



**Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance**

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Chapter Start-Up Guide

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 four-step process. This guide will lead you through the steps to starting a chapter in your community. With that foundation, you can grow your community's chapter to fulfill your needs, vision, and dreams.

As mentioned, there are four steps to starting a DBSA chapter:

- Step 1: Learn the basics
- Step 2: Start your support group(s)
- Step 3: Incorporate as a nonprofit organization
- Step 4: Affiliate as a DBSA chapter

These four steps do not all have to be done immediately. Work at your own pace, and feel free to take your time. Use this guide to get started and 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 email away for guidance and support.

Each chapter takes a different amount of time to accomplish their idea of success. Remember, 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 community's chapter develops.

Let's get started!

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Step 1: Learn the Basics

There is some basic information any person interested in creating a DBSA chapter needs to know to be successful. This includes:

- What is DBSA?
- What is a DBSA chapter?
- What is the process for affiliating as a DBSA chapter?

What is DBSA?

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, depression and bipolar disorder, which affect more than 21 million Americans, account for 90% of the nation's suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses.

DBSA's peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources are available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America.

Through more than 700 support groups and nearly 300 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

What sets DBSA apart from other mental health organizations?

DBSA was founded in 1985 by two patients supported by a professional. Over thirty years later, people living with mood disorders continue to direct DBSA's operations. DBSA support groups are peer-run, which means that people living with mood disorders, or their friends and family, facilitate DBSA support group meetings. Some employees and board members have a direct connection to mood disorders through their own lived experience or that of a family member. DBSA is different from other mental health organizations because:

- DBSA focuses only on depression and bipolar disorder,
- DBSA is peer-directed, founded, and run,
- DBSA is focused specifically on the needs and desires of peers, and
- DBSA support groups are peer-led and facilitated.

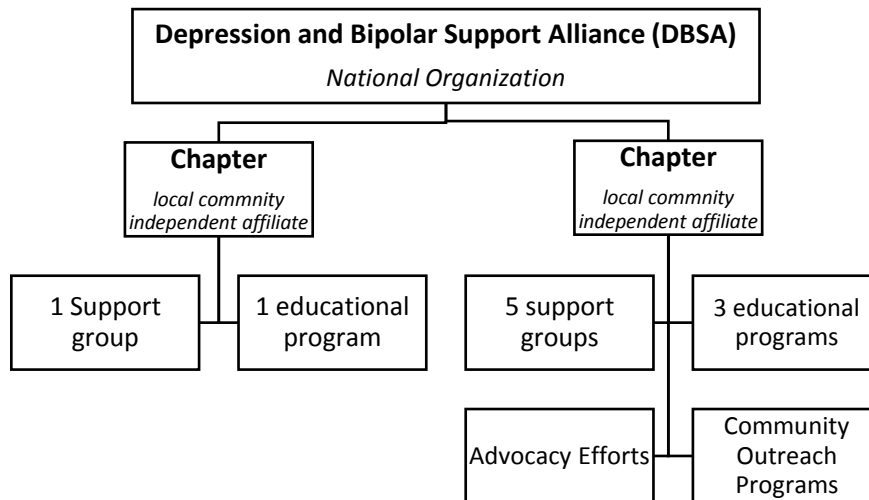
What is a DBSA Chapter?

DBSA chapters are independent, local affiliates of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. DBSA chapters are incorporated, nonprofit organizations that are governed by their own board

of directors. The selection of services each DBSA chapter offers depends upon the needs of its participants and the community it serves. All chapters must provide at least one peer-led support group, but they may also provide educational community outreach and advocacy activities.

What does a DBSA chapter do?

Here's a visual representation of the way DBSA is structured:



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 strive to support the mission of DBSA: to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. The highest achieving chapters are often 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, such as offering a support group and educational program.

What is the process for affiliating as a DBSA chapter?

Before affiliating as a DBSA chapter, the group must:

1. Have started, or be in the process of starting, a peer-led support group.
2. Have a dedicated board of directors to oversee chapter operations with, at minimum, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
3. Have operational bylaws that include instructions for term limits and elections for the Board of Directors.
4. Be an incorporated, nonprofit organization either through DBSA in the state of Illinois or in your own state.
5. Submit a completed affiliation application, with affiliation fee, to the national office of DBSA.

Step 2: Start a Support Group

One of the basic expectations and major functions of a DBSA chapter is to provide at least one peer-led support group. Empowering individuals just like you to facilitate a support group is one of the most effective ways that DBSA has found to work toward its mission. Your community's support group can improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.

While there are many different types of support groups, the following information will cover what is expected of support groups that are (or will be) a service of a DBSA chapter.

What do DBSA Chapters' support groups do?

At support group meetings people share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully with mood disorders. These are the six key elements of a DBSA chapter's support group:

1. *Focus on self-help*

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

- a) Each person has the ability to make appropriate use of available resources to meet her or his own needs. Some people may utilize this ability more fully than others, but it is present in everyone.
- b) All of us together know more than any one of us. Everyone has value and has something to add to a group process.
- c) 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 Mallroy, 1984)

2. *Peer-led*

Discussion at support group meetings is facilitated by a group participant, and this is important to the group's smooth functioning. The group facilitator should be a person living with a mood disorder or friend/family member, if the group is serving friends/family of individuals living with depression or bipolar disorder. 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 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 live successfully with depression or bipolar disorder. People use information they've gained from others at the meeting and the mental

health professionals they work with to make their own judgments about correct strategies for themselves.

4. Confidential

Open and honest communication is important to a positive group experience. 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 question. 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 or participant lists.

5. Meet regularly

The group determines how often, when, and where it meets. Support groups meet at least once every month; most groups meet weekly or twice monthly.

6. Free of charge

Support groups that are part of a DBSA chapter must hold meetings that 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 chapters’ support groups are:

1. NOT therapy or treatment

Group discussion is not led by or directed by anyone in a professional capacity. Groups are peer-led.

2. 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 support groups do not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatment or medication.

3. NOT a 12-step group

The 12-step formula, although valuable, is not the basis for DBSA support groups. DBSA believes that each person’s path to wellness is uniquely his or her own. There is no “one way.”

4. NOT a “pity party”

While acknowledging that challenges may arise when living with a mood disorder, 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.

5. NOT an expert giving a lecture

Groups may periodically invite a professional or other expert to speak, but a 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 support group?

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

What do I need to start a 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 a commitment to your own wellness, a willingness to learn, and a sincere desire to help and cooperate with others.
- **Support of other people with mood disorders and 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 three or four 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/leaders are also good sources of interested individuals.

You can also find interested people by asking permission to leave flyers in waiting rooms of local health care facilities and providers. You can advertise in your local newspaper that a support group is forming and that interested individuals should contact you. These are also good ways to find support group participants, too; 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, near public transportation (if this is available in your community), and have sufficient parking. 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 require that DBSA chapter's support groups meet in a public site** and not in a private home. For meeting site tools, see the toolkit at the end of this guide.
- **Professional support from a local advisor.** All DBSA chapters are encouraged to have a local professional advisor. The professional advisor is a licensed or certified professional working in the mental health field, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, licensed social worker or psychiatric nurse. Professional advisors do not attend support group meetings consistently, but they may occasionally speak to the group or answer questions from the group at a meeting. They may consult with 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. Ultimately, your group will determine its needs and discuss these with potential advisors.

