a welcoming touch and gives people something to do when they come in.



For a first meeting checklist, see Start-Up Toolkit.

Meeting agenda at a glance

DBSA support groups are not required to operate according to a rigidly prescribed formula. The sample meeting format shown here incorporates the elements used by many of our groups and is intended to guide you. Try using this as a starting point for your group's discussion of participant needs and how your group can be structured to meet those needs.

- **Gathering time**
- **Welcome**
- **Review what will happen at the meeting**
- **Review discussion guidelines**
- **Check-In**
- **Discussion**
- **Close the meeting**

Detailed meeting agenda

Gathering or social time

Welcomes people breaks the ice

Have one or more members of your start-up committee greet people as they arrive and thank them for coming. Encourage them to sign in on the list provided, including telephone and e-mail address, if available. This is the beginning of your group's mailing list, so try to get as many people to sign up as possible. However, if someone is uncomfortable providing information, do not require that they do so. Volunteers should offer nametags, invite guests to have refreshments if these are available, and help introduce them to others in the room. Make sure there are places for people to talk with others, and places for people to be alone or read informational materials. Be sensitive to individual needs and choices.

Welcome

Brings people together and gets their attention ... provides a focus point

What you might say:

“Hello, everyone, and thank you for coming tonight. We know that it may not have been easy for you to make the decision to attend. My name is Katie, and I’d like to welcome you. We’re here tonight to start a support group for people with mood disorders like depression and bipolar disorder. This group will be affiliated with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA). The mission of DBSA is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.



“Please sign our list so that we can let you know about future meetings. This list will be kept totally confidential and not shared with anyone else.”

Add any needed “housekeeping” announcements: where people can pick up materials, location of restrooms and water fountains, when the meeting is scheduled to end, etc.

Review what will happen at the meeting

Moves the group to the “business” part of the meeting ... everyone has the same information and knows what to expect

What you might say:

“Now it’s time to review the format and schedule for the meeting. Tonight we will follow a procedure recommended by DBSA and designed to give everyone an opportunity to participate as they are comfortable. First we will check in, when each of us will have an opportunity to introduce ourselves by first name and tell us briefly why you have come to this meeting.

“After the Check-In, we will have a talk about our mood disorders and share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully with these illnesses. The discussion will last until [time] when the meeting will end.

“Before we begin to talk with each other, I’d like to review the rules for our discussion.”

State the DBSA support group guidelines

Everyone knows the rules and is responsible for following them

You are encouraged to duplicate these guidelines for distribution to those present (*see* Start-Up Toolkit) and perhaps display them on a flip chart or blackboard in your meeting room. Many DBSA groups find it is helpful to have someone to read the support group guidelines aloud before beginning discussion. This can be done by a group participant, perhaps someone other than the facilitator.



DBSA Support Group Guidelines

- **Share the air:** Everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity to do so. No one person should monopolize group time.
- **One person speaks at a time:** Each person should be allowed to speak free from interruption and side conversations.
- **What is said here stays here:** This is the essential principle of confidentiality, and MUST be respected by all.
- **Differences of opinion are o.k.:** We are ALL entitled to our own point of view.
- **We are all equal:** Accept cultural, linguistic, social and racial differences and promote their acceptance.
- **Use “I” language:** Because we do not participate in support groups as credentialed professionals, *We do not INSTRUCT or ADVISE.* We however do share from our own personal experiences. We are unique individuals, and only we know what is best for our own health (along with our doctor’s recommendations). Example: “In my experience, I have found...”
- **It’s o.k. not to share:** People do not have to share if they do not wish to.
- **It’s everyone’s responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.:** We respect confidentiality, treat each other with respect and kindness, and show compassion.

This is also the time for the facilitator to outline her/his role. “To facilitate” means “to make easier an action or process.” Facilitators, therefore, make easier the conversations and sharing that goes on at self-help meetings. Facilitators:

- Are participants of the group themselves, and have a personal experience with a mood disorder
- Are aware of and sensitive to the special needs of group participants
- Promote and help foster the sharing of experiences, feelings, and ideas
- Actively listen more than talk
- Direct discussion only to keep it focused, relevant and productive
- Promote good will, mutual respect and pro-activity among group participants
- Discourage unhealthy confrontation among participants



What you might say:

“I am here as a volunteer and a person with a mood disorder who will be facilitating discussion today. This is our group, and I am not here as the person with all the answers. My role is to simply keep our discussion on track and to help maintain a productive environment. To do that, I may occasionally ask a question, make a comment, or help move discussion along.”

Check-In

A chance for each person to find out who else is at the meeting, and what their issues are to know that they're not alone.

