



Depression and Bipolar  
Support Alliance

# A Guide to Partnering with DBSA

Discover the ways a partnership with DBSA can help to achieve your organization's goals while expanding outreach and support to people with mood disorders.





**Michael Pollock**  
DBSA Chief Executive Officer

As I write this, I am reminded of the powerful stories we hear every day about how DBSA's programs have provided hope and a sense of community. For me, this is not just a job. Leading this amazing organization is my passion.

Words cannot fully convey the impact of DBSA, but I hope you will begin to understand the important work being done here when you read through this Partnership Guide.

We are reaching out because we believe a partnership with DBSA is a win-win for both our organization and yours. We hope you will take a moment to consider how the opportunities described in the following pages would add value to your charitable giving efforts at a time when more than 21 million individuals in the U.S. are living with mood disorders. And, given that reality, there's a good chance a number of your employees, customers, and constituents are among them. By sponsoring one or more of our programs, you are demonstrating that you recognize the transformative effect of peer support while also helping us expand our reach. Through our national online support groups, our local chapter network, or other digital platforms, DBSA creates a safe space to offer hope and wellness to a broad and diverse community.

Please take a moment to see if there's a program that best fits your organization. My door is open, and I look forward to discussing these vital programs with you at your convenience. Thank you!



**Roger McIntyre, MD, FRCPC**  
**DBSA Board Chair**  
Head of Mood Disorders  
Psychopharmacology Unit,  
University Health Network  
and Professor of Psychiatry  
and Pharmacology,  
University of Toronto

I am honored to assume the role of DBSA Chairman of the Board. I've had the privilege of serving as a member of the DBSA Board of Directors since 2015, and as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for two years. I come from academia and scientific research, with a specialty in mood disorders. One thing I've learned over the years is that individuals with depression and bipolar disorder can clearly benefit not only from counseling and certain medications, but also from peer support. The feeling of community is a meaningful part of the therapeutic equation. I am excited to bring the knowledge that I have acquired throughout my career to help DBSA advance its mission. I hope you will find the programs outlined in this guide inspiring and meaningful to those audiences you serve.

I learned that many others have been through the same thing, and I found a network of people who gave me strength when I needed it most. Now, I have the opportunity to help others. —**Tom S., DBSA Support Group Participant**





# Why DBSA?

Selecting philanthropy partners is no easy feat. DBSA understands it's essential for funders to partner with charitable and advocacy organizations whose programs and services matter to and resonate with your internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, it's essential to select partners with proven results.

DBSA meets those criteria. We are the leading national organization focusing on mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder. Our mission is to provide hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people who have mood disorders. These conditions also account for more than 50% of the nation's suicides each year and cost about \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace issues. We are answering the call—whether online, in local support groups, in audio and video broadcasts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters and mental health care facilities across America.

In this Partnership Guide, you will learn about some of DBSA's peer-based, wellness-oriented support and empowering services as well as resources available to help people when they need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them. We believe the DBSA programs and services spotlighted here are particularly well suited for general support at varying levels so that people living with depression and bipolar disorder can continue to flourish.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT DBSA

As part of our mission, DBSA is committed to actions that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to enhance mental wellness for all. DBSA recognizes the unique ways that identity, culture, and access affect people living with mood disorders. We strive to create safe and inclusive spaces for individuals to feel empowered on their own path to wellness. DBSA offers equitable access to peer support services and mental health resources and advocates for all individuals with a lived experience with a mood disorder, regardless of cultural and social identity or systemic barriers.



**Kent Dauten**  
**Immediate Past DBSA**  
**Chairman**

Founder and Chairman,  
Keystone Capital

Joining the Board of Directors of DBSA in 2018 was a natural philanthropic decision for me. I have family members who live with bipolar disorder, and I wanted to make a difference for other families like mine. Working in the corporate sector, I also recognized how mental health is often overlooked in business. In my time with DBSA, I have learned firsthand that people can be profoundly impacted when they realize that they are not alone in their struggles. Finding community, wellness, and hope is not just a catchphrase. Those outcomes are happening every day at DBSA, and countless individuals who participate in peer support groups are better able to thrive at work and at home. I cannot think of a better way for a company to show its commitment to employees and members of the community with mood disorders than by sponsoring the important work of DBSA.

# Numbers tell the story

In 2023



**1.5M+**

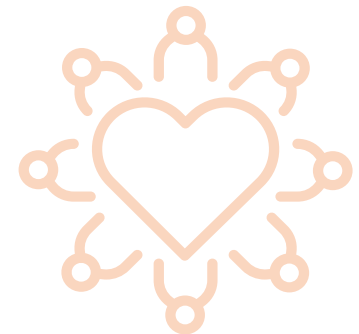
people served

**45,000+**

resources downloaded

**20,000+**

total support group meetings



**250,000+**

approximate number of participants served



**7,000+**

advocates and trained peer support specialists and facilitators





The National Institute of Mental Health estimated that in 2020, **14.8 million** of all US adults had at least one major depressive episode with severe impairment. **5.7 million** had bipolar disorder in the past year and **82.9%** of those had bipolar disorder with serious impairment.