A 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. For professional advisor guidelines and responsibilities, see the toolkit at the end of this guide.

- **Responsibility to yourself.** Before you start a support group in your community, we encourage you to think about your needs and how the responsibilities of running a support group will affect your own goals and wellness. Everyone has the ability to succeed as a support group facilitator. Generally, though, successful group leaders can recognize when or if their work to help others is compromising their own well-being. Be sure that you are treating yourself with care. DBSA also recommends you share the responsibility of running a support group for many reasons, including taking time to prioritize your own wellness.

- **Telephone number and email address.** The support group phone number 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 1-800-273-TALK. A group's telephone number can be an answering machine or the personal number of a group leader. DBSA recommends using a service like Google Voice. DBSA also recommends that your community's chapter have a dedicated email address. Free email addresses are available through www.yahoo.com, www.hotmail.com, www.gmail.com, and many other internet-based email services.

DBSA Support Group Guidelines

Please duplicate the DBSA support group guidelines and distribute them to the people who attend the support group. A list of guidelines is included below. You might also consider displaying the guidelines on a flip chart or blackboard in your meeting room. Read the support group guidelines aloud before beginning discussion at each meeting, even if no one new is present. 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 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.
-

The Role of the Facilitator in a Support Group

“To facilitate” means “to make easier.” Facilitators, therefore, make easier the conversations and sharing that go 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, but do share when it is their turn
- Direct discussion only to keep it focused, relevant, and productive
- Promote good will and mutual respect among group participants
- Discourage unhealthy confrontation among participants

During discussion, facilitators do only what their position calls for: facilitating smooth discussion. The main tasks of the facilitator are to be an active, supportive listener and, of course, to receive support from other participants as well.

There is no single way to facilitate effectively, but if you follow the basic support group guidelines provided in this guide, review the facilitator orientation resources available in this guide, 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 participants of the group slip into this role.

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. More facilitation information will be available for your use upon affiliation. In particular, DBSA chapters have access to many resources via the chapter management section of DBSA’s website (password protected for affiliated chapters only).

Step 3: Incorporate as a nonprofit organization

Incorporating your chapter with a state government makes your chapter a legal business entity. Incorporation indemnifies (protects from liability) individual chapter representatives such as directors or officers who are acting in the best interest of the corporation. The chapter itself holds the liability risk.

All chapters must be incorporated in order to affiliate with DBSA.

Why must all chapters incorporate in order to affiliate with DBSA?

- It is in the best interest of the chapter and its leadership to have a board of directors to handle concerns and bylaws to determine procedures. Years of helping support groups and chapters start has taught us that NO group, regardless of the size, purpose, or temperament is exempt from difficult participants, accidents, or misunderstandings.
- It is legally necessary for a chapter to be incorporated in order to protect all individuals involved in the chapter from liabilities of the chapter. For example, if a chapter is not incorporated and someone sues the chapter, the board members and participants could be held legally liable. If the chapter is incorporated then the liability will be with the chapter rather than board members and/or participants. This helps to protect the personal assets of the board members and participants.

What are the steps to incorporate as a nonprofit organization?

1. Determine if the organization needs its own incorporated status, or if it is a piece of an already incorporated organization (such as your host church, mental health facility, etc).
 - a. If the organization is a piece of an already incorporated organization, you will need to include your proof of incorporated status with your affiliation paperwork to DBSA. Additionally, board leadership from the incorporated organization will need to, in writing, accept responsibility for ensuring that all Chapter requirements are met. Please discuss with DBSA's Chapter Relations Team to learn more.
 - b. If the organization will need its own incorporated status, please follow steps 2-6 below.
2. Define your leadership team. *Your leadership team can be made up of anyone who is interested in helping. This may be support group participants, family members or friends, or local mental health professionals, among others.*

3. Develop organizational bylaws. *Bylaws are rules or policies adopted by a corporation to govern its actions. DBSA has sample bylaws that you can review to help you create your own. Visit www.DBSAAlliance.org/affiliationresources for the sample.*
4. Elect a board of directors with, at minimum, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Please note: Board meetings should be held at least twice a year or the minimum as required by your state, whichever is larger. Minutes should be taken and Robert's Rules of Order observed.
5. Have the board of directors vote to adopt the organizational bylaws
6. Decide if you want to incorporate using DBSA's group filing process in the state of Illinois or in your own state.

Incorporation Steps

If you decide to file for incorporation in your own state:

1. Check with your local secretary of state to determine what paperwork is required, the cost to incorporate, and if there are any special requirements of filing in your state.
2. Fill out the “Naming Your Chapter” worksheet (page 38), and contact DBSA staff to have your chapter’s name approved.
3. Submit the required paperwork and fee to your state.
4. When you have received notice back that the incorporation is complete, send the following items with your completed DBSA affiliation paperwork and \$125 affiliation fee.
 - a. A copy of your Articles of Incorporation.
 - b. A copy of your letter of incorporated status from your state.

If you decide to incorporate in Illinois through DBSA’s group filing process:

1. Groups may elect to have DBSA file their incorporation paperwork for them for a one-time \$50 fee. DBSA will cover the annual report fee each subsequent year and will submit all paperwork to the State of Illinois.
2. Complete the Articles of Incorporation available at www.DBSAAlliance.org/affiliationresources. **Please fill out articles 3 and 6 only.**
 - a. Article 3: Fill in the names and addresses of three or more chapter directors.
 - b. Article 6: Have the directors sign their names, with their printed name directly below. Also, have them again fill in their address next to their signature. At least one director must sign their name.
 - c. Use **BLACK** ink when filling out the form. Please note that P.O. boxes are not acceptable for address purposes. Also note that this information may be subject to public disclosure in accord with law, although this is highly unlikely.
3. All signatures must be original (no photocopies, faxes or scans can be accepted.) Please submit the original form to DBSA with your affiliation paperwork.
4. DBSA also requires that you send a copy of the chapter’s signed bylaws with your affiliation paperwork.

If you have questions about the incorporation process, please visit www.DBSAAlliance.org/affiliationresources to review the resources available or contact the DBSA Chapter Relations team at startup@DBSAAlliance.org or (800) 826-3632.

Optional: You may also file for federal tax-exempt status through DBSA.