Each person has an opportunity to introduce themselves by their first name and tell the group why they came to the meeting that day.

What you might say/hear:

“My name is Mary, AND ...

AND ...

“I think I might be depressed – I’m not sure.”
“I’m here to learn more about ... ”
“I’m just here to listen.”
“I just spent two weeks in the hospital.”
“I want to know how I can make my brother stay on his medication.”
“I was just diagnosed with bipolar disorder and need more information.”
“I just can’t go on the way I have been.”
“My doctor told me I should come to this meeting.”
“My medication just isn’t working.”

[Crying]

[Silence]

The Facilitator briefly reacts to each person as a way of acknowledging his or her presence. Don’t start discussion of specific questions or topics at this time; keep the introductions going. It is natural for some people to want to tell their whole story now, but it is essential that the group facilitator remind each person that this is a check-in time only, and that everyone will have the opportunity to talk more soon.



What the facilitator might say after each person has an opportunity to speak:

“Thank you, Mary.”

“We’re glad you’re here.”

“Thank you for sharing that.”

“Each of us has a lot of questions. We’ll be talking about [particular subject of interest] more after we’re done checking in.”

“It took a lot of courage for you to come here tonight – thank you.”

“No one is required to speak. We’re glad you’re here.”

Open Group Discussion

The heart of why a DBSA support group exists

After Check-In, the facilitator can begin discussion in several ways. Sometimes a topic of common concern has been identified during the Check-In, and the facilitator can begin discussion using this topic. For example, if several participants have expressed frustration about communicating with their psychiatrists, the facilitator might say, “It sounds as if a number of us are having challenges in dealing with our doctors. What are some of these problems and how can we deal with them?”



The facilitator can also begin discussion by asking if anyone has something of importance they wish to share or a topic they want to discuss. If no one brings up a specific topic the facilitator can suggest a topic for discussion. This gives participants an opportunity to discuss their own challenges/successes/concerns, or the topic of the evening.

Some potential topics are:

- Recognizing the signs of a mood disorder
- Talking to a therapist or doctor
- Working with medications
- Effects of the illness on family and friends
- Fears participants share
- Stigma participants face
- Doing things that make you feel good

During discussion, facilitators do only what their position calls for: facilitating smooth discussion. The main role of the facilitator is to be an active, supportive listener. To do this:

- **Restate** – Participants need to know that others have been listening. Restating what others say in other words is the simplest way to let them know you are paying attention.
- **Question** – Ask questions that seek more information or clarify what a participant has said: “Maurice, can you tell us more about ... ?”
- **Redirect** – Ask other group participants to respond to what has been said: “I wonder if anyone has some thoughts about what Jennifer has just shared.” This

can be a good technique for drawing out quieter group participants and involving them in the discussion.

- **Reflect** – Identify the feelings that underlie what is being said. This is done in an intentionally tentative way: “It sounds as though ... ”
- **Validate** – If you have experienced some of the feelings being expressed by a participant, say so and tell them you understand why they feel that way. You can do this without agreeing with someone or condoning unacceptable behavior.
- **Summarize** – Review what the conversation has been about up to the present. This puts things in perspective, refocuses discussion, and shows where discussion can go.
- **Share** – Facilitators shouldn’t forget that they are also group participants. They should share feelings and experiences when appropriate.



There is nothing wrong with silence at any time during the discussion. A break in conversation allows people to reflect on what was said and collect their thoughts. Silence sometimes encourages people who haven’t talked to speak up.

The facilitator should be prepared to deal firmly but kindly with individuals who are hypomanic, hostile, antagonistic, discouraged, and depressed. Remember that everyone in the group, including you, has experienced difficulty in their lives. Strive to be patient, kind, and empathetic, but remember that the purpose of the meeting is to provide productive support for everyone. If one individual is dominating discussion, for example, it is appropriate for the facilitator to intervene and move on to another member of the group. If someone appears to be unable to participate productively in discussion, is in crisis or suicidal, be prepared to summon assistance or make sure that the individual in question gets the help they need from another resource.

There is no single way to facilitate effectively, but if you follow these basic concepts and trust your own good instincts, you will do just fine. Every facilitator finds her/his own style and rhythm over time. Even if you feel anxious and awkward at first, as you gain experience you will be pleasantly surprised at how comfortably you and other members of the group slip into this role. Although not required, many current and potential facilitators have found it helpful to attend facilitator trainings offered by DBSA, or to seek other training from a self-help resource center. Upon affiliation, more facilitation information will be available for your use.

