



Evidence-Based Value and Availability of Self-Help Groups for Mood Disorders in the U.S. and Ireland



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Objectives:

- Assess the main purposes, structure, and evidence-based benefits of self-help support groups for mood disorders
- Compare and contrast the major self-help organizations for mood disorders available in the U.S. and Ireland
- Identify specific resources and websites for self-help groups in the U.S. and Ireland.

Relevance

The Lancet in June 2015 stated that low back pain and major depressive disorder were among the top ten causes of YLDs and were the cause of more health loss than diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and asthma combined (Prince, Wu, Guo, Robledo, O'Donnell, Sullivan, & Yusuf, 2015).

The U.S. is one of the most depressed countries in the world, according to the World Health Organization (McPhillips, 2016).

According to figures released by WHO depression is increasing worldwide and is now the leading cause of global mental and physical disability. Four percent of the global population or more than 300 million people were living with depression in 2015, which shows an 18% increase over a 10-year period (Schlein, 2017).

Relevance (Continued)

The National Network of Depression Centers notes that depression is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. among those aged 15-44 (<https://nndc.org/the-facts/?gclid=CPTThipTXtNQCFUtNfgodvL4NdA.>)

Countries with the greatest burden of disease for mental and behavioral disorders, in terms of most years of life lost due to disability or death adjusted for population size, according to WHO: China, India, U.S., Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Germany. If looking specifically at depression, anxiety, or alcohol and drug use add: Mexico, Turkey, Japan, Iran, and France.

What are Self-Help Groups and what do they do?

Self-help groups are made up of people who share similar problems, issues, situations. Members provide help and support to each other. They learn new coping strategies and gain information on what others have done and resources to assist with like problems.

Self-help groups are **FREE** and have research to back their effectiveness.

Research estimates that at least 10 million Americans are currently using self-help groups and as many as 25 million have utilized a group at some point in their lives (Kessler, Mickelson, & Zhao, 1997).

Lack of professional education on the effectiveness of self-help groups and the lack of revenue generation by these groups are two of the primary reasons why these groups are understudied and untapped (Low, 1950).

Evidence-Based Benefits of Self-Help Support Groups

As noted above there is not a great body of research on self-help groups. Kessler, et al (1997) conducted a study in which participants reported that 40% of all visits were in the self-help sector compared with 35.2% in the mental health sector. Another national study found that apart from Sunday school and Bible study groups, self-help groups are the most prevalent formal support groups in the U.S. with approximately 500,000 such groups.

An older study (Rush & Thomas, 1999) conducted by the National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association (now named DBSA), including 2,049 people from 190 cities in 38 states and DC found evidence that their support groups provide both social support and contribute to increased treatment adherence.

A meta-analysis of randomized, controlled trials was conducted to compare the benefits of self-help on depression and anxiety directly with face-to-face psychotherapy. The overall results indicated no significant difference between the methods used in the initial post-test or in follow up studies up to one year later (Cuijpers, Donker, van Straten, & Li, 2010).

Evidence-Based Benefits of Self-Help Support Groups (Continued)

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is connected with various psychological issues that include depression and anxiety. Wakefield, Bickley, and Sani (2013) hypothesized that it is the level of subjective identification that positively affects the mental health of people with MS versus mere support group membership. Real engagement makes a difference.

A prospective study was conducted to look at the survival time of 86 clients with metastatic breast cancer (Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer, & Gottheil, 1989).

Internet support groups (ISGs) are especially popular among those with depression (Griffiths, Mackinnon, Crisp, Christensen, Bennett, & Farrer, 2012). However, high quality evidence is very limited to show their efficacy. These authors conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of ISGs in reducing symptoms of depression among community members.

Evidence-Based Benefits of Self-Help Support Groups (Continued)

Chien and Chan (2013) tested the effects of a nine-month family-led mutual support group for Chinese people with schizophrenia, contrasted with a psycho-education group, and standard psychiatric care over a 24-month follow-up. Their study found positive results for the support group approach. Based on their findings the authors concluded that the support group program can serve as a beneficial family intervention for Chinese people with Schizophrenia.

Parmenter, Fieldhouse, and Deering (2015) conducted a review of published journal articles on peer-facilitated community support groups. They found that in “successful support groups peer-facilitation fosters mutually supportive, reciprocal relationships capable of inspiring hope among group members. These processes promote recovery, social inclusion, and personal growth. An over-arching theme regarding individuals’ engagement with such groups was the benefits of being with, and doing things with, other people with whom there was a sense of affiliation.”

Self-Help Organizations for Mood Disorders Available in the U.S. and Ireland



Mission: To provide hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people who have mood disorders.

www.dbsalliance.org

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the largest organization for people with mood disorders, run by people with mood disorders in the U.S. and beyond. At least 50% of the staff of the national office and the board of directors have to be people with mood disorders. DBSA is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It was founded in 1986 and was originally called the Depressive Manic-Depressive Association.

DBSA chapters are independent, local affiliates of the national Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance with headquarters in Chicago. DBSA chapters are incorporated, non-profit organizations, each governed by their own board of directors.

