



Newsletter of the Tucson Chapter of the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance

Improving the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Volume 1, Issue 8

Staying stable amidst the holidays

by Lisa

With the holiday season in full motion, the insanity begins and the stress starts to mount. What is one to do when dealing with the holidays and also with mental illness? In my experience, I take a deep breath and take a step back from everything. I take the day one hour at a time and focus on achieving one task at a time. This allows me not to become overwhelmed with all I have to do. This is a good protective factor that helps me to avoid stress that would induce my illness.

As I grieve for lost loved ones at this time of year, I just remember to reach out to my family and friends for support. It has been my experience that if you are alone and don't have family or friends around you, one can reach out to our support group members. Battles are often won with a lot of support! If you feel comfortable, by all means, just get out and attend our group *(con't p.3)*

**We're on the web
at
dbsatucson.com**

Additional copies of this newsletter can be downloaded from this site.

DBSA meeting times & locations

Central Tucson

Sunday nights 6—7:30

Located in University Medical Center at 1501 N. Campbell near Elm . The meeting is held in the back two rooms of the cafeteria on the main floor.

Northwest Tucson

Wednesday nights 6:30—8

Located at the YMCA at 7770 N. Shannon close to the corner of Magee. We meet in room 303, which is in a separate building which is outside the YMCA and parallel to the north parking lot (parallel to Magee Rd.). The room is glass-fronted and is the only room east of the pottery room.

Advocating for myself

by Kristen

Having bipolar, even with treatment through medication, I experience times of stability but also times where I am depressed. It has been my experience that I maintain periods of wellness by not only taking my medication, but also by implementing self-maintenance strategies and advocating for myself.

In my experience, the key to managing depression or bipolar disorder is to recognize risk factors that will induce illness. By recognizing risk factors of my disorder, I can successfully advocate for myself by using protective factors. *(con't p.2)*



*Happy
Holidays*

Advocating for myself (con't p.1)

These protective factors help me to maintain my wellness during periods in which I am vulnerable to mania.

Essentially, I recognize risk factors and immediately use my protective factors. For example, there are times when I am unable to sleep or continually wake up through the night. This is a risk factor for mania in my disease. Alternatively, a protective factor I would use in this case is to make note of the fact that I am not sleeping regularly. I make sure that I am on a regulated sleep schedule in which I go to bed and wake at the same time each day. By charting my sleeping habits I become more aware as to whether I am ex-

periencing bipolar induced mania or not, and then I can determine whether I need to contact my doctor before I experience a relapse.

I can share my sleep chart with my doctor and we are able to analyze together whether I am experiencing mania or whether there are environmental factors that are stressful and are disturbing my sleep patterns. Essentially, I am very aware of risk factors and then am able to use protective factors in order to advocate for myself.

Quotes to help you through the day by Jon

“May the pain you have known and the conflict you have experienced give you the strength to walk through life facing each new situation with courage and optimism.” ~ Unknown

“Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile. A word of optimism and hope. And you can do it when things are tough.” ~ Richard M. DeVos

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.” - Maria Robinson

“Perhaps our eyes need to be washed by our tears once in a while, so that we can see Life with a clearer view again.” ~ Alex Tan

“Having a positive mental attitude is asking how something can be done rather than saying it can't be done.” ~ Unknown

“One of the things I learned the hard way was that it doesn't pay to get discouraged. Keeping busy and making optimism a way of life can restore your faith in yourself.” ~ Unknown

“You've got a lot of choices. If getting out of bed in the morning is a chore and you're not smiling on a regular basis, try another choice.” ~ Steven D. Woodhull

“Be pleasant until ten o'clock in the morning and the rest of the day will take care of itself.” ~ Elbert Hubbard

“Whatever you are, be a good one.” ~ Abraham Lincoln

“Life is like riding a bicycle - in order to keep your balance, you must keep moving.” ~ Albert Einstein

“To do nothing is sometimes a good remedy.” ~ Hippocrates

“Have compassion for all beings, rich and poor alike; each has their suffering. Some suffer too much, others too little.” ~ Buddha

Staying stable amidst the holidays (con't p.1)

meetings to avoiding falling into a funk. I surround myself with positive family and friends that can help to keep me on track.

I also will keep a mood chart which is helpful to see whether I am becoming depressed or manic. A mood chart enables me to analyze whether my medicine is working correctly or if my moods are being influenced by stressful holiday factors. One can create their own mood chart, whether one does it on a scale of -10 to +10, with 0 being stable, or even just 1 to 10 with 5 being stable. As everyone has their own way of coping with their illness, chart your moods in whatever way works for you. These charts have helped me to advocate for myself to maintain four years of stability during the holidays.

