

# Hill and Valley Newsletter: November, 2010

## **Mark Your Calendar for our Annual Holiday Party!**

We will hold our annual holiday party on Sunday December 5, 2010, in the Oak Room area of Good Samaritan Hospital from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Watch for more information on our website, [www.dbsawest.org](http://www.dbsawest.org).

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT FOR NOVEMBER**

#### **Bank Account Balances**

Checking Account Balance	\$1,351
Emergency Medical Fund:	\$5,116

#### **Dues Paying Members**

Individual Members	15
Family Members	11
Total Members	26

#### **Newsletter Distribution**

Email Recipients	194
Hardcopy Recipients	64
Total Recipients	258
Last Email Date	10/3/10
Last USPS Mailing Date	10/4/10
Last Board of Directors Mtg	9/6/10

In the past month, we added 10 addresses to our mailing list. Our distribution list has reached **258**. We also received dues from 2 new members.

## **This Issue's Article: Handling the Holidays – Part 1 (thanks to WebMD)**

The holidays can be a tricky for anyone. But people with bipolar disorder may anticipate November and December holidays with real dread -- and depression. The following article, from webmd.com, is full of insights on bipolar disorder and the holidays.

### **Bipolar Disorder: Why the Holidays Can Be Hard**

Experts say many things come together to make the holidays tough for people with bipolar disorder, including:

- **Disrupted schedules.** "The biggest single problem with the holidays for people with bipolar disorder is that they take them out of their routine," says Ellen Frank, PhD, director of the depression and manic depression prevention program at the University of Pittsburgh's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. Studies show that people with bipolar disorder do best when they're on a schedule -- getting up, eating, exercising, and going to bed at roughly the same time each day. Even the loss of just one night of sleep can trigger a mood swing. But during the holidays -- when you may be traveling across time zones, partying, or staying up until the wee hours -- it's all too easy to get off track.
- **Over-stimulation.** Shopping, decorating, and preparing for the holidays can leave you excited and anxious. Some family reunions aren't always happy. Any excess stimulation can trigger a swing toward holiday depression or mania.

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- **Shorter days and longer nights.** Some people with bipolar disorder find their mood swings are related to the seasons. Depression is more common in the fall and winter in the northern hemisphere.
- **Holiday "cheer".** The holidays are a time when excessive drinking is often tolerated, even encouraged. Though unwinding with alcohol can be tempting, it can be bad for people with bipolar disorder. Not only can it interfere with medicine, it may also ruin sleep and make you more prone to mood swings.
- **Excessive spending.** It's the season when it seems everyone is running up their credit cards. If you have a history of excessive spending and grandiose gift-giving during hypomanic or manic episodes, you are clearly at risk.
- **Missing your medication.** When you're busy, it's easy to forget about your medication. You may even feel tempted to skip a few doses on purpose: it might make it easier to tolerate alcohol, or being a little hypomanic may give you the energy to get errands done. But when you have bipolar disorder skipping your medication is always risky, since it makes your mood less stable.
- **Believing the hype.** We all know how we're supposed to feel at the holidays: brimming with joy, good will, and love. But a lot of us don't really feel that way. Being depressed during the holidays can really make you feel out of step, which adds to feelings of isolation.

### Planning for Holiday Success When You Have Bipolar Disorder

It's very easy to let the holidays dictate your life. You *have* to go shopping. You *have* to go to your office party. You *have* to bake four batches of Christmas cookies. It can make you feel completely powerless. Your own needs become irrelevant.

The key is to take control before that happens. "Where is it written that you *must* do all these things?" says Frank. The key to a successful holiday is to plan for it well in advance, she says. Here are a few tips that may help ease your holidays:

- **Scale back your expectations.** Be easy on yourself. "The gifts don't have to be perfect," Crowel tells WebMD. Neither do the decorations. Or the turkey. Or *anything*.
- **Think twice before playing host.** The preparations for a holiday dinner -- shopping, cooking, cleaning -- can be overwhelming for a person with bipolar disorder. So make sure you are really up to it. If you do host, simplify. Pare down the guest list. Cook something you can prepare in advance. Ask for help from friends or family.
- **Be open and direct with your family.** Tell them what you need this year. If the usual family gathering of dozens seems like too much, see if your family might cut down the guest list. Obviously, this could cause conflict with the rest of the family. But if the extended family members really care about the person with bipolar disorder they should understand, Frank says.
- **Make this year different.** If holidays have not gone well in the past, make changes. Instead of doing the usual dinner at home, go to a restaurant. If staying with your in-laws hasn't been good for you, check into a nearby hotel instead. Or simply get away from all the holiday hubbub and go on vacation.
- **Spread out the visiting.** Frank suggests shifting some of your visits into October and January, instead of trying to fit in everyone in November and December.
- **Increase the number of check-ins.** You might want to step up the schedule of appointments with your therapist or check-ins with your family and friends. It's a good way of staying grounded.

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### **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.

