

THE SPECTRUM

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago

DBSA-GC Board of Directors Update

If you are interested in volunteering, we need writers for our Spectrum and enthusiastic individuals who want to join our board and further our mission through fundraising and community outreach. Please email wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org and we will send you information.

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!

20TH ANNUAL DBSA-GC SYMPOSIUM

MOOD DISORDERS: ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING HEALTH & WELLNESS

Saturday, April 20, 2019 8am - 1pm
Evanston Hospital Frank Auditorium
2650 Ridge Ave. Evanston, IL

REGISTER AT OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.DBSA-GC.ORG

CEUs available

Join us for our 20th Annual Symposium! Featuring Dr. John Zajecka of Rush University Medical Center presenting on Esketamine, Ketamine, and other new treatments for treatment-resistant depression. Please go to our website and register by making a donation to our organization! We are a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Thank you for your generosity! Complimentary breakfast included.

Ads available: The Board of Directors are selling ads for our Symposium brochure! Please go to our website or click [HERE](#) for more details on how to purchase an ad. Thanks for your support!



DBSA-GC needs a webmaster!

DBSA-GC is looking for a volunteer to manage its website! Know anyone? Please contact us at wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org if you are:

- Technologically savvy
- Available by e-mail
- Have 1-2 hours per month to volunteer on website development
- Available for an initial re-vamp of the website, and subsequent occasional updates as dictated by the Board of Directors

Our website was created years ago with wix.com. We have made periodic updates to it, but none of us are technologically savvy enough to spruce it up! Being a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, we unfortunately do not have the means to hire a professional webmaster. We desperately need a volunteer to help us! If you have experience in web development, or know someone who does, please contact us at wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org.

THANK YOU!

Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

From helpguide.org submitted by DBSA-GC Board Member, Matt Maul

Everyone knows that regular exercise is good for the body. But exercise is also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and more. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts your overall mood. And you don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits. Research indicates that modest amounts of exercise can make a difference. No matter your age or fitness level, you can learn to use exercise as a powerful tool to feel better.

To learn more about the mental health benefits of exercise, click [HERE!](#)



A Message from DBSA-GC's Community Liaison

Judy Sturm, Community Liaison, Facilitator, DBSA-GC Past President

Dear Members and Friends,

If you are reading this, then you have somehow been touched by DBSA-GC and it was likely a positive thing in your life. It is vital that our mission of education, support and advocacy continue. If there is no continuation of our legacy, then all of our hard work of 40+ years will stop. There will be no more DBSA-GC support groups in Evanston, in Palatine, at Northwestern Hospital, nor at our treasured Devon Bank "home site". There will be no annual Symposium, no holiday party, no educational meetings, no

website, no Spectrum, no referrals, and much more that we offer individuals when able.

The board members do this as a labor of love, dedication, either paying it forward or retroactively but always with the mission at our forefront. Remember, we are an all-volunteer organization. No fat paychecks, no inflated expenses but we do donate our time and often “forget” to hand in legitimate expense receipts. We comprise consumers, family members and professionals. I always joke that no one really knows who is who, which is which.



Now it is your turn! All of you receiving this should feel at least a twinge of regret if you have not, in some way, helped us in the past. I urge each and every one of you to consider helping the organization in whatever way you can. Oh, you work full time? Good for you! Make a donation, no matter how large or small. You are a student? Super! Study with us a couple of times a month. You will learn bunches and it will look pretty darn good on your resume down the line. If you are a computer whiz- HELP! Many members, including me,

often need some help. Depressed? Get out! Reach out! It will do you so much good. If you are currently on disability- find something to do on a regular basis. Tutor a child, walk a dog for an invalid, volunteer somewhere. Whatever reason you think you have for not volunteering, email me. I promise you I will prove to you that it is not valid-enough! I am not asking you folks for a life-long commitment- just an occasional date.

Help us honor our past and secure our future. One of the driving forces of DBSA-GC, Gloria Barry, was my friend and mentor. She was a WAVE during WWII, a wife, a mother of five and she had BP and managed to help implement our chapter, travel to advocate for mental illness and facilitated support groups, wrote about mental illness, kept archives and... and ..and.....So, please do not say that you have no time to help those that need help as you did, as you do? Help carry on the legacy.

Best Wishes to You,

Judy Sturm
Liaison and Facilitator

DBSA-GC Member's Mental Health Journey

Author Unknown - Submitted for publication in The Spectrum

I began my journey as a teenager of 16 in 1965. In Chico California. Yes the same area that experienced devastating wild fires recently that wiped out 95% of the town of Paradise and completely destroyed my brother's home in Butte Canyon.

My parents, of modest means, couldn't afford a private psychiatrist so I was admitted to Mendicino Mental Hospital near Clear Lake, Northern California. My first recollection of this hospital stay is mostly

a vague dream and or nightmare. The day room was very much like the one depicted in the movie “One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest” starring Jack Nicholson. In fact, I wonder if the set wasn’t duplicated. Being a very impressionable young girl it didn’t take long for another adult male patient to take advantage of me. I lost my virginity in a cold stair case where no one could hear my screams. I remember one of the drugs, Thorazine. I remember creating a poster while there stating “God is not dead, He’s on Throrazine.” It took me quite a while to learn that to “get out” I needed to play the rules and pretend to participate willingly in their programs. I attended a make shift high school, but I never caught up with my scholastic level. My best friend (not really) started a rumor that I didn’t return to school that fall because I was having a baby out of wedlock and giving it up for adoption. When I discovered this rumor, I did not dispute it, because having a baby was way better than having a mental illness. Unfortunately, this stigma hasn’t changed much in 53 years. About a year later, I had a set back and was readmitted to the hospital. This time, though, I knew the way around the system and was only there for about 7 weeks.



