



DBSA West Hill and Valley Newsletter: January, 2012

BY POPULAR DEMAND: Our Sunday afternoon group will be meeting on **NEW YEAR'S DAY, January 1, 2012 in the Red Oak Room.**

Open Board Meeting

On **Sunday, January 16, at 3:00pm**, in the Red Oak room, we will be holding an open meeting of our board of directors. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss plans for 2011. At the end of the meeting, members can ask questions and offer suggestions to the board. All members are invited to attend.

MONTHLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Bank Account Balances	2012	2011	Change
Checking Account Balance	\$493	\$775	-36%
Emergency Medical Fund:	\$5,225	\$5,119	2%

Dues Paying Members	2012	2011	Change
Individual Members	34	18	89%
Family Members	19	11	73%
Total Members	53	29	83%

Newsletter Distribution	2012	2011	Change
Email Recipients	365	206	76%
Hardcopy Recipients	77	57	35%
Total Recipients	442	263	67%
Last Email Date	12/31/11	12/31/10	NA
Last USPS Mailing Date	12/31/11	12/31/10	NA

Last Board of Directors Mtg	12/4/11	12/18/10
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LOOKING BACK ON 2011

- 1) **Support Groups.** Our support group attendance steadily grew throughout 2011. We have added a “flex” support group on Sunday afternoons, for those times when attendance is too high for one meeting, and we also added a Teens and Young adult support group meeting on Thursday evenings. We are holding up to 5 meetings per week, more than any other chapter in Chicagoland.

- 2) **Monthly newsletters.** We issued a newsletter each month in 2011, and have archived them all on our website. Our monthly newsletter distribution has grown 67% in the past 12 months. If we continue to grow at the current rate, our newsletter distribution should reach 500 by mid-year. By issuing our newsletters primarily by Email instead of hardcopy, we avoided over \$1,500 in postage costs.

- 3) **Implementation of real time communication.** We have a strong relationship with the facilities management group at Good Samaritan Hospital, who notifies us of changes in conference room assignments. When there is a change, of location, we update our website immediately and send Email notifications to the support group members.

- 4) **Fellowship:** Our summer picnic and winter holiday parties both had record attendance in 2011.

The Board is honored to have served you this past year. Please do not hesitate to contact us with feedback.



This month's article comes from www.psychcentral.com: **10 Bipolar Disorder Self-Help Tips**

Whether you've been recently diagnosed with bipolar disorder or have been dealing with it for a long time, it's likely that nobody has taken the time to sit you down and explain what you can and should be doing to help yourself. We've put together this list of 10 important tips to bring you up to speed on bipolar self-help strategies that really work:

1. **Take ownership of your illness.** No, it's not your fault you have bipolar disorder, but now that you have it, do your part to get help, lead a healthier lifestyle, and follow your treatment regimen.
2. **Take your medications as prescribed.** Most of the medications used to treat depression or mania need to be taken daily, not just when you think you feel depressed or manic or think you need them.

Warning: If you can't tolerate the side effects of a particular medication, consult your doctor – he or she may have suggestions on how to reduce or eliminate the side effects without stopping the medication. See the "[Managing Bipolar Medication Side Effects.](#)"

3. **Don't drink alcohol.** (This is a biggie.) Drinking alcohol can neutralize the beneficial effects of the medications and interact with some medications to cause liver damage, seizures, unpredictable shifts in mood, and other health problems. (Avoid other substances, as well, including medications that your doctor has not prescribed for you.)
4. **Sleep seven to eight hours per night... every night.** Sleep deprivation can really throw your moods out of whack. For tips on getting some restful sleep, visit www.SleeplessInAmerica.org (now part of DBSA – the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance).
5. **Steer clear of stimulants.** Caffeine, nicotine, and other stimulants could tip your mood balance, especially if they cause you to lose sleep. Yep, those energy drinks gotta go.
6. **Establish healthy routines.** You'll be surprised at how much a daily routine can relieve stress and level your moods. Exercise can help, too. If you have trouble establishing healthy routines, consider consulting a therapist who's trained in Interpersonal & Social Rhythm Therapy (IPSRT), as we discuss in *Bipolar Disorder For Dummies*.
7. **Avoid triggers and stressors.** Situations or people that get you hyped up, agitated, or upset can trigger mood episodes.
8. **Team up with your doctor and therapist.** They can provide much more effective treatment if you make and keep regular appointments, consult them prior to making any medication or treatment changes, and are honest about what's going on.
9. **Educate yourself.** The more you and others around you learn about the disorder, the better equipped you'll be to keep it under control.
10. **Ask for help.** Your friends, family members, and the people you work with probably want to help but don't know what to do. Let them know what they can do to help you (and when you need them to back off).

These ten tips may sound pretty easy in theory, but can be very difficult to put into practice, particularly if your moods are currently cycling. If you happen to wander off course, don't beat yourself up over it. Nobody's perfect, and you are battling an illness that can be very difficult to manage.



Please help DBSA West by becoming a dues-paying member.

DBSA is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to improving the lives of people living with mood disorders and their loved ones. Our primary focus is on providing support groups for persons dealing with depression and bipolar disorder and their friends and families.

We are constantly looking for ways to make people aware of our group, which means we spend money on postage, printing and distribution of our information. When you become a member of DBSA, your \$20 individual and \$30 family annual dues payments help us pay for the production and mailing costs of our newsletters and brochures. Please see the sign up form at the end of this newsletter.

Our Officers:

President: Bernadette Knudsen, bernadette@dbwest.org

Vice President: Norma Wimunc, norma@dbwest.org

Treasurer: Mary Paganoni, mary@dbwest.org

Secretary: Bob Steinmetz, bob@dbwest.org

Our Support Group Facilitators:

Sunday, 1pm-3pm: Bernadette Knudsen, bernadette@dbwest.org

Sunday, 1pm-3pm: Karen Wennersten, karen@dbwest.org

Wednesday, 7pm-9pm: Norma Wimunc, norma@dbwest.org

Thursday (young adult), 7pm-8:30pm: Alex Steinmetz, alex@dbwest.org

Thursday (friends and family), 7pm-8:30pm: Bob Steinmetz, bob@dbwest.org

Support groups meet at Good Samaritan Hospital, 3815 Highland Ave in Downers Grove.

In January and February:

- **Patient Support Groups** are held in the Red Oak Room on the first floor in the main wing of the hospital on Sundays from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, and on Wednesdays in the White Oak room from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Teen / young adult meetings are held on Thursday evenings from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in the Red Oak room.
- **Caregiver Support Groups** are held in the White Oak Room on Thursdays from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm.

Check for last minute changes at www.dbwest.org



DBSA West – Suburban Chicago
We've been there. We can help.

BECOME A MEMBER: Print this form and mail it with your check to the address below:

Your annual dues (\$20 for an individual and \$30 for a family) will help us in our mission to provide support, friendship, hope and information for individuals with depression or bipolar disorder and to their friends and families.

Type of membership: Family (\$30) Individual (\$20)

Type of newsletter: US Mail: Email

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Make checks payable to: DBSA West

Mail checks to: DBSA West
 PO Box 4646
 Naperville, IL 60567

Thank you for your generous support! _____