

DBSA group guidelines

DBSA support groups are intended for adult participants experiencing depression and bipolar disorders and those who support them.

All participants are welcome regardless of mental and/or physical health status, culture, socioeconomic status, age, religious preference, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.

Share the air. Everyone who wishes to share is encouraged to do so, but you can always take a pass in large or small group. It may take extraordinary courage for some of us to reveal personal stories. We must all be gentle with each other and ourselves. Each person should be allowed to speak without interruption.

We are all responsible for making our discussion groups a safe place to share. We honor confidentiality: what we say here stays here, and what we say in small group stays in small group. We treat each other as we wish to be treated: with respect, kindness, and compassion. Remember to respect the privacy of other participants by using tact when greeting them in public.

Friendships are encouraged and likely to develop within our group. Romantic relationships, however, are discouraged for at least the first six months of attendance in the group.

We recognize that each person is the ultimate authority on what he or she needs and on what will work for him or her. Therefore we do not diagnose or advise specific treatments or medications. We also encourage participants to maintain regular contact with their physical and mental health care providers.

Verbal or physical abuse of any kind will not be tolerated. Should an uncomfortable situation arise, please talk with the facilitator, a large group leader, or our professional advisor, Andrea. We seek to create a safe and nurturing environment where wellness is possible. As participants we must hold ourselves and each other accountable to these guidelines.

You will feel safe and welcome in our peer-run support group. The only requirement for participation is that each member adhere to our guiding principles of confidentiality and acceptance without judgment.

Please join us any Monday for an interactive experience geared toward serving those who are emotionally challenged, their support people, and anyone else who feels they may benefit.

If you are in crisis

Please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or Kalamazoo's Gryphon Place at (269) 381-1510, or for online crisis chat visit www.imalive.org.



Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: Kalamazoo Chapter

Mondays from 7pm - 9pm
at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church
7028 Oakland Drive, Portage, MI

For more information

(269) 599-2782
www.DBSAKazoo.org
www.DBSAAlliance.org

DBSA support groups provide the kind of sharing and caring that is crucial for a lifetime of wellness.

DBSA groups:

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

Remember, support groups are not a substitute for professional care. DBSA chapters and support groups do not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatments or medications. For advice about specific treatments or medications, individuals should consult their physicians and/or mental health professionals.

There are over 25 million Americans coping with mood disorders. They and their families need a greater understanding of how these illnesses affect lives. We all need support from people who have “been there” and understand the journey. Proper diagnosis and treatment is crucial and the support from others is vital to a lifetime of wellness. DBSA chapters can provide that support.

Peer-run support groups are 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. This group is volunteer-run and provides self-help through facilitated meetings. This is not group therapy; however, we do have a professional advisor whom we ask for direction when needed.

Beyond participating in the group sessions, you will meet people from your community who can relate to your experiences. You may learn valuable information about mental health professionals and services in your area as well as tips and techniques others use to manage their illness.

In addition to support, we offer educational material as well as information on how to obtain other resources within the community. Occasionally speakers from the medical or service fields donate their time to speak to the group.

Our professional advisor, Andrea Deming, speaks to our group once a month, answering questions submitted to her via a box that is available at each group meeting, or submit them via email to questionsforandrea@gmail.com. You can also reach her at (269) 384-2270.