

THE SPECTRUM

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago

We Need YOUR Help!

Are you a student? Researcher? Writer? Have some thoughts you want to share about your experience? Submit an article for our upcoming Spectrum! Send your writing to: wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org with the subject "Spectrum" and we'll review your article and contact you for our next issue!

Is this Bliss?

Written by Kathy Powers

The mastery of energy
 The power of a mantra
 The beauty of humanity
 The honesty of passion

I feel pulses of my life
 My not-dead-yet beliefs
 Strong brainy wisdom freely flows
 My love, hypomania

These blameless, happy impulses
 Spur me on a course
 To help myself and others now
 Whilst I remain untouched

Oh yes, I always take my meds
 I skip along steep cliffs
 To me, I'm soaring with the breeze
 with persistent connectedness.

Upcoming DBSA-GC Annual Symposium

In honor of May's Mental Health Awareness Month, DBSA-GC is hosting its annual Symposium on May 2, 2020 at Evanston Hospital! \$20 suggested donation, no registration necessary.

**21st Annual
 DBSA-GC Symposium**
**Sex, Drugs and
 Rock & Roll**

How Gender, Drugs, and Music Affect
 Mood Disorders

May 2, 2020
8am - 1pm
Evanston Hospital
Frank Auditorium

- \$20 suggested donation to attend
- CEUs provided
- Complimentary breakfast

Speakers Announced on Next Page!

Behind the Board **Newly Elected Vice President Judy Sturm**

Facts about Judy:

- Judy has been working as a DBSA-GC volunteer for 24 and was President of our organization for TEN years!
- Judy has lived the last 19 years in Palatine, Illinois

Questions for Judy:

How did you hear about DBSA?

- My daughter attended a family group. I went to the regular one in appreciation and found it very helpful. Then was asked to become a facilitator, a board member, and later President

What got you interested in volunteering for DBSA-GC?

- I saw how much the groups helped me and others. time, and then I never left!

What do you like most about DBSA-GC?

- We make a difference! I have people contacting me from all over and some are DBSA-GC alums! I refer people to the National website if they are out of our sphere and do some research as needed if they are unable to.

What are your goals for 2020 for DBSA-GC?

- To continue facilitating and be of use as needed. Also, to encourage younger people to take on responsibilities and get involved.

• **Tobi Ballantine, LCSW:** Tobi is a LCSW and Youth Anti Violence Advocate at Center on Halsted in Chicago. Tobi will be presenting on gender and orientation and how it affects mood disorders.

• **Kelly Rhodes, M.D.:** Dr. Rhodes is a Psychiatry resident at Rush University and will be presenting on drugs and their affects on mood disorders.

• **Melissa Sommers, MM MT-BC:** Melissa is a board certified music therapist and Founder and CEO of Meli Music, a music therapy company providing music services for all ages and abilities. She will be presenting on music therapy and its affect on mood disorders.

• **Corey Goldstein, M.D. (tentative):** Dr. Goldstein is DBSA-GC's very own medical advisor and will be providing a pharmacological update and participating in every attendee's favorite session, the Q & A.

Interested in purchasing an ad for your business, a research study, or an *in memoriam* in our symposium brochure? Our brochure is distributed to our attendees on the day of the symposium! Click [HERE](#) for an ad form and make your payment on our website!

Would you like to sponsor our 2020 Symposium? We have a variety of sponsorship opportunities which can be found on our website [HERE!](#)

Recent Activities and highlights for Q1

January Mental Health Peervention Workshop with Hope For The Day - January 25, 2020 at Logan Square Library

Written by Hank Trenkle, DBSA-GC Board Member & Facilitator

I recently gave a talk to the support group, Hope For The Day. Their slogan is: "It's ok to not to be ok." I was the featured speaker along with Mike Vinopal, Hope for the Day Education Director

In my talk, I covered the basics regarding the illnesses of depression, bipolar illness and anxiety disorders. In this talk, I tried to educate the attendees regarding the above mentioned illnesses. Approximately 50 people were in attendance.

I stated that I am a Peer Support Specialist meaning I admit to having the illness of depression, have taken a lot of training and attended many educational seminars to be a Peer Support Specialist. My talk lasted for approximately 25 minutes.

