

# THE SPECTRUM

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago

## DBSA-GC Board of Directors Update

Special thanks to everyone who has been reaching out to the Board of Directors to volunteer! We have had many members reach out to see how they can help, and the DBSA-GC Board of Directors appreciates everyone's willingness to help!

If you are interested in volunteering, we need volunteers for our upcoming Symposium at Evanston Hospital on April 27th, 2019 from 8am to 1pm. Please email [wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org](mailto: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](mailto:wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org) with the subject "Spectrum" and we'll review your article and contact you for our next issue!



DBSA-GC's Annual Holiday Party will be on Monday, December 10, 2018 at 7:00PM on the lower level of Devon Bank at 6445 N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL. Everyone is invited and this is a party! Enjoy the holiday festivities with complimentary dinner, desserts, bingo, holiday gift bags and prizes! Hope to see you there!

## Navigating the Holidays When It's the Last Thing You Want to Do

*Megan Gilligan, DBSA-GC Volunteer/Member*

The season comes with virtually no notice. Suddenly the temperature sways from 80 degrees down to a balmy "feels like" -10. The wind cuts like ice, the ground is riddled with black ice and my hands are in constant need of lotion – like a lot. Despite these soul-sucking factors, people seem to love the season. Maybe it is the nostalgia of holiday traditions like cutting down the Christmas tree, or traveling with your family to some new city for



## 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org).

THANK YOU!

New Year's Eve. Perhaps it is that the city itself seems to slow down a bit, all dressed up in the holiday lights, we see a calm that settles over Chicago even if just for a moment. Sometimes despite all of these enjoyable things going on around you, winter seems to bring you down. The idea of the holidays becomes overwhelming – all of these people seemingly so happy, or maybe its family drama that has you thinking twice about attending a gathering. It makes you wonder, “How do I get through another Holiday season”?

What we must first acknowledge is that most people, even if they do not show it, experience some level of anxiety and an increased stress level over the season. This could be due to money, planning family or office parties, or maybe the holidays just bring up a reminder of years past that you hoped to forget. Acknowledging that this is a common underlying issue with people hopefully it will bring a bit of solace to your mind knowing that maybe you're not the only one that feels uncomfortable or unsettled during the holiday season. Your feelings are valid and you deserve to feel them and feel them fully. Nevertheless, knowing that other people might feel the same way as you might offer a sense of solidarity knowing you are not alone.



Next, I would suggest planning ahead. Often the holidays come and are incredibly time consuming – it is easy to feel like your schedule is out of control. Even if your schedule slows down significantly during this time, spending just a minute planning can help you to feel as though you have some control and direction during this time. What I'm suggesting is not to have fully developed plans and too spread your time too thin but even just adding a few things to a “to do” list can help keep your mind engaged and make sure you are not isolating yourself if you're feeling too overwhelmed.

Lastly, it is important to identify and understand your limits. It is easy to overcommit to activities and spending during this time. However, the most important piece of this equation is that you have control over your decisions. You have the ability to design your schedule in a way that suits your needs. It is important to not overextend yourself, but also important to not retreat to the comfort of your home, alone. Balance is key when navigating the holiday season. Try to remain cognizant of your obligations and what you deem as important in your life, without overextending yourself and putting more pressure on an already heightened time.

Ultimately, the Holidays are a tough time for most people. Sometimes it is nice to have a reminder that your feelings – whether you are sad, or happy, or anxious, are completely normal. It is important however to make sure you are not retreating from your life because of these feelings. Remaining engaged in your community or family/friend group is vital to maintaining your mental wellbeing through the winter.



[www.homegrownhospitality.typepad.com](http://www.homegrownhospitality.typepad.com)

## Managing the Holidays

*Margaux Shain, DBSA-GC Volunteer/Member*

As winter brings colder weather and shorter daylight, the holiday season nears. The holidays can bring cheer with annual traditions like watching holiday movies, putting up decorations and brighter lights, but it can also be a difficult time for others. Whatever your mood may be below are some tools to help you navigate the season in a healthy way.

Here are ten tools to help you feeling bright this holiday season:

1. Meditation
2. Exercise
3. Cooking and eating healthy
4. Socializing at events
5. Good sleep habits
6. Reading / listening to podcasts
7. Using a happy light or vitamin D
8. Volunteering or donating items
9. Journaling to track mood and gratitude
10. Calling a friend or family member

What makes you feel loved? Here are some ideas: affirmation, receiving gifts, quality time, physical touch and acts of service. Learn more about what makes you feel loved by taking a [QUIZ](#).

## Save the Date - 04.27.2019 DBSA-GC Annual Symposium

Save the date for DBSA-GC's Annual Symposium in the Frank Auditorium at Evanston Hospital on 4.27.2019. DBSA-GC Board of Directors is working hard to bring you an educational and interesting symposium this upcoming April! Please contact us at [wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org) with any suggestions for topics you'd like to see this year, speakers you've enjoyed in the past, and any feedback you feel would be helpful to make this year's symposium the best yet! See you in April!



## DBSA-GC Reminders & Updates

**Aurelio's Pizza fundraiser (11/25 -11/27):** Special thanks to Aurelio's Pizza in Wrigleyville for hosting DBSA-GC for a fundraiser in November! DBSA-GC earned \$100 in donations from customers who participated in the fundraiser. Thank you for your support!

**Amazon Smile:** Shopping online for gifts this holiday season? 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.



We are truly grateful for your engagement with DBSA this year. We had a wonderful year together and we look forward to kicking off our activities and events with you in 2019. Wishing you a healthy and happy holiday.

“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.”