Close the Meeting

Brings closure to the session

How to do it:

- Give a 10- or 15-minute notification before discussion is scheduled to end.
- Ask participants to make any final comments or summaries
- Briefly summarize what has happened at the meeting (or ask another participant to do this)
- Ask people how they feel the group has helped them
- Announce next meeting date/time/place OR (if this is your first meeting) get commitment from attendees to meet again and determine date/time/place
- Encourage attendees to come back (“even if you’re not sure”)
- Encourage attendees to tell others about the group, including their doctor/other mental health professional
- Ask for volunteers to help with the next meeting as there are both small and large tasks that necessitate volunteers
- Ask for volunteers to visit DBSA’s web site (www.DBSAlliance.org) for information/resources on a potential discussion topic for the next meeting
- Distribute fact sheets or other information/materials
- Thank everyone for coming



If possible, allow people to stay and talk with others for a time after the meeting ends.

Step 3: Affiliate as a DBSA Chapter

Congratulations! You've just completed a major step in establishing a DBSA chapter in your community – you hosted your first support group meeting. The meeting may not have gone exactly according to plan, but you have seen the need and the potential for your group.



Now is the time to finalize your group's affiliation as a DBSA chapter. Some groups choose to take this step at the same time they are planning their first meeting. Others wait until after the meeting when they are confident that the group addresses a local need and plans to continue. The choice is entirely up to you and the members of the group. *Remember, however, that your support group cannot use the DBSA name until the affiliation process is complete, nor can your group access all DBSA resources or materials.*

To affiliate formally as a DBSA chapter for your first year of existence, complete the attached *Application for Affiliation and Chapter Profile*. Once that form and the \$40 affiliation payment are received, your application is reviewed and approved by the DBSA Board of Directors. This process doesn't take long and should be complete within 30 days.

After your first year as a DBSA chapter there are further requirements that the DBSA Chapter Relations Team can help you fulfill to protect yourself, your chapter participants, and DBSA. These further requirements include:

- Your chapter should create official chapter By-Laws which include a chapter board of directors and other organizational structures (DBSA can help)
- Your chapter should incorporate as a legal not-for-profit organization, and work toward 501(c)(3) tax exempt status (DBSA can help)
- Your chapter should re-affiliate with DBSA regularly as required (DBSA can help)

By fulfilling these further requirements after your first year of existence as a DBSA chapter, your chapter leaders, participants and *you* will be responsibly protecting yourselves, and providing an opportunity to others to contribute tax-deductible donations to your chapter.

Regular re-affiliation with DBSA provides unique benefits that are of significant value to you and your chapter. See the next page for more details...

Benefits of Official Affiliation

- Use of DBSA name and logo
- Referrals via DBSA's toll-free number (800/826-3632) and web site (www.DBSAAlliance.org)
- Quantities of DBSA's quarterly newsletter, *Outreach*, to distribute to participants free of charge
- Regular informational mailings, including *FYI*, our information-packed publication for chapter and support group leaders
- Press kits and public service announcements to promote your group's visibility
- Free copies of DBSA brochures and videotapes
- Leadership training opportunities through regional or national meetings, on-line learning tools, and other delivery possibilities.
- Chapter awards programs that can provide recognition and funding for your group
- Tips for developing effective groups, including ways to expand and share leadership of the group via the Chapter Management Web Site (password protected for affiliated chapters only)
- Chapter Leadership Guide



We look forward to assisting you as you take the next steps to becoming DBSA's representative in your community.

We acknowledge with gratitude the following chapters and individuals for sharing their expertise in the development of this Guide:

- ★ DBSA Colorado Springs, CO
- ★ Depression and Related Affective Disorders Association (DRADA), Baltimore, MD, and Wendy M. Resnick, M.S., R.N., C.S.
- ★ MDDA Boston, MA, and Charles Weinstein, M.A.E.
- ★ MDSG New York, NY



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Start-Up Toolkit

On the following pages you will find several tools to assist with starting up your DBSA chapter. These tools should give you the basic information you need, but remember that after you affiliate officially, DBSA provides even more information in a *Chapter Leadership Guide*, the *Chapter Management Website*, and other publications and resources.

