



Support Group Guidelines

1. **What is said here stays here.** This is the essential principle of confidentiality and must be respected by all.
2. **Raise your hand** and wait your turn to be called upon. No one person should monopolize group time.
3. **It's everyone's responsibility to make the discussion groups a safe place to share.** We treat one another with respect and kindness, and show compassion.
4. **Use "I" language**, that is, speak from your own experience. Do not give advice unless asked to do so.
5. **We don't diagnose or prescribe.** One person's experience with a doctor or medication does not imply that your experience will be similar.
6. **It's okay not to share.**
7. **Set your cell phone ringer** to vibrate, or turn it off entirely.
8. **If you need to leave the meeting, feel free to do so**, but please leave quietly.
9. **Please, no eating during the meeting.** It can be distracting to those trying to speak.

These guidelines are designed for the safety and protection of everyone in the support group.

If you feel you need extra help, please speak with a DBSA San Diego board member.

Introductions

Please state:

1. your first **name**
2. your **diagnosis**
3. your **mood** – how you feel *here and now* – on a scale of 0 to 10, where mood *higher* than 5 signifies *mania* and mood *lower* than 5 signifies *depression*.
4. a **topic** to discuss

All items are optional, but please give your first name so we can address you.



Frequently-Asked Questions

Q *Can I bring family members or friends to DBSA San Diego meetings?*

A Yes, we have a dedicated "family & friends" group on Mondays. And on both Mondays and Thursdays, family members and friends are welcome in the consumer group(s).

Q *Does DBSA San Diego have a mailing list?*

A Yes, this is one of the many functions of our Yahoo! Groups Web site. You can join by asking any DBSA San Diego officer or facilitator.

Q *What does it cost to join DBSA San Diego?*

A There is no charge for membership nor any formal membership process. If you attend our meetings, you are a member. However, we do appreciate donations.

Q *What's the difference between bipolar disorder and manic depression?*

A *Manic depression* is an older term for what is now usually called *bipolar disorder*. They are exactly the same.

Q *Does DBSA San Diego have a Web site?*

A Yes, it is located at <http://www.dbsasandiego.org/>.

Q *How do I know if I should go to the hospital?*

A If you are (1) a danger to yourself, or (2) a danger to others, or (3) gravely disabled, then you should seriously consider going to the hospital. Legally, you can be required to do so if any of those criteria are met. Speak to your psychiatrist if at all possible.

Q *Can you recommend a good psychiatrist or therapist for someone with depression or bipolar disorder?*

A Yes, we maintain a list of providers recommended by members and associates of DBSA San Diego.

Q *Can I volunteer to work for DBSA San Diego?*

A Yes, we always need volunteers. Speak to any DBSA San Diego officer or facilitator.

Q *Can I stop taking my medications once my depression or mania passed?*

A Medication decisions should be made by the psychiatrist, not by the patient. It is very unlikely your psychiatrist would advise stopping your meds at this point.

Q *Are DBSA San Diego meetings canceled for holidays?*

A No, we meet every Monday and every Thursday without exception, to support one another on our paths to wellness.

Q *Does one have to be a veteran to attend DBSA San Diego meetings?*

A No. Although we meet in the VA Hospital, we are not affiliated with the hospital, the VA, the government, or the military. We are only affiliated with DBSA, the (national) Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.