

DBSA GROUP GUIDELINES

(These guidelines are read at the beginning of every group meeting.)

Welcome friends! 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.

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.

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, and courteous as to how much time we spend sharing our experiences, especially during large group time. Each person should be allowed to speak without interruption. As participants we must hold ourselves and each other accountable to these guidelines.