I spoke from experience and stated that the illnesses referred to above are true illnesses and are not weaknesses as some people assume. If you have one of these illnesses, the goal is to feel normal and there are certain things that help in combating these illnesses. This would be: finding a good psychiatrist, a good talk therapist that you feel comfortable with, finding a medication that works for you and attending support groups that we at DBSA-GC have. Regarding talk therapy, you must feel comfortable with the person and if you don't, get someone else. With medication, it can be hard to find the right one. There is no test to determine what would work for you - it is all trial and error. It may take up to six weeks to learn if a medication will work and in

that time, if what you are trying is not working, move on to try something else. These illnesses are a result of improper brain chemistry but can be stabilized with proper treatment. You must never give up hope.

I told the attendees other ways to combat the illnesses involve: proper rest, proper diet, support from family and friends, not isolating, exercise, reaching out to help others, learning as much as possible about the illnesses and realizing there are millions of people who have the illnesses - you are not alone. When your mood stabilizes, don't stop taking the medication before consulting with your doctor. I passed out many educational flyers and brochures to the attendees which was appreciated. DBSA looks forward to continuing our partnership with Hope for the Day to support mental health education and support.

Hope for the Day - Conversation Café Podcast: January 16, 2020 at Sip of Hope Coffee Bar

January's episode, titled "You Are Not Alone", featured interviews with the following Hope for the Day's Partners - Big Brothers Big Sisters Chicago, Center on Halsted, and Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago (DBSA-GC), featuring our very own Marty Heller, DBSA-GC board member and facilitator for the Evanston and Northwestern Hospital peer support groups. Alex Springer, a member and facilitator from the DBSA Loop Chapter also participated in the podcast. Over 70 people listened in to the podcast.

The Conversations Cafe is a monthly live podcast recording at Sip of Hope Coffee Bar featuring education and open forum dialogue on the intersections of Mental Health within our communities. This education programming is brought to you by Hope For the Day with support from our partners in prevention, The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention of Illinois, Banyan Treatment Center, and Janssen. Join the conversation. We are in this together.



**PEER TO PEER
PREVENTION
WORKSHOP**

A workshop designed to educate you on the obstacles, tools, and strategies to enable proactive and effective mental health care, focusing on disrupting and eliminating the highest risk factors for reaching a stage of mental health crisis.

SATURDAY 25 11:00AM - 3:00PM	FREE EDUCATION WORKSHOP AT THE LOGAN SQUARE PUBLIC LIBRARY
TO REGISTER VISIT PEERVENTION.ORG	FOR MORE INFO CONTACT INFO@HFTD.ORG

BROUGHT TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
AFSP, BANYAN TREATMENT CENTER, JANSSEN

HOPE FOR THE DAY **DBSA**
HFTD.ORG

HOPE FOR THE DAY PRESENTS

CONVERSATIONS CAFE

A LIVE MENTAL HEALTH PODCAST
FEATURING EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE ON THE INTERSECTIONS
ON MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Exploring Supports In Our Community

In this episode, we will feature interviews with some of HFTD's PIPs providing support in our communities Big Brothers Big Sisters Chicago, The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) of Greater Chicago, and Center on Halsted.

JANUARY 16, 2020
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

RECORDING AT: Sip of Hope Coffee Bar
FEATURING: Casey Nunes, Martin Heller, and Tobi Ballantine

Logos for Janssen, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, HOPE FOR THE DAY, and Banyan Treatment Center.

The podcast included three panelist groups from:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago** is an affiliate of the oldest, most respected mentoring organization in the United States. They are a mission-driven, performance-based organization that is professionally managed and provides high-quality 1:1 mentoring services to over 2,100 children in Metro Chicago and their families across four counties: Cook, DuPage and Lake Counties in Illinois and Indiana.

- **Center on Halsted** is the Midwest's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and securing the health and well-being of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people of

Chicagoland. More than 1,000 community members visit the Center every day, located in the heart of Chicago's Lakeview Neighborhood. They will also serve as a speaker for our upcoming May Symposium!

- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago (DBSA-GC)** is a self-help organization offering support and education to those with mood disorders, their families, and friends. They are a local chapter of DBSA, which is a national organization with hundreds of affiliates across the US, Canada, and now, Mexico, Brazil, China, and Singapore. Marty did a great job highlighting the services DBSA offers and answering questions to break down stigma and promote mental health support

Click [HERE](#) to listen to the podcast, "Anthologies of Hope". For a direct link to Spotify for the episode in which DBSA-GC was featured, click [HERE](#).

