



Services and Activities

Free Support Groups

Free peer-led support groups two days a week at the VA Hospital in La Jolla, CA. Mental illness doesn't take a holiday and neither do we.

Mondays 6-8pm Meet in room 2011 for announcements and split into separate groups.

2-3 consumer groups of 10-20 people

1 Family & Friends group of 5-30 people

Thursdays 6-8pm Meetings in rooms 2113 and 2108 if a second room is needed

1 -2 mixed groups (consumers & family) of 10-20 people

Population Served

We are open to anyone with a mood disorder, family & friends, professionals interested in observing and psychology, medical or nursing students. Ages range from 18-65, but there is no upper limit. We occasionally have teenagers but do not serve young children.

Resources Available at the Group

- Lending library of books, DVDs, CDs, VHS tapes, and cassette tapes
- Two Phone lists – one list is only available on paper at the group, another is available on paper at the group as well as online in our Yahoo group files. Together there are over 200 people listed.
- Provider's List – list of doctors, therapists, and other professionals recommended by group members
- Flyers and information about upcoming events and current research projects

Resources Available Online

- Yahoo group DBSA San Diego – members who join can share resources they find, discuss issues, and receive reminders about upcoming events. They can also ask for a ride, as well as access many resource files and the online phone list.
- Website (www.dbsasandiego.org) – continuously updated website with all info about our chapter, as well as all other chapters in the county. There is an extensive Resources page that lists resources throughout the county, other non-profits, mental health events, relevant news and research articles, options for volunteering and social opportunities.
- There is contact information on the website if people need more information. There are 3 email addresses and a phone number to a cell phone carried 24/7 by one of our members. It is NOT a



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crisis line but is available for anyone who needs information. We frequently get calls from out of state or from non-group members looking for help.

Lecture Series

<http://www.dbsasandiego.org/speakers.html>

The first Monday of almost every month we host a lecture in Garren Auditorium on the UCSD School of Medicine campus, directly across the street from the VA. We announce and promote our speaker not only to our members but also to several hundred providers, advertise on Backpage.com and Craigslist.org, and hand out flyers at outreach events. We average between 10-40 people in attendance. Recent speakers have included:

Oct. 2009	Jim Hatton, PhD, MFT	"How much do you worry about the possibility you might have OCD?"
Aug. 2009	David M. Reiss, MD	"Borderline Phenomenology"
Jun. 2009	John Lohrman	"Private Health Insurance and Medicare"
Apr. 2009	Colin Depp, PhD	"Understanding Self-Harm"
Feb. 2009	Rafael Reyes, PsyD	"Anxiety & Relaxation, Part Two"
Jan. 2009	Rafael Reyes, PsyD	"Anxiety & Relaxation, Part One"
Nov. 2008	Henry Peterson, LCSW	"Surviving the Holidays"
Oct. 2008	David Granirer	"Standing Up for Mental Health"

This event was held at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital, hosted by DBSA San Diego. David did his stand-up routine and then screened a documentary about his program. It was standing room only with over 75 people. A very successful event.

Other guest speakers have included Michael T. Lardon, MD, Kitty Dukakis & Larry Tye, and John McManamy. All speakers back to April of 2007 are listed on the speakers page of the website.

<http://www.dbsasandiego.org/speakers.html>.

Outreach

We host a booth at a number of resource fairs in an effort to reach out to consumers, professionals, and the community with information about mood disorders, community resources and our group. This year's events include:

Feb. 2009 CAHM Forum Community Alliance for Healthy Minds community forum and resource fair



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Apr. 2009	NAMI Walk	1600 walkers in attendance to raise money for NAMI San Diego
Apr. 2009	Health Fairs	We passed out info and answered questions at both Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges' health fairs.
May 2009	CBF Fair	California Bipolar Foundation's Mental Health Fair open to the public with an exhibit hall & lectures.
Oct. 2009	SDPA Conf.	Two day conference of the San Diego Psychological Association. We were invited and connected with many providers, most of whom had never heard of DBSA.
Oct. 2009	Mtg of Minds	Meeting of the Minds is a one day conference put on by Mental Health America for providers and community organizations.
Oct. 2009	Out of Dark.	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's annual Out of the Darkness Walk to raise money for suicide prevention.
Nov. 2009	Save a Life	Save a Life San Diego Walk is put on by Survivors of Suicide Loss and Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Foundation and all money raised stays here in San Diego.

Example of one of our resource tables:



Thanks to our extensive outreach effort, in person and through our website, DBSA San Diego is growing by leaps and bounds. It's hard to keep up with sometimes. A few of our members have recently branched out to start another group, DBSA Alvarado, at Alvarado Hospital.



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Social Events

Summer Beach Picnics – Each summer we have 3 beach potlucks, one per month, at Crown Point. DBSA San Diego provides the meat, buns, condiments, drinks, plates and cutlery and members bring the rest. They are quite popular and successful.

Spring Fling & Thanksgiving Celebration – These two events are held at a local Hometown Buffet in the spring and in November and are subsidized. The price of the buffet is around \$9. We ask that our members pay \$5 and we pay the rest from our general fund. Anyone who can't afford to pay is welcome to come for free. These events are also open to friends & family of group members. Our average attendance is between 60 and 70 people.

Christmas Party – We have a potluck Christmas party every year in lieu of the first hour of one of the Monday groups near Christmas.

Ralphs – After almost every group a handful of people go to a Ralphs grocery store a few blocks away to eat and socialize. There are food places nearby and an area with tables and chairs inside the store, which is open 24/7. There is usually at least something for everyone to eat if they're interested and if they can't afford to buy food the group will pitch in to help.

Claire de Lune – Several people gather outside Claire de Lune coffee shop on Friday nights just to talk. Most of the people who go are former group members or people we don't see very often but there has been more interest recently by new group members.

One of the things our members really appreciate is that DBSA San Diego is not just about support for mental illness, it's about making connections with people. Many of our members are friends and do things outside the group. It reduces social isolation and helps people develop a sense of belonging in the community, also to know that they're not alone. There are also opportunities for members to volunteer to help with the table at walks or to set up for speakers or participate in outreach. Everyone is welcome at steering committee meetings and anyone who shows up can vote.

Documentaries

We have been fortunate enough to be involved in three documentaries recently. For each, members volunteered to be filmed during a support group and/or interviewed separately. The first was a documentary shot by a woman hoping to raise awareness of mood disorders in Mexico. The second is a project of an award-winning author and filmmaker about depression that is complete but has not been released yet. The third is in the making and about bipolar disorder. Two of the three are projects of group members.



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Community Involvement

- DBSA San Diego keeps the County of San Diego's Network of Care website up to date with the events and changes of all DBSA chapters in San Diego County.
- We network with providers and other support groups, organizations, hospitals and programs in our area sharing information, resources, and events.
- We promote all mental health related community events we're aware of.
- Provider's Email List – We now have a sign-up sheet for providers to join an email list just for them to receive email updates about events and speakers we're having and also as a way for them to request additional information and resources.

Crisis Intervention

We are not and do not claim to be professionals, but we do a fair amount of crisis intervention. We often get people who are suicidal or in severe need of help. We do everything we can to help, including providing rides to the hospital. We have several people who can help walk members through the process of entering the mental health system and surviving it.

Funding

We are primarily funded through member contributions. We pass the bag at each meeting and people are free to donate whatever they can or to just pass it along. This year we got a \$1000 grant that was used to reimburse a member who had been paying out of pocket for two years for some of our printing costs. None of our facilitators or board members are paid.