This will allow individuals to make tax-deductible donations to the chapter. To do this:

1. Complete the *Consent to be Included in Group Exemption* form available at www.DBSAlliance.org/affiliationresources. Fill out the requested information (including an EIN if your chapter has already been assigned one. You may leave this blank if you do not have an EIN.) The “approved by” line can be completed by any participant of the chapter. By signing this, your chapter gives its permission to be included in the DBSA group filing with the IRS for 501(c)3 status (federal tax exemption). To be included in the group exemption, your chapter will need to adopt the same fiscal year as our national organization, January 1st to December 31st.
2. Complete the *Form SS-4*. PLEASE FILL OUT BLANKS 7A and 7B ONLY, and SIGN at BOTTOM. As part of the group filing for 501(c)3 status, each chapter must be assigned an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This Form SS-4 is the application submitted to the IRS for that number. The EIN is the number you will provide to individuals or organizations when they make donations to your chapter. This allows the donation to be tax deductible for them.
 - i. Print the name and social security number of one chapter director in Blanks 7A and 7B, respectively.
 - ii. Have that same director print their name and title at the bottom of the page. Directly below their printed name and title, have the director sign and date the form. Signing this form does not make the individual personally liable or responsible.

If you have questions about the incorporation process, please visit www.DBSAlliance.org/affiliationresources to review the resources available or contact the DBSA Chapter Relations team at startup@DBSAlliance.org or (800) 826-3632.

Step 4: Affiliate as a DBSA Chapter

Congratulations on all your progress! Now it is time to finalize your group's affiliation as a DBSA chapter. To affiliate as a DBSA chapter, please follow the instructions for affiliation on page 19. You will need to complete and submit:

- DBSA Chapter Affiliation Agreement (pages 23-27)
- New Chapter Profile (pages 29-31)
- Chapter Requirements Checklist (pages 33-34)
- Provide proof of incorporation or submit Articles of Incorporation
- Copy of your chapter bylaws
- Affiliation fee

Once the paperwork and affiliation payment are received, your application will be reviewed for approval. This process doesn't take long and should be complete within 30 days. Before a chapter is fully affiliated, DBSA must have proof of incorporation. If your chapter is incorporating through DBSA, DBSA will submit your articles of incorporation on your behalf. Once proof of incorporation is received, you will receive a confirmation letter and a welcome packet including your charter certificate, letterhead, logo information, and a copy of your group's listing as it will appear on the DBSA website and in DBSA publications.

DBSA chapters must re-affiliate annually. Paperwork for the following year is sent out in November and will be due by January 31st of the new year with an annual affiliation fee.

A note on the annual affiliation fee: Money should never be a barrier to bringing support to those around you, and we at DBSA are committed to helping you bring support to your community to the best of our abilities.

As of 2010, it costs DBSA nearly \$400 to support a chapter for one year. Your affiliation fee helps us to off-set this considerable expense; however, we understand that there are times when chapters are unable to cover this entire fee. Affiliation fee reductions may be available. To request an application for fee reduction, please contact the Chapter Relations Team at (800) 826-3632 or startup@DBSAlliance.org.

A note on choosing a name: Naming your community's new chapter can be a challenge. The most important point to convey when naming a chapter is location. After location, it is also important to indicate if your chapter serves a specific population, such as individuals with a dual diagnosis or parents. Please complete the naming your chapter worksheet (page 35) to determine the best official name for your chapter. All chapter names are subject to approval by DBSA staff.

Benefits of Affiliation

Affiliation with DBSA provides unique benefits that are of significant value to you and your community's chapter. These benefits include:

- Referrals to your community's chapter and support groups via DBSA's toll-free number (800/826-3632) and website (www.DBSAlliance.org).
- Regular informational communications filled with resources and ideas for chapter growth and improvement.
- Tips for developing effective groups, including ways to expand and share leadership of the chapter via the Chapter Management website (password protected for affiliated chapters only).
- Free or low-cost copies of select brochures and publications from DBSA's stocked inventory.
- Chapter leadership and facilitation training opportunities and resources to chapter participants.
- Chapter awards programs to recognize the outstanding achievements of DBSA chapters.
- Access to all chapter leadership guides to help the chapter succeed by providing tools, guidance, and references.
- Opportunities to connect with chapter leaders and facilitators from around the country to share successes and brainstorm solutions to difficulties.
- Grant and fundraising opportunities, as they are available, to help your chapter grow.
- Use of the DBSA name and a DBSA chapter logo, which will identify your group as part of the nation's leading peer-directed organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder.
- Access to materials that promote the benefit of DBSA support groups in publications and the media.
- Assistance in incorporating your community's chapter as a nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status through DBSA's group filing process.



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

Instructions for Affiliation

- Sign and date the **DBSA Chapter Affiliation Agreement**. This agreement outlines your chapter's relationship to DBSA and will remain in effect until either the national office or the chapter terminates the affiliation in writing. (see page 23)
- Complete the **New Chapter Profile**. We will use this information to refer the public to your chapter and to compile information on the services DBSA provides nationwide. (see page 29)
- Fill out and turn in the **Chapter Requirements Checklist** (see page 33)
- Show proof of incorporation or complete and sign the appropriate **incorporation materials**, available at www.DBSAAlliance.org/affiliationresources. (See page 14)
- Pay **the affiliation fee of \$125** if you are already incorporated or **\$175** if you will be filing for incorporation through DBSA (see payment form below).

Payment Information

- A check or money order for \$_____ is enclosed, payable to DBSA.
- Charge \$_____ to my: (circle one) VISA MasterCard Discover Card American Express

Account Number: _____

Expiration Date: ____/____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Return all of the above to DBSA:

DBSA, Chapter Relations

55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490 • Chicago, IL 60604

DBSA CHAPTER AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

This agreement is made between the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (“DBSA”), an Illinois nonprofit corporation, and DBSA _____ (hereunto referred to as the “Chapter”) in order to fulfill the goals set forth in DBSA’s mission:

The mission of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is to provide hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people living with depression and bipolar disorder. DBSA pursues and accomplishes this mission through peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources when people want them, where they want them, and how they want to receive them.

1. GRANT OF AFFILIATION

1.1 Affiliation. DBSA hereby grants to the Chapter non-exclusive affiliation as a chapter of DBSA. The Chapter is authorized to use the designations “Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, [Chapter Name],” “DBSA [Chapter Name],” and “[Chapter Name] an affiliated chapter of DBSA” with authority to use such designation in connection with the activities of the Chapter in conformance with DBSA’s Graphic Standards Manual, subject to the terms and conditions listed below in Section 4.1.

1.2 Territory. The Chapter agrees to offer services in its local area; however, DBSA may, in its sole discretion, conduct its own activities within the specified geographic area during the term of this Agreement. DBSA agrees to inform an existing chapter when granting affiliation to a chapter in its service area.

