

DUAL DIAGNOSIS ANONYMOUS

MEETING HANDBOOK

TYPES OF MEETINGS

In DDA there are seven types of meetings:

1) Open Meetings

Open meetings are held in various locations including community centers, treatment facilities, churches, 12 step clubs, etc. and are open to anyone, whether they are in recovery or not. Open meetings are often attended by members of DDA's extended family and/or others who may be interested in learning more about our fellowship.

2) Closed Meetings

Closed meetings are usually held in hospitals and institutions and are closed to the public. Closed meetings may be attended by persons who have been approved by DDA and the facility where the meeting occurs.

3) Gender Specific Meetings

Gender specific meetings are either women only or men only meetings. Men may be invited to attend a women's only meeting or women may be invited to attend a men's only meeting at the discretion of the group. This occurs when gender specific meetings invite speakers and/or may be conducting chapter business. Opposite gender participation only occurs with unanimous approval of the group.

4) Transition Age Youth Meetings

Transition age youth (TAY) meetings are attended by persons who are 25 years of age or younger. Older persons may attend TAY meetings with unanimous approval of the group.

5) Business Meetings

In DDA time is given near the end of each meeting for the secretary to give a brief report on chapter business, but at times it may be necessary to devote an entire meeting to discuss business. Business meetings may occur at the regularly scheduled meeting time or may be scheduled at a time determined by the group. Business meetings may be used to plan events, discuss finances, or discuss any other business of the chapter.

6) Guest Speaker Meetings

Guest speaker meetings are meetings during which an invited guest shares their recovery with the group. Guest Speaker meetings may be scheduled at the regular DDA meeting time or at a time designated by the group. The group consciousness of the meeting agrees upon any potential invited guest speaker.

7) DDAers Only Meetings

As the name implies, DDAers only meetings are meetings that are designated for persons in recovery from their dual diagnosis.

Guidelines for Chairing DDA Meetings

INTRODUCTION

Meetings of DDA follow formats that are similar to those of other 12 step fellowships. DDA has no special requirements regarding who may chair a meeting, although it is helpful for a chairperson to have some familiarity with the DDA program. It is acceptable in DDA for a member of our extended family* to chair a meeting. We have found it best to follow the authorized version of DDA's meeting format. It is especially important to remind persons to limit their sharing to 5 to 10 minutes in large meetings. This allows the opportunity for a greater number of participants to share. The chairperson in a DDA meeting does not 'run' the meeting, because effective meetings run themselves. However, there may be times that the chairperson needs to gently re-focus the meeting should it meander off topic or become disorganized. The chairperson may need to remind a member if they exceed 10 minutes so that others in the meeting have an opportunity to share. We have found that the 'round robin' format of meetings is effective in DDA. The

round robin format simply refers to going around the circle. The round robin format allows the greatest number of persons an opportunity to share. Usually, the chairperson of the meeting chooses the person to their immediate left or right to begin the round robin. When beginning the round robin format it is helpful for the chairperson to remind members that it is OK to pass if they do not wish to share. In DDA it is important to rotate the responsibility of chairing a meeting. This allows DDAers a tremendous opportunity to serve, allows for diversity, and provides 'training' on how to chair a meeting. By learning how to chair a meeting, members are able to start new chapters of DDA if they move to an area where there is no local chapter of DDA. Chairing DDA meetings is completely voluntary and although DDAers and DDA's extended family are encouraged to chair meetings, there should be no pressure and/or expectations placed upon any person to do so. The DDA chapter secretary is responsible for assigning chairpersons and keeping track of when they have chaired a meeting. It is helpful to schedule in advance who will be chairing upcoming meetings for local chapters. By rotating and keeping track of chairpersons everybody in the chapter has a greater opportunity to chair meetings.