- ★ **DBSA Chapter Fundamentals:** The first tool included in this toolkit is entitled *DBSA Chapter Fundamentals*. This document puts most of the information you and your chapter participants need to know all on one page. Share this document with everyone that participates, and be sure that all participants understand its contents.
- ★ **Professional Advisor Tools:** The second tool can assist you in finding, enlisting, and utilizing a professional advisor. The first part of this tool instructs will help you find a professional advisor, while the second part includes guidelines to which the professional advisor to agrees.
- ★ **Guide For Meeting Sites:** Third, you will find a *Guide For Meeting Sites*. Again, this tool has two parts – the first will help you find a meeting site, and the second is a document to share with potential meeting site hosts so that they understand what your chapter is about.
- ★ **DBSA Support Group Guidelines:** Next, you will find a page with three copies of *DBSA Support Group Guidelines*. Copy, cut and share these guidelines with all of your participants.
- ★ **First Support Group Meeting Checklist:** Also included in this toolkit is a checklist to help you prepare for your first support group meeting.
- ★ **Naming Your Chapter Tool:** Naming your chapter can be your first real challenge. The next tool is provided to assist in this process. Use the *Naming Your Chapter* tool to figure out the best official name for your chapter. (All names subject to approval by DBSA staff)
- ★ **Affiliation Paperwork:** Finally you will find the required paperwork to affiliate as a DBSA Chapter. Be sure to read and sign in all appropriate spots of all three pages of this paperwork.

Toolkit Contents

- DBSA Chapter Fundamentals
- Professional Advisor Tools
- Meeting Site Tools
- DBSA Support Group Guidelines
- First Support Group Meeting Checklist
- Naming Your Chapter Tool
- Affiliation Paperwork

DBSA Chapter Functions

DBSA Chapter Fundamentals

DBSA Chapter Outcomes

DBSA Chapters exist *to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders* on a local level. These chapters engage in four major functions to achieve this mission:

- **Advocacy**
The chapter actively advocates for legislation, policy and legal actions that improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.
- **Community Outreach**
The chapters receive and actively reach out to community members in need of chapter services. The chapter publicizes community and chapter illness-related opportunities, and maintains communication lines for interested parties.
- **Education**
The chapter provides scientifically sound, illness-based educational programs and resources to community patients, and does not promote a specific medication, business, treatment or provider.
- **Support**
The chapter offers consistent, comfortable, welcoming peer-led support services to their community that help people successfully manage their disease.

Through the four chapter functions, the exemplification of our chapter principles, and the dedication to our mission, policies and guidelines, we, as DBSA chapters, work toward the following outcomes:

- Help people successfully manage their disease.
- Provide emotional support and the wisdom of experience to patients, families and friends.
- Build self-esteem and empower participants to actively improve their life, and the lives of others affected by depression or bipolar disorder.
- Eliminate discrimination and stigma related to depression and bipolar disorder.
- Reach all individuals in the community affected by depression or bipolar disorder with opportunities for support and empowerment
- Educate chapter participants and the public -- through programs and resources -- about mood disorders.
- Help participants rediscover strength and humor they may have thought they had lost



DBSA Chapter Principles

- **Focus on self-help**
Each person has the ability to help themselves. Together we all know more than one of us alone. Everyone has value and something to add to the group process. Each of us is the authority on what we need.
- **Peer-leadership**
We are all equals. Our chapters are governed by our participants, and our support groups are led by patients or friends/family of patients.
- **Confidentiality**
No one may publicly reveal information about the people attending chapter activities, or what is said during a support group meeting. Exceptions to this policy are made only when the safety of an individual is in danger.
- **Safety and Acceptance**
Chapter activities and support groups are welcoming to all, and foster a nurturing atmosphere.
- **Consistency**
Chapter services are offered at consistent times and places for the comfort of participants.
- **Accessibility**
Support groups are free of charge, and all activities are accessible to anyone who can benefit from them.

DBSA Support Group Guidelines

DBSA Chapters engage in four functions, one of which is to run peer-led support groups

- **Share the air**
Everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity to do so. No one person should monopolize group time.
- **One person speaks at a time**
Each person should be allowed to speak free from interruption and side conversations.
- **What is said here stays here**
This is the essential principle of confidentiality, and MUST be respected by all.
- **Differences of opinion are o.k.**
We are ALL entitled to our own point of view.
- **We are all equal**
Accept cultural, linguistic, social and racial differences and promote their acceptance.
- **Use "I" language**
Because we do not participate in support groups as credentialed professionals, *We do not INSTRUCT or ADVISE*. We however do share from our own personal experiences. We are unique individuals, and only we know what is best for our own health (along with our doctor's recommendations). Example: "In my experience, I have found..."
- **It's o.k. not to share**
People do not have to share if they do not wish to.
- **It's everyone's responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.**
We respect confidentiality, treat each other with respect and kindness, and show compassion.

How to Find a Professional Advisor

- Start by talking with supportive health care professionals with whom you or the members of your start-up committee have had contact. You may start with your therapist, doctor, or nurse or ask these persons for recommendations and introductions to other professionals.
- Contact local branches of professional societies (for example, the local medical society, psychiatric society, National Association of Social Workers chapter, or nursing association) or nearby medical or other professional schools.
- **Provide them with a copy of the *DBSA Professional Advisor Guidelines*** and use this as the basis for your discussions.