Additional Upcoming Events

Wellness Retreat - Wednesday, March 18, 2020, 9am-2pm

If yoga and meditation helps your mind, body and spirit, or you are interested in trying something new, check out this upcoming wellness retreat in our area: <https://www.chillchicago.com/evanston-retreat>

Say It Brave – Webinar Thursday, March 26, 2020, 7pm

Join Insight Behavioral Health Center on Thursday, March 26 at 7 p.m. for this month's free Say It Brave Online Event: When Depression Comes Knocking: Tools for Survival and Finding Your Light Again

In this special, free Say It Brave event, we'll have a raw and honest conversation about what to do when depression comes knocking and it feels as though darkness is everywhere. National Recovery Advocate,



Shannon Kopp, will share from the heart about her battles with depression, and overcoming the voices of shame that kept her from reaching out for help. Jennifer McAdams (MA, LCPC, CEDS-S) will share her clinical expertise on depression and seasonal depressive disorder.

You'll learn:

- How to recognize when depression is knocking on your door
- Tools for surviving, and ultimately, overcoming depression, no matter how dark it's been
- Quick and easy self-compassion exercises to help you get out of bed and into the world
- Local and national resources to support your healing journey

Register for the seminar by clicking [HERE](#)

Research Opportunity with CLEAR Research Lab

Have you experienced suicidal thoughts in the past month? Are you interested in participating in research on the biology of suicide risk? The CLEAR Lab is seeking participants for a paid research study.

Dr. Tory Eisenlohr-Moul, Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Chicago is conducting a research study to investigate the biology of stress, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

You may be eligible if you are:

1. Assigned female at birth
2. Between 18 & 45 years of age
3. Not using hormonal medications (for example, birth control pills)
4. Medically healthy (no major physical ailments)
5. Seeing a mental health care provider at least once every 3 months



Complete this [SURVEY](#) to find out if you're eligible. UIC IRB #2018-0189

Have questions? Please call 872-216-3597 or e-mail temo@uic.edu | [CLEAR Lab Facebook Link](#)

AMITA Health Center for Mental Health – Teen Program Looking for Participants



Teen Introduction to DBT (13 –18 years old) Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Group is a solution focused, cognitive behavioral skills training group. Skills covered are mindfulness, stress management, relationship management and emotional

regulation. The goal of this group is to help teens learn the skills to monitor and control feelings and behaviors that can lead to negative thoughts and actions.

Teens that are appropriate for the DBT Group are between ages 13 and 18 (if 18, must be in high school). They have experienced some difficulty with emotion regulation, relationship issues, anxiety, and/or depression. Teens who have a history of self-injury and/or Borderline tendencies are also appropriate.

They are currently accepting referrals. Prior to starting this group, an assessment will be scheduled to determine whether the client can benefit from the group and insure that the client's needs will be met. Fees vary based on insurance and residence.

Tentative Start Date: March/April 2020

Tuesday Evenings | 6:00-7:30pm

Facilitated by: Skylar Nagy, LCPC

AMITA Health

Center for Mental Health, Arlington Heights

3436 N. Kennicott Ave.

Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Please call AMITA Health Center for Mental Health at (847) 952-7460 for more information.

Monthly Mental Health Education Workshops from Hope for the Day

PEERvention is Hope For The Day's shorthand for Peer-to-Peer Proactive Suicide Prevention. The PEERvention Workshop is designed to educate you on the obstacles, tools, and strategies to enable proactive and effective mental health care as individuals and communities. Hope For The Day's pioneering program focuses on reducing suicide



rates by disrupting and eliminating the highest risk factors for reaching a stage of mental health crisis. The biggest obstacle to effective prevention is the silence of stigma. HFTD's free monthly education opportunities are made possible through the support of Partners in Prevention, the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#), [Banyan Treatment Center](#), and [Janssen](#).

Please [register here](#) to attend these free presentations at Logan Square Library. Walk-ins are also welcome.