* Our extended family includes all those who, although not identifying as dually diagnosed, support the DDA 12 Steps plus 5 program of recovery. These persons may include family members, friends, prescribers, clinicians, clergy, and/or others. DDA acknowledges the profound contribution of our extended family to our recovery efforts. The inclusion of our extended family within the symbol of DDA is true testimony that these persons are indeed embraced within our fellowship! (About Our Symbol, www.ddaoforegon.com)

DECIDING ON AN OPEN DISCUSSION MEETING OR CHOOSING A TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

Following the reading of the 5 Steps of DDA, the chairperson decides upon an open discussion meeting or chooses a topic from the lists below. The lists below are not meant to be all inclusive but rather to provide suggestions for chairpersons. Many times a chairperson selects a topic that is related to something that s/he is currently working on.

OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Open Discussion Meetings allow DDAers to share anything related to their recovery. Oftentimes during open discussion meetings DDAers simply share about how they have been doing since their last meeting. When a chairperson decides upon an open discussion meeting, s/he usually shares first. After sharing, the chairperson opens the meeting to others to share. Often during open meetings members are able to identify with one another, which results in mutual support and understanding. For example, the chairperson may share about various symptoms they have been experiencing and find that others have had, or do have, similar experiences. This highlights the power of the DDA fellowship as members are able to receive powerful feedback and support from others who understand their experiences.

TOPICAL DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Topical Discussion Meetings in DDA are meetings in which the chairperson chooses a recovery topic that is consistent with the principles of DDA and/or is something they are working on. The chairperson may also ask if any group member has a particular topic they would like to discuss. As with open discussion meetings when a chairperson decides upon a topic s/he usually shares first. After sharing, the chairperson opens the meeting to others to share. Some of the more common topics used for discussion in DDA are listed below for consideration by chairpersons.

Abstinence from all non-prescribed drugs

Acceptance

Courage

Faith

Fearlessness

Fellowship

Forgiveness

Genuine Power

Gratitude

Higher Power

Honesty

Hope

Humility

Love

Medications

Open-Mindedness

Patience

Perseverance

Readiness to Change

Serenity

Service

Sobriety from Alcohol

Solidarity

Spirituality

Strength

Therapy

Tolerance

Trust

Understanding

Willingness

Wisdom

In addition, there are many other potential topics for discussion found in our readings. The list below contains some of these topics.

Possible Topics from the 5 Rules of Respect:

- **The Importance of Confidentiality and Anonymity**
- **The Value of Respect**
- **The Value of Positive Feedback**

Possible Topics from the Preamble:

- **Why is it important to share our experiences, strengths, weaknesses, feelings, fears, and hopes, with one another?**
- **What do we mean by “resolving our dual diagnosis?”**
- **The importance of learning to live at peace with unresolved problems**
- **The importance of our desire to develop healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles**

Possible Topics from the Opening Thought:

- Why do we say that Dual Diagnosis Anonymous is a program of simplicity?
- Why is it dangerous to “dwell on past regrets?”
- How does “undue concern for the future” create anxiety?
- How can recovery from our dual diagnosis be simple and yet difficult at the same time?
- Why do we “remain focused on today by living one day at a time?”
- How does “accepting life on life’s’ terms” help us maintain serenity?
- Why is “courage” necessary to persevere in our recovery?

Using the 12 Steps plus 5 as Topics

Any of the 12 Steps plus 5 may be used as a topic for a meeting. This is simply a matter of the chairperson choosing a step for discussion.

Using Just for Today in DDA as Topics

Any one of the 12 Stanzas found in Just for Today in DDA may be used as a topic for a meeting. When using Just for Today in DDA the chairperson simply chooses one of the stanzas for discussion.

Possible Topics from Closing a Meeting with the Serenity Prayer

Any one, or all, of the principles of the Serenity Prayer may be used as a topic for a meeting. What is the significance of forming a circle for the Serenity Prayer?

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DDA Approved Literature

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THIS HANDBOOK
PLEASE CONTACT OUR CENTRAL OFFICE
TOLL FREE AT: 1-877-222-1332

You may also contact our Central Office
by using the “contact us” link on our webpage at:
www.ddaoforegon.com

Or by writing to:

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous
P.O. Box 2883
Portland, OR 97208