DBSA Professional Advisor Guidelines

A DBSA Chapter Professional Advisor is a certified or licensed health care professional who provides mental health services, and who offers assistance of a technical, professional, and therapeutic nature to a DBSA chapter. The professional advisor supports the chapter in its efforts to provide self-help to persons with mood disorders.

Professional advisors should understand and respect the mission of DBSA, the policies of its Scientific Advisory Board, and how self-help groups differ from therapy groups. Advisors are just what their name implies and should not take part in leading support group meetings, which is the job of chapter participants.

Professional advisors are an integral part of successful DBSA chapters. Each year, outstanding advisors and their chapters are honored by DBSA for their partnership in supporting self-help for persons living with depression and bipolar disorder.

Responsibilities

At minimum, all DBSA Chapter Professional Advisors commit to:

- remaining in regular contact with chapter leaders

- referring individuals to the chapter
- promoting the chapter to other professionals and the public
- providing the chapter with information regarding mood disorders
- assisting chapter leaders in dealing with difficult situations within the group

An advisor may advise, educate and offer their expertise to a DBSA chapter in other ways; for example:

- speaking at educational meetings or public lectures
- writing articles for the chapter's newsletter
- seeking or providing funding to the chapter

In addition to their commitment to the local chapter, individual advisors are encouraged to make a financial contribution in support of DBSA.

Qualifications

A DBSA Chapter Professional Advisor should be:

- a licensed health care professional who provides mental health services
- supportive of the concept of self-help
- well versed in mood disorders, their causes and treatments
- committed to the DBSA mission.

A variety of health care professionals (psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, psychologists, or professional counselors, for example) may be qualified to serve as chapter professional advisors. A chapter may have more than one professional advisor if desired.

Length of service

Each DBSA chapter is asked to identify its professional advisor annually at the time of the chapter's affiliation renewal. There is no limit on the amount of time a person may serve as a professional advisor; however, DBSA chapter leadership should consider the advantages of changing their professional advisor periodically.

We've been there. We can help.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
(800) 826-3632 **www.DBSAAlliance.org**

How to Find a Meeting Site

- ***Likely sites***

Begin by identifying sites where other support groups meet, and organizations that have an interest in the success of your group and its participants. They may be looking for a group like yours to assist their clients or members. Your group can gain visibility for a hosting organization and help them meet their mission. Ask supportive local professionals like a physician, psychiatrist, social worker or member of the clergy if they can help you locate a site. Remember, many spaces are in great demand, especially if they are free of charge.

Many DBSA groups meet in or near a health care facility, for example, a hospital, community mental health clinic or counseling center. Potential group participants will be familiar with these sites, and they usually offer parking, restrooms, and other amenities. Other groups prefer to meet at a location not associated with mental health care. This could be a library, community center, restaurant meeting room, or local church, temple, or mosque. Some cities and towns make government buildings available to local residents.

- ***How to approach a site***

Find out the name of the person or department that coordinates meeting space and contact the designated person by telephone or in person. Explain the purpose of the group and what will happen at the support group meeting. **Provide them with a copy of *DBSA Support Groups: A Guide for Meeting Sites*.** If required, fill out an application for meeting space and provide references.

Some organizations may be unfamiliar with self-help groups or reluctant to offer long-term meeting space. If this is the case, ask if the organization would be willing to host 2-3 meetings while your group gets up and going.

After finalizing any necessary paperwork, thank them for their consideration and outline next steps. If approval is required from others, find out when you should re-contact them for their decision. Exchange contact information so that you can reach one another.

When you get home, write a brief letter thanking them for their time and reiterating why you feel their site would be a good one. Check back with them as agreed.

- ***Should you pay for a site?***

Work to secure free meeting space when at all possible. When talking with those in charge of a potential site, make sure the person knows your group is run by volunteers and has no funding. Ask if your group can meet there free of charge, at least initially. Agree to leave the space tidy after it is used.

- ***Working with your site***

Once you have finalized a meeting site, make sure you and your contact at the site have a clear understanding of which days your meetings will take place, how long each meeting will last, and who will be responsible for opening and closing the room. Make sure you know how to contact that person during the meeting time, and that they know how to contact you before, during, and after the meeting.

Keep your contact person informed of changes in your meeting schedule (cancelled meetings, etc.) during the year. And remember to express your gratitude to the organization with a sincere letter of thanks, at least annually.

- ***Other useful information***

Some sites may be concerned about potential crises or emergencies. Be prepared to emphasize the fact that your group does not offer crisis intervention services, and that your chapter is peer led. As a chapter, it is important to develop a crisis plan, and be prepared. If you have done this, share that your chapter *has* a crisis plan in the event someone requires professional attention.



