

DBSA West Hill and Valley Newsletter: November, 2011

Mark your calendars for Sunday, December 11 at 3pm for your Christmas. You and your families are invited to attend. We are looking for volunteers to help set up and clean up; contact Bernadette to volunteer. **Please note that Christmas is on a Sunday this year. There will be no meeting on that day.**

MONTHLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Bank Account Balances

Checking Account Balance	\$1,100
Emergency Medical Fund:	\$4,750

Newsletter Distribution

Email Recipients	341
Hardcopy Recipients	80
Total Recipients	421
Last Email Date	11/1/11
Last USPS Mailing Date	11/3/11
Next Board of Directors Mtg	11/6/11

Dues Paying Members

Individual	32
Family	19
Total Dues Paying Members	51

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.
- **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.

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, beesnees1@sbcglobal.net

Vice President: Norma Wimunc, nwimunc25@earthlink.net

Treasurer: Mary Paganoni, marypaganoni@aol.com

Secretary: Bob Steinmetz, bob@steinmetzmail.com

Support groups meet at **Good Samaritan Hospital**, 3815 Highland Ave in Downers Grove. Here is our schedule for the next few weeks. Since schedules are subject to change, always refer to www.dbsawest.org for the most current information regarding room assignments.

DBSA West Support Group Meetings Nov-Dec, 2011

Day	Date	Time (pm)	Location	Group
Wed	11/2	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	11/3	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Thu	11/3	7:00-8:30	Black Oak	16-25
Sun	11/6	1:00-3:00	Blue Oak	Patient
Wed	11/9	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	11/10	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Thu	11/10	7:00-8:30	Black Oak	16-25
Sun	11/13	1:00-3:00	Blue Oak	Patient
Wed	11/16	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	11/17	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Thu	11/17	7:00-8:30	Black Oak	16-25
Sun	11/20	1:00-3:00	Red Oak	Patient
Wed	11/23	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	11/24	Thanksgiving - No Meetings		
Thu	11/24			
Sun	11/27	1:00-3:00	Red Oak	Patient
Wed	11/30	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient

Day	Date	Time (pm)	Location	Group
Thu	12/1	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Sun	12/4	1:00-3:00	Red Oak	Patient
Sun	12/4	1:00-3:00	Blue Oak	16-25
Wed	12/7	7:00-9:00	Cancer Cntr	Patient
Thu	12/8	7:00-8:30	Cancer Cntr	Caregiver
Sun	12/11	1:00-3:00	Red Oak	Patient
Sun	12/11	1:00-3:00	Black Oak	16-25
Wed	12/14	7:00-9:00	Birch	Patient
Thu	12/15	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Sun	12/18	1:00-3:00	Red Oak	Patient
Sun	12/18	1:00-3:00	Black Oak	16-25
Wed	12/21	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	12/22	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver
Sun	12/25	Christmas - No Meeting		
Sun	12/25			
Wed	12/28	7:00-9:00	White Oak	Patient
Thu	12/29	7:00-8:30	White Oak	Caregiver

DBSA West – Suburban Chicago

We've been there. We can help.

BECOME A DUES-PAYING 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!