2. OBLIGATIONS OF DBSA

DBSA agrees to:

- a) Refer members of the public to the Chapter and its support groups via its electronic chapter directory and telephone referrals.
- b) Promote the benefits of DBSA support groups in publications and the media.
- c) Distribute to the Chapter copies of all new DBSA educational publications and videotapes, free of charge or at low cost.
- d) Provide a limited amount of select educational publications from DBSA’s stocked inventory, free of charge or at low cost.
- e) Distribute and/or make available information and resource materials to the Chapter on a regular basis.
- f) Maintain the Chapter Management section of DBSAlliance.org, where chapter leaders can access a host of educational and marketing materials to help improve their chapters.
- g) Offer leadership and facilitator training opportunities for Chapter leaders in conjunction with the DBSA Chapter Leadership Forum and/or in other venues.
- h) Notify the Chapter of leadership training and educational opportunities, including those DBSA national activities that will take place within the geographic area of the Chapter as described above.
- i) Offer assistance to the chapter in filing for incorporation and 501(c)(3) status through the DBSA group filing process.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHAPTER

3.1 The Chapter agrees to:

- a) Provide these services:

- Offer one or more peer-led, public, free, recovery-oriented support group(s) at regularly scheduled times and locations.
 - Maintain a dedicated chapter telephone number, mailing address and, if at all possible, an email address as well as a specific contact person(s). All local telephone calls and electronic communications should be responded to within 48 hours of receipt, or as soon as possible in crisis situations. When dedicated chapter phone lines or email addresses are possible, callers/emailers should be notified of the chapter's affiliation with DBSA.
 - Present at least one educational session per year.
 - Utilize welcome packets and talking points that align with those provided by DBSA.
 - The Chapter may choose to provide additional services in line with DBSA's purpose and mission.
- b) Operate according to the following policies:
- Participation. The primary participants in DBSA support groups are people living with mood disorders. Support groups may also serve friends and family members of such individuals or other specific populations (GLBT, youth, later life, etc).
 - Support Group Meetings. Support group meetings shall provide a safe and open forum for group discussions for all participants and shall respect each participant's right to confidentiality; exceptions to this policy are made only when the safety of an individual or group is in danger. Support groups will use DBSA's provided discussion guidelines which are made known to each participant and all support groups will be recovery-focused. Support groups will use the DBSA preamble (description) of the support group, to be read at the start of each meeting.
 - Chapter Orientation. The Chapter must participate in DBSA's online chapter orientation training within one month of affiliation with DBSA.
 - Facilitator Education. The Chapter must ensure that each new support group facilitator review all materials in the "New Facilitator Overview" section/page of the Chapter Management section of DBSAlliance.org.
 - Membership and Dues. The Chapter may establish local membership dues; the amount, frequency, and benefits are to be determined by the chapter. However, payment of dues or any fee shall not be required to participate in a support group meeting. The Chapter or its support groups may terminate the membership or participation of any person who fails to comply with local membership requirements or who represents a serious threat to the conduct or well-being of the groups and/or its participants. Such actions should be taken only after all other attempts at resolution have failed and according to specified group procedures.
 - Fiscal Responsibility. The Chapter will institute procedures and policies that assure proper fiscal responsibility, including safeguarding and responsible expenditure of funds and regular reporting on the group's finances to the members/participants.
 - Non-Discrimination. The Chapter and its support groups shall not discriminate against any individual or group based on age, gender, gender identity or expression, race, creed, nation of origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other characteristic protected by the laws of the United States.
 - Written Policies: The Chapter shall create, follow, and make public the following policies: crisis response, disruptive participants, the removal of facilitators and/or officers, whistleblower, conflict of interest, and retention of records.
- c) Maintain regular contact with its support groups.
- d) Maintain incorporated status as a nonprofit organization and/or show proof that it is an internal unit of another incorporated nonprofit organization or government body. Chapters must maintain a

board of directors with, at minimum, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, with meetings occurring at least twice annually or the number required in the Chapter's state. The chapter will take minutes and follow Robert's Rules of Order. Chapters must have organizational bylaws consistent with DBSA's bylaws as well as federal and state statutes. The bylaws must identify term limits and elections for the Board of Directors.

- e) Read all mailed and electronic communications from DBSA and broadly disseminate all materials received for distribution from DBSA to Chapter and support group participants.
- f) Maintain regular contact with DBSA's national office by providing all requested information in a timely manner, including complete and current contact information and all records required to maintain incorporation and tax-exempt status.
- g) Act in accordance with DBSA's Core Beliefs.
- h) Refrain from undertaking any activity which may detract from or damage the goodwill or reputation of DBSA.
- i) Work cooperatively with fellow DBSA chapters and support one another whenever possible.
- j) Follow/adhere to the DBSA logo graphic standards put forth by DBSA and available at: www.DBSAAlliance.org/GraphicStandards (you must be logged in to the Chapter Management section to view this page) or by request. Approved chapter logos should be posted on any print or electronic chapter materials including newsletters, stationery, websites, flyers, etc.
- k) Provide information about the chapter's affiliation with DBSA and the mission of DBSA at support group and/or educational meetings in the community.
- l) Conduct an annual self-evaluation, including participant feedback, in partnership with DBSA.

3.2 Fiscal Year. If the Chapter participates in the Group Exemption maintained for DBSA chapters, the Chapter agrees to adopt a January 1 – December 31 fiscal year.

3.3 Compliance With Laws. The Chapter warrants that it agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, and other requirements that may affect its performance of this Agreement. The Chapter warrants that it will make all required filings, such as annual corporate filings, as may affect its corporate or tax status.

4. Use of DBSA Trademark, Copyrighted Materials, and Member Information

4.1 Limited License. Except as specified in Section 1.1, the Chapter shall not use, or permit to be used by any person, the logos, trademarks, service marks, trade names, or copyrighted materials of DBSA without DBSA's prior written consent and in accordance with DBSA's Graphic Standards Manual. The Chapter shall not resell any copies of DBSA's educational materials or publications, or reprint/republish any portion of the same without DBSA's prior written consent. With respect to any permitted use of DBSA's logo, mark, name, or copyrighted materials, the Chapter shall ensure that the applicable copyright or trademark notice is made, pursuant to requirements of U.S. law, the laws of applicable states, and any other guidelines that DBSA shall prescribe. In any event, upon expiration or termination of this Agreement, the Chapter will immediately end all use of DBSA's proprietary property, such as logos, marks, names, or copyrights. The Chapter's obligations to protect DBSA's property under this Section 4.1 shall survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement.

4.2 Participant Lists. If the Chapter maintains a membership or mailing list, it agrees not to rent, sell, or disclose any of this information, other than in the form of a printed membership directory for internal use, to

any party other than DBSA without the prior written permission of all chapter participants. The Chapter will share its participant roster with DBSA upon request.

5. Separate Entities

DBSA and the Chapter expressly acknowledge and agree that they are, and shall remain, separate entities and that no partnership or agency is created by virtue of this Agreement. As such, neither party is authorized to incur any liability, obligation, or expense on behalf of the other. The Chapter is not liable or responsible for the debts and obligations of DBSA and DBSA is not liable for the debts or obligations of the Chapter.

