

# Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (DDA)

## Starting a New Chapter of DDA

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this pamphlet is to serve as a guide for persons who are interested in starting a new chapter of DDA in their community. DDA makes every effort to hold fast to the principle of simplicity. It is our hope that this guide “Keeps it Simple” for you.

#### 1) Why Start a New Chapter of DDA?

There are many reasons to start a new chapter of DDA. The most common reason is that there are no meetings being held in the area of interest. Oftentimes, person(s) are introduced to DDA while hospitalized, incarcerated, and/or involved in a treatment program. When these persons return to their communities, they may find that there are no local chapters of DDA to maintain involvement. In fact, almost a third of all chapters of DDA were started by persons returning to their communities after treatment and/or incarceration.

Secondly, when someone has benefitted from DDA involvement, they share their recovery story with others, and then the need for new meetings develops by word of mouth.

And finally, we find that people search for possible support for themselves or others, find our webpage ([www.ddaoforegon.com](http://www.ddaoforegon.com)), and become interested in starting a new chapter.

Whatever your reason we look forward to supporting your endeavor.

## 2) What is the Cost of Starting a New Chapter of DDA?

DDA will provide all the necessary print materials (including a secretary binder, flyers, brochures) to start a new chapter. We have found that the majority of our meetings are held in locations that do not require rent. If rent is required, please contact the central office to inquire about assistance to get your DDA chapter off the ground.

According to DDA's 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, "every local chapter of DDA should strive to be self supporting." The costs of refreshments for meetings, BBQs, and recovery celebrations should be covered by the chapter through collections at each meeting.

If and when a local chapter becomes self supporting the group may choose to send funds to DDA's central office in downtown Portland to reimburse for start-up materials and postage.

## 3) What Do We Do First?

Normally, the first thing that happens is interested persons contact DDA's central office. You will find contact information on the last page of this pamphlet. Any questions you may have will be answered by DDA's central office. After receiving meeting materials it is simply a matter of deciding what type of meeting you would like to start (Please refer to the DDAers Meeting handbook) if it is simply a matter of scheduling your first meeting. DDA will make every effort to have a seasoned DDAer present for your first meeting. DDA will provide flyers and announce your meeting on our webpage.

## 4) How Do We Find Suitable Location?

DDA emphasizes that new chapters be located in "peer friendly" environments. Peer friendly environments refer to locations that are convenient and comfortable for consumers. Considerations should be given regarding access to public transportation, the time and day of the meeting that best suits participants schedules (in other words, consider other activities and commitments that may conflict with DDA meetings), and environments that are conducive to recovery. Many chapters of DDA hold meetings at various clinics or 12 step clubs that are already familiar to peers. Many of our meetings are held in locations that donate the necessary space.

This is especially true at locations that may be connected to agencies and/or other treatment facilities that do not allow for the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition to be practiced. Other locations, such as 12 step clubs, churches, and community centers may charge rent for their spaces. The DDA Central Office may be able to help with rent until a local chapter has time to accrue funds and achieve their goal of becoming self supporting.

Once the meeting is ready to begin, we ask that a new group/chapter form be completed and sent to the Central Office of DDA. This form may be sent via post office or electronically.

#### 5) What Happens at the First Meeting?

- The first meeting of a new chapter of DDA provides an opportunity to share information about our fellowship and establish future guidelines for the group. The chairperson of the first meeting of a new chapter follows the approved DDA meeting format. When chairing the first meeting of a new chapter, following the reading of the 5 steps of DDA, the chairperson chooses an open discussion format and time is spent for discussion and/or questions and answers in order to gain a better understanding of the materials. At the point of the meeting where the secretary reports on chapter business and opens the meeting up for announcements, time may be spent to determine the following:
  - The regular meeting time and day for the chapter (this may or may not be the same time and day of the first meeting);
  - What type of meeting the chapter decides upon (eg. Open; closed; gender specific, etc. Please refer to DDA's meeting handbook for more information regarding types of meetings);
  - Nominating and electing the chapter secretary(s);
  - When applicable, deciding on how to safeguard 7th Tradition donations.
  - Choosing a name for the new chapter. It is up to the majority of the group members to choose the name for their chapter. Oftentimes, members will suggest several names to choose from and then vote on them to select

one. Many chapters are named after the organization where the meeting is held. .

#### 6) Who Chairs the First DDA Meeting of a New Chapter?

Whenever possible the central office of DDA will provide a seasoned DDAer to chair the first meeting of a new chapter. If the central office is unable to provide a seasoned DDAer to chair the first meeting, the person(s) responsible for initiating the new chapter usually serves as chairperson for the first meeting. There is also the possibility of having a seasoned DDAer available by telephone to assist during the initial meeting of a new chapter and answer questions that the group may have. Any unanswered questions that may come up at a new chapter's first meeting should be directed to DDA's central office. After the first meeting is established the responsibility of 'chairing' meetings is voluntarily rotated among group members. (Please refer to the Dual Diagnosis Anonymous Meeting Handbook; Guidelines for Chairing DDA Meetings for more information.)

#### 7) What are Chapter Secretaries in DDA?

Every Chapter of DDA should have at least one person who is responsible for chapter business. This person is the DDA chapter secretary. It is preferred that each chapter has at least two. We have found that having two secretaries for a chapter ensures that one or the other will be present for the meeting because there may be times that one or the other are unable to attend. It is important that chapter secretaries rotate responsibilities so that each has the opportunity to perform the responsibilities of their office.

The responsibilities of the secretaries are:

- To make sure that the meeting location is accessible and ready for the meeting;
- To bring all the meeting materials;
- Completes the Dual Diagnosis Anonymous New Group Form and Returns it to the Central Office;

- To do whatever housekeeping is necessary for the meeting (EG, arrange chairs and tables; make coffee and put out snacks, etc.);
- Complete the group meeting record;
- Keep track of, and safeguard, 7<sup>th</sup> tradition monies if donations are made;
- Provides contact information should people have questions about the meeting;
- Identify chairpersons for the meeting (Please refer to the DDA Meeting Handbook for information regarding chairing meetings); and
- Reports on Chapter business at the end of each meeting, opens the meeting for announcements, and if the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition is practiced, reminds members that their chapter strives to be self supporting and passes the donation basket.

#### 8) Who Becomes the Chapter Secretaries?

Secretaries in DDA are elected by the ‘group consciousnesses of each chapter. This is simply a matter of nominating potential chapter secretaries and then voting. If more than two persons are nominated to be chapter secretaries, each should share their reasons for wanting to be selected with the group. After each has shared they are asked to leave the room and a vote is taken to determine which person(s) are elected. Oftentimes, when new chapters are started, the person(s) responsible for establishing the meeting assumes the responsibility of the secretary. Once the chapter is established the group consciousness should be utilized to elect a secretary.

#### 9) What Happens After a New Chapter of DDA is Established?

After a new chapter of DDA is established it is helpful to have regular contact with our central office. Regular contact with DDA’s Central Office can help resolve questions and/or concerns of the chapter, provide updates

on literature, continue to help attract new members for the chapter, and provide ongoing support as needed.

On behalf of DDA, and all those we serve, we extend our deep appreciation to you for your interest in spreading DDA's "...message of hope and recovery to those who still suffer from the effects of dual diagnosis." (Tradition 5)

Rev5/2011cm

DDA Approved Literature

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING STARTING A NEW CHAPTER OF DDA  
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](http://www.ddaoforegon.com)

Or by writing to:  
Dual Diagnosis Anonymous  
P.O. Box 2883  
Portland, OR 97208