HFTD invites members of Chicago communities and beyond to come and join them to learn how we can break the silence on mental health together. Together, we can prevent suicide, reminding everyone IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK, HAVE HOPE. This event listing will be updated with a spotlighted Partner in Prevention closer to the actual date of the workshop so stay tuned!

*Note: there is free limited parking in the Logan Square Library parking lot. Complimentary coffee will be provided by Sip of Hope. Additional refreshments will be provided.

Upcoming PEERvention Workshops: Saturday, March 28, 2020 & Saturday, April 18, 2020

Questions? Email: info@hftd.org

www.dbsa-gc.org

Mental Health Entries Submitted by Facilitators and Readers

It's Easy When You Know How

Written by Marty Heller, DBSA-GC Treasurer/Board Member & Peer Support Group Facilitator

It's really quite as simple, as it is obvious! If you don't like a particular food because its taste, texture or appearance, you don't eat it. If you have the opportunity to try a new food, you most certainly are aware of your option to do so, or not. Fortunately, it's within our control to decide to "buy" or "not buy", and act, or not act on that, or any other thought. That is what mindfulness is, an awareness and acceptance of the mental and emotional parameters of that realization, and the ability to allow, or disallow, any judgement or additional attention to that particular thought.

Our brains have evolved over millions of years to continually broadcast and bombard a constant and never ending onslaught, as well as an overwhelming stream of thoughts. It's maddening to have little or no control of this full front attack! We all have a voice in our heads that continually rapid fires one thought after another, or ruminates over and over again, often catastrophizing our greatest fears. Do you think life might be a little more pleasant if you could gain control over that "voice"? That's the "war" raging within our skulls that compels us to engage in battle 24/7 with painful anxiety and fear about losing the fight. The alternative is to realize that you can lay down your weapon and walk off the battlefield any time you care to. The battle will continue, but you are no longer participating. "Cognitive defusion", is the name of a learned technique that helps you make the distinction between the world as structured by your thoughts, and thinking as an ongoing process, standing back from yourself, and looking at your thoughts as an observer.

Welcome to the world of emotional regulation and the joys of peace of mind, lessened anxiety, fear of being overwhelmed, and finally, up to the task of slowing down the onslaught of uncontrolled thoughts and negative self-condemnation! "Bottom line", a fundamental change in perspective, and a shift in how you deal with your personal experience, greatly altering this ever changing and challenging phenomena we call life! It's all about recovery from this heinous illness called depression!

DBSA support groups are here for you, family and friends as a safe space to share thoughts and help manage your mental health. Find a DBSA Support Group near you [HERE](#)

COGNITIVE DEFUSION

1 Identifying inner content and distancing oneself from it : recognizing thoughts as thoughts, emotions as emotions, and bodily sensations as bodily sensations, rather than as imperious commands to behave in a certain way

2 Identifying the function of the content in the context of interest : what we do next when these experiences show up and whether it's what we would have chosen to do

IN 2 STEPS

Contextual Psychology **YOUR VALUES IN ACTION** contextpsy.com

Understanding and Supporting Bipolar

Written by Ali Khan, Northwestern Medical Student

In a lecture as part of the 2018 Summer Institute for Medical Students at Hazelden Betty Ford in Center City, Minnesota, I learned that the etiology of addiction is multifactorial and spans four overlapping components – genetics, behavior, environment, and physiology. The same can be said for mental health diseases like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and bipolar disorder. Yet, as a child of immigrant parents from Pakistan, I am told my older sister's bipolar and stimulant addiction are either the result of bad omens put on my sister by jealous friends or because my sister, twenty-eight years old, has not gotten married. My mom prays each day that the omens be taken off my sister and that she finds a husband and has a child to occupy herself.

In 2015, when my sister was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder, I applied for a scholarship to pursue a year of immersion in behavioral health. I studied personal identity as a potential barrier to treatment of mental health conditions and worked as an intern at a behavioral health clinic. I soon realized that some roles that make up my sister's identity - being a Pakistani-American, Muslim woman - had constructed obstacles to her getting better. Her diagnosis and the misunderstandings about bipolar disorder placed upon my sister by herself as well as our Pakistani-American family and friends are part of a driving force for me to work on mitigating hyperstigmatization faced by dual-identity Americans around mental health.