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

DBSA Support Groups: A Guide for Meeting Sites

Thank you for your interest in providing meeting space for a local support group of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA). After proper diagnosis and treatment, the support of others is vital to a lifetime of wellness. DBSA support groups provide the kind of caring and sharing that is crucial for sustained recovery.

What is DBSA?

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading patient-directed national organization focusing on the most prevalent mental illnesses – depression and bipolar disorder. DBSA’s mission is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Assisted by a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA has a grassroots network of approximately 1,000 peer-run support groups across the U.S. and Canada. Millions of people request and receive information and assistance from DBSA each year.

What are DBSA support groups?

The primary purpose of DBSA support group meetings is to share information and mutual support related to participants’ experiences with mood disorders (depression or bipolar disorder, sometimes known as manic-depression). Our support group participants report that DBSA groups:

- Offer an opportunity to reach out to others and benefit from the experience of those who have “been there.”
- Motivate people with mood disorders to follow their treatment plans.
- Help them understand that a mood disorder does not define who they are.
- Help them rediscover strengths and humor they may have thought they had lost.
- Provide a forum for mutual acceptance, understanding, and self-discovery.

At DBSA support group meetings, persons with mood disorders meet regularly to share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully with these illnesses. The key elements of DBSA support groups are:

a. *Focus on self-help*

The self-help process is based on certain assumptions:

- Each person has the ability to make appropriate use of available resources to meet their own needs. Some persons may utilize this ability more fully than others, but it is present in everyone.
- All of us together know more than any one of us. Everyone has value and has something to add to a group process.
- Each person is the ultimate authority on what s/he needs and on what will work for her or him.

(Adapted from *Leading Self-Help Groups* by Lucretia Mallory, 1984)

b. *Peer-led*

Discussion at support group meetings is facilitated by a group member, a peer of the other group participants. The facilitator guides discussion, provides focus to the group, and helps ensure that the group's guidelines are followed.

c. *Safe & accepting*

Participants make the group a safe place by fostering a supportive, trustworthy, respectful, non-judgmental, and nurturing atmosphere. All those attending share experiences that can help others deal successfully with depression or bipolar disorder. People use information they've gained from others at the meeting to make their own judgments about correct strategies for themselves.

d. *Confidential*

DBSA support groups operate on the premise that "What we say here, stays here." No one may publicly reveal information about the people attending the group or what is said during a meeting. Exceptions to this policy are made only when the safety of an individual is in danger.

e. Free of charge

DBSA support group meetings are open to the public and free of charge. No fee is required to attend. Groups may request optional donations to defray meeting costs such as refreshments or may establish dues to be used for group-related purposes.

Each chapter has a Professional Advisor, a local health care professional who offers assistance to the support group and its sponsoring chapter.

DBSA support groups are:

- *NOT therapy or treatment*
Group discussion is not led by anyone in a professional capacity.
- *NOT a place to diagnose or a substitute for professional care*
Most people attending a support group meeting use the group as a supplement to their professional care, whether that care includes medication, therapy, or other treatment methods. Group participants do not seek to diagnose, and DBSA support groups do not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatment or medication.
- *NOT a 12-step group*
The 12-step formula, although valuable, is not the basis for DBSA support groups.
- *NOT a “pity party”*
While acknowledging the difficulty of life with a mood disorder, DBSA support group meetings are focused on mutual aid and strategies for living the fullest lives possible. Participants continuously seek to provide hope, reassurance, and encouragement.
- *NOT an expert giving a lecture*
Support groups may periodically invite a professional or other expert to speak, but a DBSA support group’s main focus is on peers helping one another.

Who can participate in a DBSA support group?

The primary participants in DBSA support group meetings are persons diagnosed with a mood disorder and those who believe they may have a mood disorder. Support groups may also include family members and friends of such individuals.

DBSA chapters are expected to provide services equally to all persons in need, and should not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other irrelevant criteria.

Other useful information

Rental fees: Most DBSA support groups operate on a very limited budget, if any, and have few financial resources. One important way you can lend support to your local group is by offering meeting space free of charge. If appropriate, group participants may be available to assist with room set-up.

*Thank you for helping to support people with mood disorders
in your community.*



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

(800) 826-3632

www.DBSAAlliance.org

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS



BASIC GUIDELINES FOR PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS



BASIC GUIDELINES FOR PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **Share the Air**

Everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity to do so. No one person should monopolize the group time.

- **One person speaks at a time**

Each person should be allowed to speak free from interruption and side conversations.

- **What is said here stays here**

This is the essential principle of confidentiality, and MUST be respected by all.