Disclosing illness at work **By Scott**

I had a job offer to work on a new crop project in Mexico. I had some brief education about manic-depressive illness; that it was a lifelong event, that it did not go away and that medication was needed to control the illness. I didn't listen. I wanted this dream job in Mexico.

Should I tell the project manager about the illness? Would I lose the opportunity to work on the project? As we talked, my mind began to race over this decision. I reasoned out that I was cured. I have often wondered, if I had disclosed, would I have gotten the job?

I believe that, in this situation, I should have disclosed my illness. When I got to Mexico things started to escalate into mania. If I had reached out for help and support from the people, I might not have destroyed the project.

Do we really want to live by hiding and hoping no one finds out? When our mood starts to escalate or decline, where do we turn? How do we change the environment?

This is why I find support groups so important - to discuss the types of situations we all face as individuals living with mood disorders and to think about them in depth.



One person's view of bipolar disorder **by Mary (Part Two)**

For those who know me from the meetings, I always start my check-in with, "Hi, I'm Mary, I have Bipolar Disorder with Ultra Rapid Cycling." In other words, I cycle between depression and anxiety several times throughout the day. The onslaught and weight of these multiple states of mind is overwhelming to the point of immobility. I simply cannot move. It is as if I am completely bound and the oppressiveness is such that I feel as if I am in a straight jacket against my will. This is the very peak of my upward climb. Physically, the crown of my head aches with such pressure and pain that, metaphorically speaking, I wish it were an acne "zit" that I could pop to relieve the pressure. Often, I'll grab and scratch at my head in an effort to accomplish release.

The pressure in my head begins to subside from between ten minutes to one half hour. During this time, I become so depressed and resign to a sense of hopelessness and uselessness. My mouth is locked shut while everything, including my very thought processes, comes to a complete halt. Usually I can anticipate when a change in a cycle is creeping up on me. If I can feel this starting, I do a better job of dealing with the changes.

Sometimes I draw a picture to illustrate my experience.

My drawings represent my attempt to describe my experience and communicate this to others. They

(con't p.4)

Presidential Ponderings by Ron

As many of you know, one of my two sons, Justin the youngest, took his life on Labor Day, September 7th. Justin, age 21, had been an EMT for an ambulance service in the St. Louis area. His death forced me to revisit the five stages of grief I learned in graduate school through a counseling course. It was first postulated by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross to help cancer patients and now is used for anytime there is a significant loss in one's life or in those around them.

- * Here are the five stages of grief:
- * Denial
- * Anger
- * Bargaining
- * Depression
- * Acceptance

Thinking about these five stages reminded me of my bipolar journey. Initially, I denied I could have bipolar disorder. Then I was angry with God for allowing it to happen to me. Next, I bargained, "Please let this be a wrong diagnosis and I'll do (fill in the blank)". Depression settled in next, lasting a long time. Finally, I experienced acceptance with the ability to move forward and work towards stability.

What I've learned from my journey of grief with regard to my son's death is that we don't always follow the steps in order and may get "stuck" in a stage for a long period of time. This is normal. Grief has to have its way with us as we struggle through a diagnosis of a mental illness as well.

My mental illness is here to stay and so are the five stages of grief. The sooner I accept this fact the better it will be for me and hopefully for you.

Wishing you the best this holiday season!

One person's view of bipolar disorder (con't p. 3)

also reflect my desire to make sense of the disorder for myself.



It's Everybody's Newsletter

Our *In the Mood* newsletter is dedicated to representing the non-fiction stories of all of us, the participants of DBSA-Tucson. We invite you to join in this effort by writing about yourself and your experiences. Find an article or a topic you'd like to share with others. If you have some ideas and want some support, consider finding a buddy or ask someone on the newsletter committee to help you write them up. Contact us at newsletter@dbsatucson.com

Distribution date: March 1, 2010

Deadline for articles for Spring: February 8, 2010

Hotlines

SAMHC	622-6000
NAMISA	622-5582
Help on Call	323-9373
Peer Mentor Warm Line	770-9909
Information & Referral	881-1794

If you are in crisis and need to call the police at 911, request that a CIT (Crisis Intervention Trained) officer be provided.

DBSA office (Not hotline) 531-2388