6. Termination of Affiliation

Either party may terminate the affiliation granted to the Chapter, with all of its attendant rights and obligations, (a) for any reason upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other party, and (b) upon ten (10) days' notice to the other party in the event of the other party's material breach of this Agreement. Upon delivery of notice of termination, for any reason and by either party, the Chapter agrees to promptly deliver to DBSA any existing current roster of all members/participants of the Chapter, including all contact information, to enable DBSA to communicate with such members/participants. Upon termination for any reason and by either party, the Chapter agrees to turn over to DBSA all cash assets, with assignment of ownership rights to DBSA or to another qualified nonprofit organization with a like mission. If assets are turned over to DBSA, DBSA may, at its sole discretion, use the funds to promote DBSA benefits and mission in the Chapter's territory or establish an alternate chapter to accommodate members of the Chapter. From and after the date of termination, the Chapter will cease to identify itself as a chapter or Chapter of DBSA.

7. Warranty; Limitation of Liability

7.1 Warranty. DBSA makes no representation or warranty, express or implied (including implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose), concerning any educational materials, educational programs, publications, or any other article or service provided hereunder. All guarantees, warranties, conditions, and representations, either express or implied, whether arising under any statute, law, commercial usage, or otherwise, are hereby excluded.

7.2 Limitation of Liability. The Chapter acknowledges and agrees that DBSA will not be responsible for any damages that the Chapter may incur from any cause, whether liability is asserted in contract or tort (including negligence). In no event shall DBSA be liable to any person for loss of profits, loss of use, loss of production, loss of goodwill, or incidental, indirect, consequential, or special damages of any kind.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 Entire Agreement. This Agreement (together with any exhibits hereto) constitutes the entire Agreement between DBSA and the Chapter with respect to the Chapter's affiliation. This Agreement may be amended only by a writing executed by both parties.

8.2 Controlling Law. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois.

8.3 Waiver. Any waiver by either party to this Agreement of any provision shall not be construed as a waiver of any other provision of this Agreement, nor shall such waiver be construed as a waiver of such provision with respect to any other event or circumstance, whether past, present, or future.

8.4 Severability. If any provision of this Agreement is determined to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, the remaining provisions shall be enforceable to the maximum extent possible.

8.5 Successors and Assigns. This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of the parties and their successors and assigns. The Chapter may not sublicense or assign any of its rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of DBSA.

8.6 Notices. Any notice contemplated by, or made pursuant to, this Agreement shall be in writing and made by courier, facsimile, or mail (postage prepaid) addressed or directed to DBSA Chapter Relations at 55 E. Jackson Boulevard, Suite 490, Chicago, Illinois 60604, or to the Chapter at its designated mailing address. Either party may change the address for notice by ten (10) days advance written notice to the other party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representatives, effective as of the date signed by DBSA.

Your chapter's name: DBSA _____

City _____, State _____

Signature of authorized officer _____

Print Name _____ Title _____

Date _____, _____

To be filled out by the national office of DBSA:

_____ Date _____, _____

Allen Doederlein, President

**Retain a copy and return a signed copy to: DBSA, Chapter Relations
55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490 • Chicago, IL 60604**



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance

New Chapter Profile

Chapter Name: DBSA

Chapter Leadership (for DBSA staff use only)

Please include the name and contact information for at least 3 members of your leadership team. Please use an additional sheet of paper for additional contacts. The first name listed should be the primary chapter contact.

Leader Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Board Position: _____

Yes, I'd like to join the State and Chapter Leaders Facebook Group

Leader Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Board Position: _____

Yes, I'd like to join the State and Chapter Leaders Facebook Group

Leader Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Board Position: _____

Yes, I'd like to join the State and Chapter Leaders Facebook Group

Chapter Mailing Address (for internal use only)

Recipient Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Physical Address: (for packages if different from above)

Recipient Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Support Group Information (for internal use only)

Number of Support Groups: _____ Date Support Group(s) began Meeting: _____

Frequency of Meetings: ___ Monthly ___ Twice Monthly ___ Weekly ___ Other: _____

Specific Populations Served (check all that apply)

Persons with Mood Disorders ___ Family/Friends ___ Teens/Adolescents
___ Other: _____

Services provided by the Chapter (check all that apply)

Support Group(s) Educational Program(s) ___ Lending Library
___ Educational Materials ___ Newsletter ___ Community Outreach/Advocacy
___ Information on Area Services

Policies and Materials Created (all are required)

Please note: bylaws must be submitted at the time of application. Additional policies should be completed within six months of affiliation and kept readily available for board use or participant perusal.

___ Financial ___ Crises ___ Disruptive Participants ___ Leadership Removal
___ Whistleblower ___ Conflict of Interest ___ Retention of Records
 Bylaws have been created and adopted by the Board of Directors (**A copy is attached**)
___ Welcome Packet and Basic Talking points that align with those provided by DBSA

Professional Advisor (for internal use only)

Advisor Name (including credentials): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Affiliations: _____

Our professional Advisor will conduct the following activities (check all that apply):

___ Consults with group leadership ___ Promotes group ___ Refers patients to the group
___ Speaks at educational meetings ___ Writes newsletter articles

Please note: Professional Advisors are recommended, but not required. DBSA staff mails directly to the professional advisor at least once per year.

Support Group #1 Listing (all information will be available to the public)

Support Group City: _____ Support Group Zip Code: _____
Contact One Name: _____
Contact One Phone: _____ Contact One Email: _____
Contact Two Name: _____
Contact Two Phone: _____ Contact Two Email: _____
Chapter Website: _____

Support Group #2 Listing (all information will be available to the public)

Support Group City: _____ Support Group Zip Code: _____
Contact One Name: _____
Contact One Phone: _____ Contact One Email: _____
Contact Two Name: _____
Contact Two Phone: _____ Contact Two Email: _____
Chapter Website: _____

Support Group #3 Listing (all information will be available to the public)

Support Group City: _____ Support Group Zip Code: _____
Contact One Name: _____
Contact One Phone: _____ Contact One Email: _____
Contact Two Name: _____
Contact Two Phone: _____ Contact Two Email: _____
Chapter Website: _____

Tear out and return to DBSA:

**DBSA, Chapter Relations
55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490 • Chicago, IL 60604**

Chapter Requirements Checklist

Please use this checklist to ensure that you meet all the Chapter Requirements. Please check each item as completed and return the document with your affiliation packet.