The next 41 years of my live seemed normal (at least to me). I met and married the love of my life, and we had our son in Germany in 1971. Returning to the States, however, I found out that my husband cared for me a lot, but didn’t love me. My divorce left me with a wild spirit for a few years until I met and fell in love with my true soulmate in 1975 and we had our first daughter in 1976. In 1980, I had my second daughter. Throughout my career I had success in sales and was even a sales manager over 5 people for an aftermarket distributor company. After 11 years with this company I began to experience mood and focus issues. I was fired and left with a broken heart and confused mind.

Over the next 5 years I worked at various companies in the sales field. Then, by chance, I was rehired at the company I loved. My friends couldn’t understand why I would return to that company, but I knew that my mental illness was rearing it’s ugly head and I was excited to have a second chance. But focusing issues began, and I was seeing a phycologist who advised my family doctor to prescribe me Adderall. Then, in the summer of 2013 my daughter and I ran in a local race, she the marathon of 26.2 miles, me the half of 13.1 miles. It was the 30th anniversary of this run, where I had participated before as a marathoner. I was a wee tired that morning so I took an extra Adderall. I took water at every stop, my daughter and I ran into the stadium hands overhead, and that was the last thing I remembered. I collapsed at the finish line and was taken to the medical tent. I was given fluids and my core temperature was monitored. I was put in a baby pool of ice-water to bring my core temperature down. I recovered, and later that night our family celebrated our accomplishments.

However, the next day at work, I felt a bit shaky. I soon realized that I didn’t know how to operate my computer and I didn’t even recognize my best customer’s voice. I went home that night and told my husband that something was off. I never really got better and was fired “again” about three months later. I then was without insurance and found out that the Affordable Care Act was not affordable if you had a certain income. We chose to go uninsured and used up a lot of our retirement funds to get me help. I now teach adults how to read at a local center. I am a lunch lady at an elementary school and proudly state that

10 TIPS TO STOP STRESSING

What are the warning signs of excessive stress? The National Institutes of Health (NIH) says job stress could contribute to:

- Frequent headaches
- Upset stomach
- Trouble sleeping
- Relationship problems
- Job dissatisfaction
- Feeling angry or being short tempered.

Gregory D. Schramka, licensed psychologist and Director of Behavioral Health Therapy at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital in Wauwatosa, WI, shares 10 things you can do to help manage your stress and encourages you to take advantage of the ones that fit your situation and work for you.



"Most everyone feels stress at one time or another. There are family demands, bills to pay, uncertainties about the future and countless other things. If you have a job, you may deal with stress in your workplace. You may face excessive demands, coworker conflicts, customer confrontations."

- 1** Track your stressors — For a week or two, write down what stresses you and how you responded.
- 2** Get organized — A to-do list can help you prioritize work and allows you to check off tasks as they're completed.
- 3** Set reasonable goals — Don't accept more work than you can reasonably do. Work with your boss and coworkers to set expectations that are realistic.
- 4** Manage technology — Set time limits on the smart phone and work email. Turn off devices during meals and at a set time each evening.
- 5** Take a break — Just a few minutes away from stressors helps. Take a quick walk or have a healthy snack.
- 6** Take time off — Take your vacation time. One survey found only 47 percent of workers take all the vacation time they're entitled to.
- 7** Make good use of your time off — Don't wait until the weekend to do things you enjoy.
- 8** Talk to your supervisor — Employees who are healthy (physically and mentally) tend to be more productive, so your boss has good reasons to create a workplace that promotes good health.
- 9** Dangerous or uncomfortable working conditions? Speak up — Work with your boss or a group of other employees to address worker health issues.
- 10** Need more guidance? Talk with a counselor — Find out if your company provides an employee assistance program (EAP). A trained counselor can help you address work stress. If your company doesn't offer an EAP, see if your health insurance provides coverage for counseling.

"Workplace stress can negatively affect your mental health. Be proactive about caring for your mental health. It's just as important as your physical health," Schramka says.

I have 7 grandchildren and 510 grandchildren between 11:00am to 1:30pm Monday through Friday. In closing, I would like to summarize by saying that I am proud to be where I am in my recovery. I acknowledge that once you have a mental illness, you will always have a mental illness, but you can adapt to it with the help of friends, family and professional medical personnel. My advice to you is to listen to your loved ones, you may not hear what you want to hear, but to hear from those that love and support you is way better than silence. - *Author Unknown*

DBSA-GC Reminders & Updates

Amazon Smile: Shopping online for every day goods? Support DBSA-GC by shopping with Amazon Smile! Follow this [LINK](#) to shop on Amazon and AmazonSmile gives back to DBSA-GC!

Support Groups: Please join us at one of our support groups this holiday season! All groups are listed on our website [HERE](#) and are free of charge. No RSVP necessary!

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.

"When we encounter challenges, it helps to have someone come alongside with practice and emotional support. These relationships can give us strength, purpose, and comfort."