## Programs that make a difference

Browse through our programs to see the many ways we provide a safe space for people with mood disorders to “Find Community. Find Wellness. Find Hope™.” Discover the programs that best align with your philanthropic goals and budget and learn more about each program throughout the Guide.

# Peer Support

## ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

DBSA offers a robust selection of online support groups. Facilitators and members share a specific culture, demographic, or life experience in each group. A survey showed that approximately 83% of participants felt better following a peer support group meeting.

Choose from groups that address the needs of:

- Military Veterans from all branches of the service
- Black community
- Rural community
- DBSA friends, family, and caregivers supporting loved ones with mood disorders
- People with tardive dyskinesia or other movement conditions and a mood disorder

“DBSA is a great, safe place where one can feel welcome and learn valuable listening and speaking skills. Income, race, age, sexual preferences, and other differences don’t count here. All you have to do is show up and be willing to care about other people with similar challenges. —**Rick C.**

## FACILITATOR TRAINING

Support groups hosted by DBSA chapters depend upon individuals to guide their peers through the process of a support group meeting. The support groups are led by peers and family members who are willing to serve as facilitators. DBSA support group facilitators are not licensed or certified by any authority, but they do have a shared purpose: to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. DBSA National provides a free, eight-hour, online course to prepare volunteers to facilitate a DBSA support group meeting. The sessions include lectures, live Q & A, interactive exercises, and solution-oriented processing. They conclude with mock facilitator support group practice sessions. Best of all, the support group facilitator training is taught by volunteers who are also DBSA support group facilitators and can give peers examples from their experience.



“Attending DBSA meetings helped me to release my shame and combat stigma. DBSA has taught me that I am a person first and not my illness. This support provides me with a constant source of hope and inspiration.”

—**Rhonda G., DBSA Support Group Facilitator**



“We are proud to partner with DBSA to help amplify peer voices and improve access to treatment options for those living with mood disorders. As a Corporate Alliance member, we appreciate the opportunity to engage with DBSA, gather insights, and collaborate on peer engagement programs.”

—**Mae Kwong, PharmD, RPh,**  
**Bioxcel Therapeutics**

“I have experienced discrimination, lack of access to care, and stigma, and I am still being targeted. I am passionate about peer support because I didn’t have a smooth experience when navigating the healthcare system. I want to be an ear to listen, a resource for help, a voice for those who cannot speak, and support people like me and my community.”

—**Nicole B., a student in DBSA’s peer support apprentice program, U.S. Army Veteran**

# Education

## WEBINARS

DBSA regularly offers educational webinars on hot topics led by mental health experts for people touched by mood disorders. Our website also provides access to an extensive library of on-demand webinars on a range of topics—from the role of building a robust social support network to understanding bipolar disorder.

## PEER SPECIALIST TRAINING

The DBSA Peer Specialist Course is a four-week learning experience designed to prepare individuals to be trained Peer Specialists. The course includes individual learning, group discussions, presentations, and role playing. After successful completion of the course, candidates are eligible to work as peer specialists for some roles and may use this as part of a state credentialing program, provided their individual states recognize our course.

“It was not until I attended the DBSA Peer Specialist Training I found my true calling and niche. Using my past to help others aided me in not carrying that dark cloud with me. It took away the lack of discussion about my journey, and I have begun to help others with my past.”—**Carrie Player Sexton, Ph.D,**  
**Certified Peer Specialist**

## VETERAN PEER SPECIALIST TRAINING

DBSA Peer Specialist Courses, available on a rolling basis throughout the year, provide valuable training in the skills needed to be a peer specialist and to pursue roles at a range of settings, including working with individuals and groups at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, behavior health centers, inpatient facilities, and community-based health centers. A variety of state credentialing boards accept our courses. Check with your state’s certification board to ensure DBSA’s course will count in your individual state credentialing program.

## DBSA MOOD CREW

For the youngest among us, communicating about feelings is one of the biggest challenges. That’s why it’s vital to help young people understand the importance of expressing their emotions and learning how to manage them. The popular Mood Crew toolkit includes worksheets, stories, and activities based on engaging characters designed to help children understand a range of feelings from anger to fear to sadness.