Required in order to affiliate:

- Understand and follow DBSA's Core Beliefs
- Have at least one, peer-led support group
- Follow DBSA's prescribed preamble and format for the support group
- Elect a Board of Directors with, at minimum, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer
- Have operational bylaws that include instructions for term limits and elections of the Board of Directors
- Create and maintain a chapter telephone number and mailing address. A chapter email address is recommended.
- Completed Affiliation Packet (turned in to DBSA)
 - DBSA Chapter Affiliation Agreement
 - New Chapter Profile
 - Copy of your bylaws
 - Affiliation Payment
 - Proof of Incorporation or Incorporation paperwork to file through DBSA
 - Chapter Requirements Checklist
 - Optional: Tax Exempt Status paperwork: SS4 and Consent Form

Required to maintain affiliation:

- Complete Chapter Orientation within one month of affiliation
- Ensure that all Facilitators review the Facilitator Training materials provided on Chapter Management
- Plan and present one educational session per year (DBSA offers several pre-packaged presentations that you may use.)
- Create Welcome Packet and talking points that align with those provided by DBSA
- Use standard DBSA Branding
- With your Board of Directors, have the following policies established and available for public (participant) review within 6 months of affiliation:
 - Financial
 - Crises
 - Disruptive Participants
 - Removal of Facilitators or Officers

- Whistleblower
- Conflict of Interest
- Retention of Records
- Regularly read and respond to communications from the national office of DBSA
- Share a participant roster with DBSA (as appropriate)
- Conduct an self- annual evaluation, including participant feedback, in partnership with DBSA
- Meet with your board at least twice a year or as often as required by your state, following Robert’s Rules of Order, and maintaining minutes from each meeting
- Complete re-affiliation paperwork, with re-affiliation fee, each year. Ensure that your incorporation is updated as required by the law in your state of incorporation (for chapters incorporated through DBSA, the annual incorporation report is included with your re-affiliation paperwork).
- Maintain a chapter phone number, responding to inquiries within 48 hours
- Maintain regular contact with support groups.
- Update DBSA, in writing, of any leadership changes.
- Follow all items as written in the Affiliation Agreement
- Comply with all laws

If your chapter accepts donations:

- Maintain federal tax-exempt status
- Maintain a procedure for acknowledging donations made to the chapter
- Ensure that the Chapter’s financial policy include the process for accepting, acknowledging, and tracking donations

Tear out and return to DBSA:

DBSA, Chapter Relations

55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490 • Chicago, IL 60604

DBSA Chapter Start-Up Toolkit

On the following pages you will find several tools to assist with starting up your community's DBSA chapter. These tools should give you the basic information you need, but remember that after you affiliate officially, DBSA provides even more information via the guides and tools available on our Chapter Management Website and other publications, mailings and resources.

- ★ **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.

- ★ **DBSA's Philosophy**

- ★ **Naming Your Community's Chapter Worksheet:** Use this worksheet to figure out the best official name for your chapter (all names are subject to approval by DBSA staff).

- ★ **First support group meeting tools**

- ★ **Professional Advisor tools:** This two-part tool will help you find a professional advisor and includes a copy of the DBSA professional advisor guidelines.

- ★ **Meeting site tools:** 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 they understand what your chapter is about.


- ★ **Tips for publicizing a new support group:** This list will help you think of ways to get the word out about your new support group.

- ★ **Sample promotional flyer**

- ★ **Guidelines for DBSA chapters' support groups:** You can copy, cut, and share these guidelines with all of your participants.

- ★ **Facilitation basics:** This section provides a sample agenda, tips, and suggestions to help you prepare for your first group meeting.

- ★ **Additional resources available once the chapter is affiliated**

DBSA Chapter Functions	DBSA Chapter Fundamentals	DBSA Chapter Outcomes
<p>DBSA Chapters exist to <i>improve the lives of people living with mood disorders</i> on a local level. These chapters engage in four major functions to achieve this mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support The chapter offers consistent, comfortable, welcoming peer-led support services to their community that help people successfully manage their disease. ○ Education The chapter provides scientifically sound, wellness-based educational programs and resources to community participants, and does not promote a specific medication, business, treatment or provider. ○ Community Outreach The chapters receive and actively reach out to community members in need of chapter services. The chapter publicizes relevant community and chapter opportunities, and maintains communication lines for interested parties. ○ Advocacy The chapter actively advocates for personal self-care and works with local advocacy agencies, as available, to help improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. 	<p>Through the four chapter functions, the exemplification of our chapter principles, and the dedication to our mission, policies and guidelines, DBSA chapters work toward the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help people live successfully with their condition. ○ Provide emotional support and the wisdom of experience to peers, 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. 	
		
<p>DBSA Chapter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 people living with a mood disorder or their friends/family. ○ 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 safety is of concern. ○ 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. 	<p>Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance</p>	<p>DBSA Support Group Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 We 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, <i>We do not INSTRUCT or ADVISE.</i> 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.

A Common Foundation

Just as what and how we say things is important to how our constituents and the public sees DBSA and our chapters, our collective beliefs form the foundation for unified, consistent messages about the treatment of mood disorders and the people who live with them.

DBSA believes:

1. People living with depression and bipolar disorder can and do lead productive and thriving lives.
2. Depression and bipolar disorder can be life threatening conditions, but are also highly treatable.
3. All individuals living with or affected by mood disorders who are seeking wellness are welcome in the DBSA community.
4. Individuals at all points on their wellness journey should be provided with support.
5. Each person's path to, and definition of, wellness is uniquely their own.
6. Wellness encompasses an individual's whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community.
7. Peer support can be an immensely powerful tool in helping a person achieve and maintain wellness.
8. Supporters are integral to an individual's wellness and often benefit from accessing support for themselves.
9. There are four basic components to treatment: personal wellness strategies, peer support, medication, and talk therapy. A person has the right to choose to use one, any combination, or all of these components to achieve wellness.
10. There is no one-size fits all treatment plan. DBSA does not recommend or endorse any one particular treatment, but instead offers information and options to support personal decision-making.
11. All individuals have the right to direct their own treatment.
12. Clinicians, researchers, and peers should target complete wellness, not merely improvement, as the end goal of the clinical treatment of mood disorders.
13. Clinicians should work in collaboration with individuals and provide options when developing their treatment plan.
14. All people should have access to quality mental health care.
15. Having the peer perspective at the center of conversations about mental health results in better outcomes.
16. The lived experience should inform everything DBSA does.

Naming Your Community's 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 the general public and easily understandable by newcomers and guests. Support groups may have different names than the chapter, but there must be consistency between both the chapter and the support group so that they will be easily identifiable by participants and the 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 Blackhawk-Grundy serves Blackhawk and Grundy counties in Iowa.
- ★ DBSA Delaware Valley serves the Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania region.
- ★ DBSA Colorado Springs serves primarily Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- ★ DBSA Southeast Louisiana Parents serves parents in southeast Louisiana.
- ★ DBSA NW Ohio Dual Diagnosis serves people who are dually diagnosed with a mood disorder and substance use disorder in northwestern Ohio.
- ★ DBSA Jacksonville Young Adults serves young adults between the ages of 18-24 in Jacksonville, Florida.
- ★ DBSA Saginaw Christian Center (faith-based) serves Saginaw, MI and is a faith-based group.
- ★ DBSA GLBT Chicago serves the GLBT community in Chicago, Illinois.

Chapter Name Formula

Your location: _____ (city, county, *not state*) OR

Areas we serve: _____ (region(s), district, and locale) **PLUS**

Specific population we serve: _____ (families, teens, GLBT, etc.) **EQUALS**

DBSA _____

(all names subject to approval by DBSA Staff)

Getting ready

- Announce your meeting to the public via press releases, flyers, personal invitations, letters, and other announcements.
- Consider visiting another nearby DBSA chapter's support group to get a feel for how DBSA meetings run. To locate a DBSA group in your area, visit the DBSA support group finder at www.DBSAAlliance.org/findsupport. In some cases, the nearest group may be 50 or 100 miles away.
- Determine who will facilitate the first meeting.
- Look over the basics of facilitating a DBSA support group on pages 47-52 of this guide.
- 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.nimh.nih.gov).
- Consider whether you will be able to offer water, tea, coffee, or other light refreshments. They can be a welcoming touch and give people something to do when they come in.