After the scholarship year, I took a deeper dive into the biopsychosocial elements that are integral in helping patients through every rehabilitation journey, whether it be related to mental health or from cancer remission or recovery after a spinal cord injury. For my sister's 26th birthday, I constructed a quote-book of thirty quotes from memoirs and scientific literature about bipolar disorder so that my sister could keep this quote book with her as she confronted issues around her diagnosis, including difficulties with parsing out her personality from her diagnosis and the importance of checking in with her support systems and team of family, friends, and healthcare providers. It was important for to me to include quotes from authors like Muslim lawyer and mental health activist Melody Moezzi, who like my sister and I comes from a population that also hyperstigmatizes mental health. I have been trying to pilot a weekly book club support group for young adults, age 18-30, living with mental health conditions that will similarly emphasize targeted readings.

As a current medical student, I learn about the chronic care model, longitudinal follow-up, and medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for both addiction and mental health diseases. I also learn the importance of community in recovery and rehabilitation. I try to bring my parents to family programs

committed to rehabilitating families affected by addiction and mental health diseases to teach them the skills to prevent family relapse of enabling or other negative behaviors. I hope to spend time volunteering at Hazelden Betty Ford in Chicago. The family program at Hazelden pairs a patient and a volunteer/family member of a loved one who is living with a similar condition, under the model that we all see and hear differently what our own family member has to share with us due to bias and emotionality. The hope is that I will learn something from the patient who is not my family member, and he or she will learn something from me.

I have seen post-it notes my sister writes to herself hoping that her bipolar is managed. When I see my big and extended family, I know that my sister's experiences are similar to those of many South Asian new Americans living with mental health conditions. I believe that if our family and other new American families take the best from our dual identities, we could advance mental health care. I find that one of the best parts of having a dual identity is that it has given me an ability to bridge disciplines and act as a translator for the dissemination of information. I have often played the role of translator in my life – translating English into Pashto for my mom as she was learning to speak English, translating biochemical pathways into similes and metaphors to provide semantic memory cues to my students as a Teaching Assistant. I also briefly wrote a translational science poetry blog. However, my favorite role as translator continues to be translating behavioral health to my family and to communities.

“Life for me is defined not by time, but by mood” – Terri Cheney (from the quote book)

Giving Back

Make a tax-deductible donation to support DBSA-GCs work to provide hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people who have mood disorders. Your gift will help keep DBSA-GC run support groups, mental health education events, and community outreach in Greater Chicagoland. To donate to DBSA-GC, visit our PayPal by clicking [HERE](#) (Paypal account not needed to contribute, debit and credit cards accepted).

The Spectrum

Thank you for reading!! Got Spectrum Newsletter Feedback? Do you like what you are reading and/or do you want more? We would love to hear what's on your mind. Please reach out to us if there are topics and ideas you would like to include or share in the next quarterly Spectrum. Anything goes – events, memorials, celebrations, recognition, thank you's, etc.



2020 Spectrum Schedule

Q2: May: Mental Health Awareness month

Q3: August

Q4: October: 10/10 World Mental Health Day

If you'd like to submit an article, event, celebration, recognition, etc. to be included in our Spectrum, please submit to wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org and we'll be happy to review!

Get in Touch with Us

If you are feeling alone, please know we're here to support you. Your recovery matters to us. If you're experiencing a difficult time, please reach out and we'll do what we can to help you get back on track. Please join us for our peer lead support groups. We have 25 peer support groups in Illinois. [Click here](#) to learn about the downtown and Greater Chicago Support Groups. For questions on our peer lead support group or anything else on your mind to get more involved, please reach out to us at: wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org. We'd love to speak with you and build our community foundation stronger.

Do you have questions for the Board? Reach out we'd love to hear your experiences, insights and share any articles you want to submit.

Amazon Smile: Shopping online? Support DBSA-GC by shopping with Amazon Smile! At NO CHARGE to you, just choose DBSA-GC as your preferred charity and a portion of your purchases are donated directly to us every time you shop on Amazon! Follow this [LINK](#) to shop on Amazon and AmazonSmile gives back to DBSA-GC!

Thank you!

DBSA is committed to providing free, quality peer mental health support, but now more than ever we need your help in order to continue expanding our reach. [DONATE TODAY](#) to be a part of what DBSA is building. We've Been There. We Can Help.

