Managing your *Demystifying Bipolar Disorder* program

Demystifying Bipolar Disorder is a program created by DBSA to help educate individuals about bipolar disorder, separate the myths from the facts, and learn about helpful tools in managing bipolar disorder.

The presentation may be done in one two-hour session (we would recommend taking a break halfway through), or can be broken down into two or more sessions.

The following information is provided to help you, as the trainer, manage an effective Demystifying Bipolar Disorder program.

Course materials and audio-visual needs

PowerPoint Presentation
The Demystifying Bipolar Disorder presentation is available on the included DVD. Due to the videos embedded in the PowerPoint presentation, we recommend utilizing an LCD projector with speakers during the presentation. In order for the embedded videos to work, you should play the presentation directly from the DVD or copy both the PowerPoint presentation and videos on to your hard drive.

You may also choose to copy the PowerPoint slides onto overhead projector sheets and forgo the use of the videos in the presentation. Your local Kinkos/Office Depot, etc. should be able to assist you with this. If you are unable to project the slides in either of these ways, you may choose to print copies of the slides and distribute them to each of the participants so that they may follow along as you walk through the presentation.

Videos
In addition to several videos being embedded in the PowerPoint slides, all videos are also included on the enclosed DVD. If you are using an LCD projector, you should be able to project these videos onto the screen through your computer. If you are not using this technology a DVD player and TV will work just fine.

Finding a location for your presentation

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

- ***Likely sites***

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

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

  Find out the name of the person or department that coordinates meeting space and contact the designated person by telephone or in person. Explain the purpose of the group and what will happen at the program. A sample letter is attached. If required, fill out an application for meeting space and provide references.

  Some organizations may be unfamiliar with self-help groups or reluctant to offer long-term meeting space. If this is the case, ask if the organization would be willing to host one presentation and then re-evaluate if they will allow you to continue holding educational sessions there.

  After finalizing any necessary paperwork, thank them for their consideration and outline next steps. If approval is required from others, find out when you should re-contact them for their decision. Exchange contact information so that you can reach one another. When you get home, write a brief letter thanking them for their time and reiterating why you feel their site would be a good one. Check back with them as agreed.

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

  Work to secure free meeting space when at all possible. When talking with those in charge of a potential site, make sure the person knows your group is run by volunteers and has no funding,

if this is the case. 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 day your presentation will take place, how long it will last, and who will be responsible for opening and closing the room. Make sure you know how to contact that person during the meeting time, and that they know how to contact you before, during, and after the meeting.

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

- ***Other useful information***

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

Sample letter requesting a meeting site

July 20, 2013

Mr. Network Person
12345 Community Way
City, ST 98765

Dear Mr. Person,

Thank you for your interest in providing meeting space for an educational presentation being offered by your local chapter of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA). After proper diagnosis and treatment, the support of others is vital to a lifetime of wellness. DBSA educational presentations provide the kind of information and caring that is crucial for sustained recovery.

What is DBSA?

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

Assisted by a Scientific Advisory Board comprised of leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA has a grassroots network of approximately 700 peer-run support groups across the U.S. and Canada. Millions of people request and receive information and assistance from DBSA each year.

What is the Demystifying Bipolar Disorder presentation?

Demystifying Bipolar Disorder is a two hour session developed by the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance to be delivered in local communities by DBSA's grassroots chapters. This session will cover a basic exploration of bipolar disorder, a discussion on the myths and facts and an introduction to helpful tools in managing bipolar disorder.

Who can participate in the Demystifying Bipolar Disorder presentation?

This session is open to people diagnosed with a mood disorder as well as family and friends and the general public.

DBSA chapters are expected to provide services equally to all persons in need, and should not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age,

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sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other irrelevant criteria.

Other useful information

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

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

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, Chapter President

Promoting the *Demystifying Bipolar Disorder* Presentation

Even the very best session cannot succeed if the public doesn't know it exists. If you want people to attend, they must know about your presentation, its purpose, when and where it is taking place. You can publicize the presentation by seeking a listing in meetings sections of community papers and local radio/television community announcements. Contact the newspaper/radio or television station to determine what information they need, how they want to receive it, and the deadlines to receive this information for publication.

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

Other ways to announce your meetings and chapter events:

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

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

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

Sample letter to professionals

July 20, 2013

Mr. Network Person
12345 Community Way
City, ST 98765

Dear Mr. Person,

Kindness is probably the most important thing that our Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance chapter participants are looking for when they come seeking our services. And it is kindness that guarantees our services remain available to this community.

"If it was not for the support that I received … I probably would not be here today." Words like these may remind you of how someone you care about was helped by a support system — or maybe how a close circle of supporters helped pull you through a difficult time in your life.

At DBSA Anytown, we know the services we provide do more than provide comfort and guidance. *They save lives*.

As we have been providing kindness and support services to people affected by mood disorders in the Anytown community for 6 years, we are now asking for your support and kindness.

Often when you are asked for support, the requestor is looking for money. However, today we are hoping we can count on you to refer members of the community to our chapter.

We are hosting a new educational session in our community called "Demystifying Bipolar Disorder." This session will bring together people living with depression and bipolar disorder, their friends and family and the general public to learn more about bipolar disorder. The presentation will focus on:

- What bipolar disorder is
- Its causes, risk factors, and triggers
- Treatment options
- Ways to support someone living with bipolar disorder
- Some of the many tools offered by DBSA and our chapter that can help you or your loved one

People you know can contact us through the information listed on this letterhead to learn more about this course or other services our chapter offers. Please share our information with them, and if possible, we would greatly appreciate it if you could share any referrals with us – so that we can reach out to them ourselves.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, Chapter President

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