- **Differences of opinion are OK**

We are ALL entitled to our own point of view.

- **We are all equal**

Accept cultural, linguistic, social and racial differences and promote their acceptance.

- **Use “I” language**

Because we do not participate in discussion groups as credentialed professionals, NO ONE CAN INSTRUCT. We however can share from our own personal experiences. As an example, we cannot say – “*you should do X.*” we should say: “*when I was faced with that problem, I...*” Always put things in the context of our own experiences.

- **It’s OK not to share**

People do not have to share if they do not wish to. Much can be gained by just listening.

- **It’s everyone’s responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.**

Respect confidentiality, treat each other with respect and kindness, and show compassion.

- **Share the Air**

Everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity to do so. No one person should monopolize the group time.

- **One person speaks at a time**

Each person should be allowed to speak free from interruption and side conversations.

- **What is said here stays here**

This is the essential principle of confidentiality, and MUST be respected by all.

- **Differences of opinion are OK**

We are ALL entitled to our own point of view.

- **We are all equal**

Accept cultural, linguistic, social and racial differences and promote their acceptance.

- **Use “I” language**

Because we do not participate in discussion groups as credentialed professionals, NO ONE CAN INSTRUCT. We however can share from our own personal experiences. As an example, we cannot say – “*you should do X.*” we should say: “*when I was faced with that problem, I...*” Always put things in the context of our own experiences.

- **It’s OK not to share**

People do not have to share if they do not wish to. Much can be gained by just listening.

- **It’s everyone’s responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.**

Respect confidentiality, treat each other with respect and kindness, and show compassion.

- **Share the Air**

Everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity to do so. No one person should monopolize the group time.

- **One person speaks at a time**

Each person should be allowed to speak free from interruption and side conversations.

- **What is said here stays here**

This is the essential principle of confidentiality, and MUST be respected by all.

- **Differences of opinion are OK**

We are ALL entitled to our own point of view.

- **We are all equal**

Accept cultural, linguistic, social and racial differences and promote their acceptance.

- **Use “I” language**

Because we do not participate in discussion groups as credentialed professionals, NO ONE CAN INSTRUCT. We however can share from our own personal experiences. As an example, we cannot say – “*you should do X.*” we should say: “*when I was faced with that problem, I...*” Always put things in the context of our own experiences.

- **It’s OK not to share**

People do not have to share if they do not wish to. Much can be gained by just listening.

- **It’s everyone’s responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.**

Respect confidentiality, treat each other with respect and kindness, and show compassion.



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

First Support Group Meeting Checklist

Have you:

- Announced your meeting to the public via press releases, flyers, and other announcements?
- Determined who will facilitate the first meeting?
- Arranged to have pamphlets and other educational materials available?
- Prepared a sign-in sheet to gather participant names and contact information? (participants should not be required to give their name and/or contact information).
- Gathered basic meeting supplies to have on hand for the meeting: name tags, tape, thumb tacks, paper, pens, and markers?
- Photocopied and/or posted the DBSA Support Group Guidelines?
- (if applicable) Prepared signs and made sure the receptionist or security guard at the entrance to your meeting place knows about your group's meeting and location?
- Set the room up with comfortable chairs in a circle?
- Prepared a table near the entrance and a literature table for informational materials?
- Taken a deep breath and given yourself a pat on the back for all your hard work?*

Naming Your Chapter

When naming your chapter it is important to use a name that adequately and concisely represents a few points about your chapter. It is also very important to choose a name that is welcoming to, and understandable by the general public.

The most important point to convey is *location*.

Some questions to consider when choosing a name:

- ★ Does your chapter primarily serve one town?
- ★ If not, do you serve a county or other area that has a specific name?
- ★ Is your group intended to serve a specific population?

Some Examples:

- **DBSA Colorado Springs* serves primarily Colorado Springs, CO.
- **DBSA Ft. Worth/Tarrant Counties* serves both of these counties.
- **DBSA Delaware Valley* serves the Delaware Valley, Ohio region.
- **DBSA PPD Moms* serves Moms with Post-Partum Depression.
- **DBSA Southern California for Families* serves families.
- **DBSA Pinks and Blues (LGBT group)* serves the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual communities in their area.
- **DBSA Chicago Christian Center* serves community members, and offers a religious focus.

While in the past some chapters have been named outside these parameters, this has caused significant confusion for many (especially potential participants). Therefore, we ask that you try to stick with these suggestions and find a name that is reflective of the group as a whole (where it meets, what it does, etc.). Use this worksheet to determine your best options:

Our Location _____ (city, county, *not state*)

Areas We Serve _____ (region(s), district, locale)

Specific Population We Serve _____ (families, teens, LGBT, etc.)