# Advocacy in Action

Our Advocacy in Action program is a multi-sponsored program which supports national efforts to promote access to quality mental health care, broadening adoption of peer support services and the advancement of the peer specialist profession. This program also encourages the inclusion of lived experience through both regulatory and legislative directives. Key to this is the DBSA advocacy platform that enables virtual mobilization, frequent communication on issues relevant to access to care, and opportunities for peers to raise their voice and be heard. DBSA has over 7,000 grassroots advocates across the U.S. who have signed up to receive advocacy communications from DBSA.

## AMPLIFYING THE PEER VOICE

DBSA is committed to assisting our public and private partners by connecting them with the peer voice in developing internal and external policy decisions.

**PEER COUNCILS** are groups that come together for an interactive facilitated discussion. These sessions allow our partners to hear directly from peers on a variety of topics around living with a mood disorder for the purpose of collecting raw qualitative data.

**ACADEMIC RESEARCH** provides for graduate-level study under the supervision of a post-graduate level advisor through an institute of higher education, with the intent of publishing the results in a thesis, dissertation, or peer-reviewed journal article. DBSA provides listings of opportunities for peers to participate in academic research as well as periodic educational highlights about the importance of such participation.

## TRANSFORMING THE DEFINITION OF WELLNESS

This initiative seeks to improve health outcomes for people living with mood disorders, by transforming the way researchers, medical product developers, clinicians, and third-party payers evaluate wellness for people living with mood disorders who engage with the healthcare ecosystem. The goal will be achieved by developing a new Depression Wellness Clinical Outcome Assessment (COA).

DBSA partnered with the Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy to conduct the Supporting Wellness survey to better understand the aspects of wellness that are most important to people living with mood disorders. Survey results were used to support an externally-led Patient-Focused Drug Development meeting.



# At the heart of everything we do

Every DBSA program is designed so that people with mood disorders never feel alone. The following graphic breaks down our major initiatives by the different audiences reached.

	Peers	Caregivers	Children	Teens	Young Adults	Older Adults	Black	AAPI	Latino	LGBTQ+	Rural	Substance Use	Veterans	Clinicians	Product Developers	Policy Decision Makers
<b>PEER SUPPORT</b>																
Online Support Groups	●	●					●				●		●			
Facilitator Training	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
<b>EDUCATION</b>																
DBSA Mood Crew®	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●			●		
Peer Specialist Training	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Peer Supporters Course	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
Healthcare Workers Peer Supporter Course	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
<b>ADVOCACY</b>																
Advocacy in Action	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Amplifying the Peer Voice	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Peer Councils	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Academic Research	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Transforming the Definition of Wellness	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●



# Leveraging Our Partnership

In addition to helping DBSA continue offering our needed programs to individuals with mood disorders, you can promote your partnership with us in a variety of ways. Here are a few ideas:

- Post an article about mental health at work on your intranet, mentioning your DBSA affiliation and offering DBSA resources such as our webinars to your employees. We can provide source materials for articles.
- Incorporate the DBSA logo and health/mental health-related events such as employee wellness and community health fairs.
- Invite us to speak at an internal employee event.
- Demonstrate your organization's commitment to mental health programs when speaking to the media about related issues.
- Include the value of DBSA peer support in your external speeches and internal town halls.
- Our door is always open to explore what will work best for your organization.



**Vera Lewis**  
DBSA Vice President,  
Development and  
Communications  
Mental Health Advocate

I joined DBSA following more than 15 years of corporate and nonprofit development and marketing communications experience with particular strength in forging strategic alliances between business and charitable organizations. Those partnerships were designed to grow and enhance essential charitable programs, bringing mutual benefit to all parties.

When I was offered the opportunity to help DBSA realize its strategic goals and expand its services to individuals with depression and bipolar disorders, I immediately knew that my skillset in nurturing relationships could be effectively applied here. I am honored to share the great work of DBSA's online peer support groups with potential corporate sponsors.

Importantly, DBSA does not subscribe to a "one size fits all" approach when exploring and developing partnerships. Our approach involves aligning individuals with mood disorders with programs best targeted to their individual needs. We understand that a range of factors can impact whether people with depression and bipolar disorder will seek treatment and, if they do, how their shared experience with others provides a foundation for hope. It is incredibly important for the cultural considerations of different audiences to be taken into account for peer support to be effective.

Telling DBSA's story is one of the greatest joys of my career. Every day, I feel that the work I do is helping countless individuals have a better quality of life. I look forward to answering any questions you may have, learning about your objectives and discussing how partnering with us can be mutually beneficial.

## HOW WILL YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

You hold the key to someone's wellness journey. Help us reach more people, expand programs, and change lives for the better. And help those in corporate America appreciate the impact of peer support and targeted resources on building healthy workplaces.

### Let's talk!

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Find Community.  
Find Wellness.  
Find Hope.™



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