What Happens at a Support Group Meeting?

At meetings people share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully with mood disorders. There are six key elements of a DBSA chapter's support groups:

1. Focus on Self-Help
2. Peer-Led
3. Safe and Accepting
4. **Confidential!**
5. Meet regularly
6. **Free** of Charge—DBSA groups must be free and open to the public

Self-help groups are not therapy groups, but they are very therapeutic! Support groups are not a substitute for professional care. DBSA does not endorse or recommend the use of any specific treatment or medication. For specific advice individuals are urged to consult their providers.

DBSA Groups are held onsite and online.

DBSA Website: www.dbsalliance.org

On DBSA Website

Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance



EDUCATION
info, training, events

WELLNESS OPTIONS
treatment, tools, research

PEER SUPPORT
peer groups, inspiration

HELP OTHERS
family, friends, peers

ABOUT DBSA
who we are

Can't make it to a DBSA support group in your area? DBSA now offers [online DBSA support groups](#) in real-time! These virtual meetings are just like the DBSA support groups offered by our affiliated chapters and provide the same hope, help, and support needed for a lifetime of wellness and recovery.

Click on your state to find a support group in your community

US Search by Zip Code:

Mile:



More on Finding a Support Groups

There are at least 650 DBSA groups. There are currently groups in 42 states of the U.S. (States with no current groups are: Alaska, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.)

Non-U.S. Locations:

Argentina—Buenos Aires

Brazil—Sao Paulo











Greece—Athens

Romania--Bucharest

Singapore--Singapore

More DBSA Website Offerings

- Chapter Spotlights
- Young Adults
- Podcast Series
- Q&A
- Peer Inspiration
- Life Unlimited Stories
- Life Unlimited Awards
- DBSA Honorary Advisory Board
- I'm Living Proof
- Videos of Personal Stories
- Peers Celebrating Art
- Peers Celebrating Music
- Be Vocal

-  Advocacy Center
-  Balanced Mind Parent Network
-  Peer Specialist Training
-  Wellness Tracker
-  Facing Us Clubhouse
-  Find a Pro
-  Survey Center
-  WeSearchTogether
-  Resource Center
-  En Español

DBSA National Headquarters:
55 E. Jackson Blvd, Suite 490
Chicago, Illinois 60604
Toll-free: 800-826-3632
Fax: 312-642-7243

Other Resources





Recovery Incorporated was founded by Abraham Low (1891-1954, a Polish neuro-psychiatrist, who became a U.S. citizen in 1927. The name was changed to Recovery International in 2007.

Mission: to use the cognitive-behavioral, peer-to-peer self-help training system developed by Abraham Low, MD. to help individuals gain skills to lead more peaceful and productive lives.

<https://www.recoveryinternational.org>

RI is based on self-control, self-confidence, and increasing one's determination to act. RI is a non-profit, secular organization directed at helping clients after their hospital or therapeutic treatment time. Most groups are led by experienced non-professionals.

Method: *a system of cognitive-behavioral techniques for controlling behavior and changing attitudes toward symptoms and fears.*



Recovery International (RI) groups are available onsite, online, and via telephone.

RI groups are located in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Israel, India, Ireland, and the UK.

U.S. website: <https://www.recoveryinternational.org/>

Location: 1415 W. 22nd St, Tower Floor
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Phone: 312-337-5661

Canada website: www.recoverycanada.org.

Location: 16-20 Kitty Murray Lane
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1L7

Irish Division of RI website: <http://recoveryireland.ie/drlow.shtml>

Location: Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Dublin 10

Phone: 01-62 60 775

Irish registered charity number CHY 7690

In Conclusion:

Please consider referring your clients to available support groups. They are **FREE** and have so much potential benefit.

For mental health needs, the three-pronged approach to treatment is widely supported:

1. Medication (when warranted)
2. Therapy, and
3. Self-help!

“Who then can so softly bind up the wound of another as he who has felt the same wound himself?”

Thomas Jefferson

National Websites for Depression & Bipolar Disorder

Depression and **Bipolar** Support Alliance

<http://www.dbsalliance.org/> DBSA provides information on **depression** and **bipolar disorder**, online tools, ... Find help from the leading **national organization** for people with mood disorders. Evidence-Based Value and Availability of Self-Help Groups for Mood Disorders in the U.S. and Ireland

NIMH » **Bipolar Disorder** - **National** Institute of Mental Health

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/> **Bipolar disorder**, also known as manic-**depressive** illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry ...

Bipolar Disorders - American Psychiatric Association

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/bipolar-disorders> Learn about **bipolar disorders**, including symptoms, risk factors, treatment options ... APA's Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals · Meet Our **Organization** · Read APA **Organization Documents and Policies** · Work ... For those dealing with **depression**, and those who care for them, it is ... **National** Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

More National Websites for Depression and Bipolar Disorder

[NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness | NAMI: The National ...](#)

<http://www.nami.org/> NAMI, the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health **organization** dedicated to ... Hope for **Bipolar Disorder**. Back to Top. