



---

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

**Improving the lives of people living with mood disorders.**

Volume 1, Issue 1  
Spring, 2008

### **Too many irons**

*By Jay*

Having been the founding father of the Tucson Desert Rats Chapter at its inception in 2004, I continue to learn from our consumers, each and every meeting. Never too late or senescent to learn.

For me, since my diagnosis in 1988, and the institution of pharmacologic treatment, plus the addition of a quadrangle of other ther-

apy, I have learned about a trigger—which can induce exhilaration, leading to exuberance, and the nasty hypomania.

That stimulus is doing too much, too quickly, with the notion of omnipotence. Having journaled for 8 years, and analyzing my triggers, this particular one makes me prone to emotional discomfort. I have

learned to recognize it, and "pull some irons out of the fire," to return to my baseline.

It is my observation that this is a common event for those with mood disorders, as it is with me. Hoping this instills some insight and recovery skills, for those with similar triggers.



---

**We're on the web  
at  
[dbsatucson.com](http://dbsatucson.com)**

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

---

### **DBSA meeting times & locations**

#### *Central Tucson*

*Sunday nights*

*6—8 pm.*

*Located in University Medical Center, on Campbell Avenue near Elm .*

*The meeting is held on the main floor next to the cafeteria.*

#### *Northwest Tucson*

*Wednesday nights*

*6:30—8 pm.*

*Located at the YMCA on Shannon Avenue close to the corner of Magee. It is north of Pima Community Northwest campus on Shannon. The meeting is held in a meeting room on the north side of the YMCA.*

---

### **I needed a support group**

*By Judy*

Four years ago, when I was diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) and depression, I knew I needed to find help in understanding what was happening to me. Little did I know I needed a lot more. I needed understanding people, friendly

greetings, caring remarks and the never-ending question of "What do you need from our support group?"

While living in Yuma, I had no support for my illness. A friend of mine who is bipolar had read about the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

and we decided to start a chapter in Yuma.

I saw new and familiar faces with each meeting. Facilitating the support group opened new perspectives regarding my needs and the needs of others. (p.3)

## In our own voice

by Carol

“In Our Own Voice” is a national program sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) where people with mental illness share their stories. A team of two local presenters speak publicly about their truths of mental illness. One of our DBSA members, Carol, is a presenter for the project. When asked why she enjoys being a part of it she said,

“I hope that it takes away the stigma that people assign to mental illness.” She added, “My participation helps to dispel the myth that people with mental illness can’t live a healthy, rewarding, and successful life.” The presentations are composed of five parts: dark days, acceptance, treatment, coping skills, and successes-hopes-and dreams. She has presented to audi-

ences of case managers at the Pima Council on Aging, psychology students at Pima Community College, and graduate students in the ASU social work program. In 2007, there were over 70 NAMI presentations. For 2008, NAMI has a goal of at least 100. Carol finds her involvement rewarding and is honored to be a part of it.

### Many thanks for the generosity of

- An anonymous member of the Tucson DBSA Chapter who provided funding for *In the Mood*.
- The UPS Store, 6336 N. Oracle Rd., for numerous donations and discounts in the printing of the newsletter.

### Serotonin

By Sara

Once I accepted that 1) my challenge with recurrent depression developed from biochemical imbalance and 2) did not result from personality or character weakness, I started seeking out information about how the brain worked. The educational process has helped me move from the subjective of “what’s wrong with me?” to the objective of what is happening or not happening in my brain. I now understand mental illness to be a “no-fault illness” that needs to be treated like any other illness.

Serotonin is the neurotransmitter or chemical messenger consistently linked with depression as well as obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety, anorexia, and other psychiatric disorders. It impacts (p.3)

### In the mood: welcome!

by Morty

The exchange of information with others in the group has had a major positive impact on my own recovery. The newsletter will further allow those within the group, and those who are not familiar with DBSA, to understand the good work DBSA does, and provide education for existing and new audiences.

### Activities in the Tucson mental health community

#### Walk with us!

NAMI is sponsoring their annual NamiWalks walkathon. It will happen on March 29th. It is a fund raiser for the local NAMI organization. The walk is free to all who wish to join in the fun. The event will be held at Kino Veteran’s Memorial Center, which is at 2805 El Ajo Way. If you’d like to join a group with other DBSA members, contact Scott at 624-7112. His team is the Purple Pavement Pounders Squashing Stigma.



## An Unquiet Mind— a book review

By Bobby



Kay Redfield Jamison's *An Unquiet Mind* is the story of her own experience with severe manic-depressive illness. It is also told from the perspective of her professional life as a psychologist, psychotherapist and researcher. The book speaks from a powerful, uncompromising and illuminating point of view. Jamison has lived with bipolar I disorder for more than 30 years. In her own words her book illustrates the complex nature of the illness.

What makes her book such a good read is that Jamison's writing is precise and descriptive of the events that include deep depressions and breathless highs. Jamison writes about a high manic episode, "I remember singing *Fly Me to the Moon* as I swept past those of Saturn, and thinking myself terribly funny. I saw and experienced that which had been only dreams, or fitful fragments of aspiration." While her experiences are often wildly dramatic, her profes-

sional background brought structure to her life.

*An Unquiet Mind* is not a self-help book; rather it is a narrative both informative and riveting. I agree with the Boston Globe's opinion that the book is, "Brave, insightful, richly textured and chillingly authentic."

### Serotonin con't

sleep, body temperature and libido. A high level of stress over a long period of time gradually lowers serotonin, which the body may not be able to replace.

"When serotonin is low, we experience problems with concentration and attention. We become scatter-brained and poorly organ-

ized. As stress continues and our serotonin level continues to drop, we become more depressed." (Dr. Joseph Carver found on [www.mental-health-matters.com](http://www.mental-health-matters.com))

Getting perspective on my mood disorder as well as taking good care of myself with regular walks, healthy foods, authentic relation-

ships with others, and working closely with my doctor and therapist have helped me cope with the challenge. Giving depression a voice in the supportive DBSA meetings is part of staying functional and connected with others when my lows occur.

### I needed a support group (con't)

When I moved to Tucson, I was happy to find a very active DBSA support group. I have been able to participate in the Sunday night meetings of the Tucson group while still driving back to Yuma every Thursday to facilitate the Yuma DBSA group.

During the past year, I have seen the lives of many Southern Arizonans and winter visitors touched

by the fine chapters of DBSA. Hundreds of people each year are being helped. I'm glad to say that DBSA was available when I needed a support group.



## Meet the Members of the Board

---

### ***President Emeritus: Jay***

Participating in the chapter, and serving on the board of directors, has given me great insight into the dynamics of consumers, and into the families of consumers. The support groups allow them to vent and receive essential support—to educate and lend peer support to all.

### ***President: Justin***

I came to the group in May of 2005 dealing with a bout of depression. After getting some valuable assistance from the group, I decided that I wanted to help. I approached the then-President Jay and had him mentor me as a facilitator. I joined the board a short time later and was ultimately nominated and voted in as president. I have enjoyed serving this chapter both as a facilitator and as president.

### ***Vice President: Ron***

Ron is a charter member of the Wednesday night meeting. Diagnosed in 2003 with bipolar II with rapid cycling, Ron hopes to help both consumers and support persons to find strength and encouragement.

### ***Treasurer: Doug***

I have been retired for several years so I volunteer a lot—from which I get loads of satisfaction. I am treasurer for several organizations (HOA, rocket club, friends of the library). I like to read, work in the yard, and play sudoku puzzles. I'm married (for 35 years), have two (grown) kids, and one grandson.

### ***Secretary: Robin***

I am excited about the direction the BOD is going with our DBSA chapter and I am looking forward to serving as secretary. I believe that as I grow, I can help take the DBSA Desert Rats chapter forward.

### ***Advocacy Director: Lisa***

As advocate for DBSA, I want to create a kind and compassionate environment for those who suffer and seek to get help with their illnesses. I have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder since 1996. Although it has been a long road, I am convinced there is hope and the illness can be controlled. It starts with proper doctors, medication, a willingness to get well, and group meetings like ours at DBSA once or twice a week.

### ***Member at Large: Morty***

I am new to the board and hope to work for the continued delivery of what I believe to be the main priority: Support for those with depressive and bipolar illnesses in a safe and comfortable environment, as well as assisting those in crisis with counsel and with immediate referral for their problems. If we accomplish this, we provide a huge service for those of us who carry the burden of these illnesses.

### ***Member at Large: Roberta***

Roberta is a facilitator for the Sunday night DBSA support group. She also volunteers at a local hospital.

---

## It's everybody's newsletter

Our *In the Mood* newsletter is dedicated to representing the stories of all of us, the participants of Tucson's Desert Rats Chapter of DBSA. 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](mailto:newsletter@dbsatucson.com)

---

***June 1: next issue of newsletter will be distributed.***

***May 10: deadline for articles for June issue.***



## Hotlines

<i>SAMHC</i>	622-6000
<i>NAMISA</i>	622-5582
<i>Help on Call</i>	323-9373
<i>Peer Mentor Warm Line</i>	770-9909
<i>Information &amp; Referral</i>	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.*