} ← **Choose one**
+
← **This (optional)**

All names subject to approval by DBSA Staff

Our Chapter Name:

“DBSA _____”

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) **CHAPTER PROFILE**

TEAR OUT next 3 pages,
and RETURN To DBSA.
Keep a copy for your
chapter's files.

CONTACT INFORMATION

(NOTE: ALL INFORMATION EXCEPT ADDRESS IS PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>DBSA NAME OF CHAPTER _____</p> <p>CHAPTER MAILING ADDRESS _____</p> <p>CITY/STATE/ZIP _____</p> <p>1st CHAPTER CONTACT/ LEADER NAME _____</p> <p>1st CHAPTER CONTACT/LEADER TELEPHONE _____</p> | <p>2nd CHAPTER CONTACT NAME (if any) _____</p> <p>2nd CHAPTER CONTACT TELEPHONE (if any) _____</p> <p>CHAPTER E-MAIL ADDRESS (if any) _____</p> <p>CHAPTER FAX NUMBER (if any) _____</p> <p>CHAPTER WEBSITE ADDRESS (if any) _____</p> |
|---|--|

SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION

NUMBER OF SUPPORT GROUPS: One Two Other: _____

DATE SUPPORT GROUP(S) BEGAN MEETING: _____ # OF CURRENT PARTICIPANTS: _____

LOCATION OF MEETING(S) (city/state/zip code) _____

GROUP(S) MEETS: Monthly Bi-monthly Weekly Other: _____

SPECIFIC POPULATIONS SERVED (check all that apply)

Persons with mood disorders Family / Friends Teens / Adolescents Other _____

SERVICES PROVIDED BY YOUR CHAPTER (check all currently offered)

Support Groups Educational Programs Lending Library Speakers Bureau

Educational Materials Newsletter Community Outreach/Advocacy Information on Area Services

PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR

NAME: _____
First MI Last Credentials (M.D., Ph.D, R.N., etc.)

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

A check or money order for \$40.00 is enclosed, payable to DBSA.

Charge \$40.00 to my Visa MasterCard Discover Card Acct # _____

Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____
(required for credit card payment)



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATION

This document is an agreement between the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) and:

DBSA _____
(name of chapter)

located in _____
(city/state)

Both parties enter into this agreement to fulfill the goals set forth in the DBSA Mission Statement:

The mission of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders, by

- ◆ *Improving recognition, early detection, and diagnosis of mood disorders as treatable medical illnesses*
- ◆ *Helping people successfully manage their disease*
- ◆ *Working with people with mood disorders, families and health care professionals to improve care*
- ◆ *Expanding the ability of people to receive treatment*
- ◆ *Advancing research to improve mood disorder treatment options*
- ◆ *Increasing acceptance and understanding of mood disorders so that the rights of people with mood disorders are protected*

DBSA agrees to:

- Refer the public, especially potential participants, to the chapter via DBSA's toll-free number and website.
- Promote the benefits of DBSA support groups in publications and the media.
- Distribute copies of all its educational publications and videos free of charge or at low cost to affiliated chapters.
- Regularly distribute informational and resource materials to affiliated chapters.
- Recognize the outstanding achievements of affiliated chapters through awards and other programs.
- Provide affiliated chapters with information on current legislative, research and funding issues affecting the health, education and welfare of our mutual constituency.
- Offer chapter leadership training opportunities to chapter leaders.

TEAR OUT and
RETURN To DBSA.
Keep a copy for your
chapter's files.

TEAR OUT and
RETURN To DBSA.
Keep a copy for your
chapter's files.

Affiliated DBSA Chapters agree to:

- Run at least one peer-led, public, free support group for people affected directly or indirectly by depression or bipolar disorder.
- Enlist one professional advisor who is a certified or licensed health care professional.
- Complete all necessary paperwork provided by DBSA for official affiliation and incorporation, and submit the \$40.00 affiliation fee. *(see step 3 of this Start-Up Guide)*
- Act in support and accord with the mission and policies of DBSA.
- Broadly disseminate all materials received for distribution from DBSA to group participants.
- Maintain regular contact with DBSA's national office, completing all requests for information in a timely manner.

As official representative of DBSA [Chapter Name] _____, I agree that our chapter will comply with all provisions above. We have read and agree to the terms listed, and commit to uphold the integrity and good name of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.

Enclosed is our *Chapter Profile* and \$40.00 fee.

Chapter Leader Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Please return this form, and the *Chapter Profile* to:

**DBSA
Attn: Chapter Relations
730 N. Franklin St.
Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-7224**

Fax: (312) 642-7243



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