First Support Group Meeting Checklist

- Announce your meeting to the public via press releases, flyers, personal invitations, letters, and other announcements
- Determine who will facilitate the first meeting
- Look over the basics of facilitating a support group on pages 47-52
- Arrange to have pamphlets and other educational materials available (affiliated chapters receive up to 600 free brochures per year)
- Prepare an optional 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 needed)
- Photocopy and/or post the DBSA support group guidelines
- Prepare signs and make sure the receptionist or security guard at the entrance to your meeting place knows about your group's meeting and location
- Set up the room with comfortable chairs in a circle
- Prepare a literature table for informational materials
- Take a deep breath and give yourself a pat on the back for all your hard work

Everyone is here! Now what do I do?

While each DBSA chapter will develop its own personality, all DBSA groups are required to follow the same basic format. The sample meeting agenda shown here incorporates the elements prescribed by DBSA and is intended to guide you. Using this format will simplify your preparation and will ensure consistency between groups.

Meeting Agenda (detailed information will be provided upon affiliation)

- Gathering time
- Welcome
- Review what will happen at the meeting
- Review DBSA support group guidelines and preamble
- Check-in with attendees
- Discussion
- Close the meeting

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 perhaps ask these people 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) and nearby medical or other professional schools.
- Provide them with a copy of the DBSA Professional Advisor Guidelines below and use this as the basis for your discussions. DBSA also provides a brochure for Professional Advisors upon Chapter affiliation.

Professional Advisor Guidelines

A DBSA chapter professional advisor is a certified or licensed health care professional who provides resources, education, and the professional perspective 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 and how self-help groups differ from therapy groups.
- Advisors do just what their name implies – advise – 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 for the chapter

Qualifications

A DBSA chapter professional advisor should be:

- a licensed health care professional who provides mental health services
- supportive of the concepts of self-help and wellness
- 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 encouraged to identify any professional advisors working with the chapter 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.

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 religious leader 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, such as 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 local library, community center, restaurant meeting room, 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. If required, fill out an application for a 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 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 if it does not. 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 the support group is peer-led. As a support group, it is important to develop a crisis plan and be prepared. If you have done this, share that your support group has a crisis plan in the event someone requires professional attention. If the group does not yet have a crisis plan, DBSA offers a guide to help you create one.

Please Note:

If you have not yet completed your affiliation with DBSA, you may not refer to the support group as a DBSA support group. You may indicate that you will be applying for affiliation with DBSA.

Support Groups: Information for Meeting Sites

Thank you for your interest in providing meeting space for a local support group for those living with depression and bipolar disorder. After proper diagnosis and treatment, the support of others is vital to a lifetime of wellness. Support groups provide the kind of caring and sharing that is crucial for sustained recovery.

Who is the support group affiliated with? (Include only if the chapter is affiliated with DBSA.)

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, depression and bipolar disorder, which affect more than 21 million Americans, account for 90% of the nation's suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses. DBSA's peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources are available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America.

Through more than 700 support groups and nearly 300 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

What kind of support group will this be?

The primary purpose of our support group meetings is to share information and mutual support related to participants' experiences with mood disorders (depression or bipolar disorder).

If the chapter is already affiliated, you may add: 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 these 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 this support group are:

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 his or her own needs. Some people 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)

Peer-led

Discussion at support group meetings is facilitated by a group participant, 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.

Safe and 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. Participants use information they've gained from others at the meeting to make their own judgments about correct strategies for themselves.

Confidential

Our 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 safety is of concern.

Free of charge

Our 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.

Who can participate in the support group?

The primary participants in 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.

Rental fees

Most 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 waiving rental fees and

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!

Tips for Publicizing a New Support Group

Please note that you may not use the DBSA name or logo until the chapter is fully affiliated with DBSA.

- Distribute and post flyers and brochures at public places such as libraries, grocery stores, hospitals, doctors' offices, and colleges (see the next page for a sample flyer you can use).
- Place announcements in newsletters and bulletins. Many places of worship, schools, and neighborhoods have their own newsletters and would be happy to include a note about a new support group.
- Send letters introducing the group to health care providers, drop-in centers, and social service agencies.
- Tell other support groups in your community that you are starting a group specifically for depression and bipolar disorder. These groups may include AA, NA, Survivors of Suicide, Schizophrenia Anonymous, NAMI, etc.
- List your support group meeting time and place with community calendars in newspapers, radio and cable stations, etc.
- Send press releases to local newspapers and radio stations. (Samples of press releases are available for affiliated chapters)
- Hold educational sessions and social events prior to your first meeting to drum up interest in your community. (Be sure attendees know that your ultimate goal is to start a support group, though!).
- Never underestimate the power of word-of-mouth. Tell five people you know, and ask supportive family and friends to tell five people too, if they feel comfortable doing so.
- Get the word out over the internet. You may also consider publishing your own website or asking to list your group's time and place on community websites or bulletin boards. Craigslist (www.craigslist.org) and Meet-Up (www.meetup.com) are two possible places to post notices about your meetings.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Over 24 million people live with depression and bipolar disorder in the U.S.

Support Group for Depression and Bipolar Disorder forming now!

Why attend this support group?

- We're a caring, supportive group of peers.
- It's an open, free, voluntary meeting.
- We believe support groups are an important step on the road to wellness.

Who should attend this support group?

- People diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder
 - People who think they may have a mood disorder
 - Supporters of a person with a mood disorder
-

You're Invited

to a local support group:

Day: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

What is the goal of support groups?

The main goal of DBSA Chapters' support groups is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. We come together in support groups to share our experiences, learn from one another, and gain strength and hope, all with the goal of improving our lives.

The facilitator's personal commitment

It can be helpful to review the following commitment prior to support group meetings to remind yourself of your role and your desires for the group. Take some time to think about what else you would like to include in your personal commitment.

As the facilitator for this support group, I commit to:

- Listen more than I talk (except when it is my turn to share.)
- Empower participants to respect and support each other.
- Give and receive support personally.
- Use the DBSA guidelines.
- Be compassionate and understanding.
- Work towards a hopeful environment.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Leave medical talk to medical professionals.
- Empower the group to focus on wellness-oriented discussions.

Support Group Meeting Outline

The meeting format shown here incorporates the elements used by many of our groups and is intended to guide you.

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

Detailed Support Group Meeting Agenda

Gathering or social time (welcome people and break the ice)

Have a volunteer greet people as they arrive and thank them for coming. Encourage newcomers to sign in on the list provided, including telephone and e-mail address, if available.