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#### Our Officers:

President: Bernadette Knudsen, [beesnees1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beesnees1@sbcglobal.net)

Vice President: Norma Wimunc, [nwimunc25@earthlink.net](mailto:nwimunc25@earthlink.net)

Treasurer: Mary Paganoni, [marypaganoni@aol.com](mailto:marypaganoni@aol.com)

Secretary:

Communications Director: Bob Steinmetz, [bob@steinmetzmail.com](mailto:bob@steinmetzmail.com)

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#### Our Support Group Facilitators:

Sunday: Bernadette Knudsen, [beesnees1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beesnees1@sbcglobal.net)

Sunday: Linda Dougherty

Wednesday: Norma Wimunc, [nwimunc25@earthlink.net](mailto:nwimunc25@earthlink.net)

Thursday: Bob Steinmetz, [bob@steinmetzmail.com](mailto:bob@steinmetzmail.com)

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

In November:

- **Patient Support Groups** are held in the Red Oak Room on the first floor in the main wing of the hospital on Sundays from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, and on Wednesdays in the White Oak room from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.
- **Caregiver Support Groups** are held in the White Oak Room on Thursdays from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. NOTE: On October 28, the caregiver meeting will be held in the CEC conference room, on the ground floor of the North Pavilion.

Check for last minute changes at [www.dbsawest.org](http://www.dbsawest.org)

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## This month's word search: BIPOLAR AND FAMOUS!

Q C G Z E K T X Y S L U U J X T G J H T C M P P F F Q P T U  
 J G B Y N T C E Y Q A I M G K Y D B B O U H O G K R V U X L  
 U K T K J A E D L A D C O N N I E T U I W B D K B X X O S C  
 P L J Q V Q Y R B E L U Y A D N I L M X Q B P V M A Q H U R  
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 C T Y D H X T M A C R O Z Z F H M A J F X M X R E D D I K B  
 K L N A X O E S A T S A N F O K F N T A X Z D T B O Y N B J  
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 R Q E A T E Q Y O F Y G T P B B Z M J C I M B N B E O A P T  
 F Y N U H W Z B G A Y S U Z W M C K R I S T Y O S T G A K T  
 I W G O W T U P W V I E Q A V F L N T V U Q S L O B U E O C  
 S Y C A R T V G P D Z Z R V I R G I N I A F M K S L W V R R  
 H V Y S W A N T N F G T I D P W T L L T T P Z K E E I P N S  
 E V A G P I M E U Q S E B K I D S L K R P R D Y T R R P A P  
 R R R J M Y Y S M G U H X K U Y I U U B R U W T T I O O H Q  
 C B S E L A G N I T H G I N I M R V E X K D E K D U P U T O  
 M R H D G Z S U X I C E P H W O B Y E E L I G E M I V M A D  
 K R D O V G R H S Y C U W M G U Y Q F C R O I U S K T B N Z  
 L R Y G R S Z T L Z K F R Q I C S Q N A J U I Y J M P I O R  
 F P O W V D X X C C O B A I N I G A M S G I B G C I Z A J X

Abbie	<b>Hoffman</b>	Jack	<b>London</b>	Patty	<b>Duke</b>	John	<b>Daly</b>
Axl	Rose	Jane	<b>Pauley</b>	Richard	<b>Dreyfuss</b>	Alonzo	Spellman
Brian	<b>Wilson</b>	Jean-Claude Van	<b>Damme</b>	<b>Robin</b>	Williams	Ilie	<b>Nastase</b>
<b>Burgess</b>	Meredith	<b>Jonathan</b>	Winters	<b>Rosemary</b>	Clooney	Darryl	<b>Strawberry</b>
Carrie	<b>Fisher</b>	<b>Kristy</b>	McNichol	<b>Sidney</b>	Sheldon	<b>Sting</b>	
Charley	<b>Pride</b>	Kurt	<b>Cobain</b>	<b>Sinead</b>	O'Connor	<b>Tracy</b>	Ullman
Cheri	<b>Oteri</b>	<b>Linda</b>	Hamilton	Ted	<b>Turner</b>	<b>Ben</b>	Stiller
<b>Connie</b>	Francis	<b>Margaret</b>	Trudeau	<b>Vincent</b>	Van Gogh	Robert	<b>Downey Jr.</b>
Dick	<b>Cavett</b>	Margot	<b>Kidder</b>	<b>Virginia</b>	Woolf	Francis Ford	<b>Coppola</b>
<b>Edgar</b>	Allan Poe	<b>Mariette</b>	Hartley	<b>Vivien</b>	Leigh		
Ernest	<b>Hemingway</b>	Mel	<b>Gibson</b>	<b>Winston</b>	Churchill		
Florence	<b>Nightingale</b>	Ozzy	<b>Osbourne</b>	Mark	<b>Twain</b>		

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We've been there. We can help.

**DBSA West**      **WE'VE BEEN THERE. WE CAN HELP**

*The Chicago Western Suburbs Chapter of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.*

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**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 their families.

In addition to helping to financially support our organization, you will receive our monthly newsletter, either by mail or Email.

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

Type of Newsletter:    US Mail:     Email:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_    Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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!