Keep in mind, though, that no one should be required to leave contact information if he or she doesn't feel comfortable doing so. Volunteers can invite guests to have refreshments if these are available and help introduce newcomers to others in the room.

Special note: Keep track of how many people have arrived so that you can quickly and easily decide how many groups you will need to split into in the future. DBSA recommends that you have no more than 8-12 participants in each support group.

Welcome

Bring people together, get their attention, and provide a focus point.

What you might say:

"Hello, everyone! 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."

If you are not yet affiliated, you can say, "This is a support group that is in the process of affiliating with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance."

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. Even if the same people attend the support group regularly, it is important to offer a formal welcome to everyone.

Review what will happen at the meeting

Move the group to the "business" part of the meeting, give everyone the same information and expectations

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 why you have come to this meeting.

"After the Check-in, we will have an open discussion 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 guidelines for our discussion."

State the DBSA support group guidelines. **Stating guidelines at each meeting is valuable for many reasons. It insures everyone is responsible for following the same guidelines and helps people learn and commit to the group standards.**

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

DBSA’s prescribed preamble, found in the Chapter Basics Guide should be shared at this point. All chapters, once affiliated, are provided with a Chapter Basics Guide.

Check-in

A chance for each person to find out whom else is at the meeting, share what issues they’d like to discuss, and 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 ...

- 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]
- [Silent]

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 support group exists

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 family, the facilitator might say, “It sounds as if a number of us are having challenges in working with our families. As we go around the circle tonight, you are all welcome to address the challenges or successes you have had in communicating with your family along with anything else you’d like to discuss. Perhaps we can determine a number of possible approaches for ourselves in dealing with this concern.”

The facilitator can also begin discussion by asking if anyone would like to be the first to share or just ask the person to their left or right to begin.

Close the meeting

Bring 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.
- Ask the group how they feel the meeting helped them and how they plan to move forward toward wellness before the next meeting. Sample questions include:
 - What will we take away from the meeting that will help us?
 - What will we commit to doing as we move forward into the week?
 - What new strengths will we explore?
 - What part of our wellness plan will we work on this week?
- 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 new attendees to attend 3 or 4 times before deciding whether a support group is right for them or not.
- Encourage attendees to tell others about the group, including their doctor/other mental health professional.

- Ask for volunteers to help with the next meeting.
- Refer to fact sheets or other information/materials that are provided to participants.
- Thank everyone for coming.

Discussion Starters

If you're having a hard time getting conversation going during the open group discussion, consider asking participants to share their thoughts on a particular topic when it is their turn. Again, no one dictates discussion, but introducing possible topics at the beginning of the meeting is a great facilitator tactic. 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
- Non-medication techniques
- Adhering to your treatment plan
- Relationships

Tips for Facilitators

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 and to receive support from the group as well. To do this:

- Restate – People 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 individuals 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 group 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 it is their turn.

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 hostile, antagonistic, discouraged, depressed, or experiencing hypomania. 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 participant of the group. In this situation you may want to try some of the following statements:

- "It sounds like there's a lot going on in your life right now. Let's hear from a few other people and then if we have time at the end of the discussion we'll come back to you."
- "I think we're clear now about your ideas, John. Who else would like to respond?"
- "It seems we've moved from the original topic. Is that what we want to do?"
- "Do you have an opinion about that, Jane?"
- "Let's share the air to make sure everyone's getting a chance to participate."

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.

Empowering Others through Good Facilitation

Many of us who get involved in leadership roles have a tendency to be problem-solvers and like to offer advice in order to help people. As a facilitator though, our role is actually to help get out what others need to get out, not to solve their problems or even offer advice. This can be very difficult for many of us, especially if people seem to be asking for our advice. Here are some statements you may want to try using to make sure you're facilitating conversation rather than giving advice.

- "What experiences have other people here had that Sean might find helpful as he deals with this?"
- "Out of all the problems you've talked about tonight, which one is most important?"
- "What are some things you think would help? Does anyone else have additional ideas?"

As you continue to put questions back to the group and the individual you will likely be surprised at how many possible solutions they can come up with. And, added bonus, everyone leaves feeling like they hold the power to change their lives in their own hands!

Sample List: Free Resources Available to Affiliated Chapters

Chapter Management and Growth Tools

- ★ Chapter Business Cards Sample
- ★ Conflict Management Tool
- ★ Fundraising Letter Tool
- ★ Chapter Incorporation and Tax Exemption
- ★ Finding and Cultivating Volunteers
- ★ Sample Letterhead
- ★ Sample Certificate of Appreciation
- ★ Basic Self-help Principles
- ★ Chapter Team Etiquette
- ★ Educational Program Topics
- ★ Helpful Hints for Answering Calls and Emails
- ★ How to Publicize Support Group Meetings
- ★ Information for New Participants About Your Group
- ★ Low or No Cost Ways to Advertise
- ★ Sample Attendance Sheet
- ★ Sample E-mail Auto-reply
- ★ Teen Depression Initiative
- ★ 10 Days and 10 Ways to Raise \$100
- ★ Volunteers - A Dozen Things They Can Do
- ★ DBSA Inclusiveness Guide
- ★ Starting a Family and Friends Support Group
- ★ Understanding DBSA Chapter Quality
- ★ DBSA Chapter Advocacy Guide
- ★ DBSA Advocacy and Public Policy Information
- ★ Board and volunteer development

DBSA Support Group Facilitation

- ★ DBSA Support Group Facilitation Guide
- ★ Facilitator Orientation Tools
- ★ Video library of Frequently Asked Questions
- ★ Approaches to Respond to Crisis
- ★ Building On Your Current Facilitator Skills
- ★ Facilitator Challenges (Role Playing)
- ★ Peer-Based, Self-Help Article
- ★ Support Group Guidelines

- ★ Discussion Group Guidelines Article
- ★ Facilitator Report - provided by DBSA Ohio
- ★ Facilitating For Success (Tips)
- ★ Sample Support Group Survey Form

Free DBSA Brochures/Publications for Your Chapter

News Releases & Samples

- ★ News Releases for Your Chapter
- ★ Press Releases Guidelines and Samples
- ★ Holiday News Release
- ★ Mental Health Awareness Month Release

DBSA Logos and standards of use

DBSA Chapter Networking

Past Chapter Leadership Forum (CLF) Materials

Education Materials and Sessions

- ★ Effective Communication=Less Conflict
- ★ Chapter Dreams
- ★ Living Successfully with a Mood Disorder course guide
- ★ Pathways to Recovery group guide
- ★ Planning and Event from Idea to Evaluation
- ★ Getting and Keeping New Chapter Participants
- ★ Strategic Planning
- ★ Framework for a Nonprofit Strategic Plan
- ★ Volunteer Empowerment Checklist
- ★ Action Sheet

DBSA Chapter Related Publications

Recent DBSA Chapter Mailings / e-Updates

Don't forget: Our Chapter Relations team is here to help. Please contact us with any questions: (800) 826-3632 or startup@DBSAlliance.org.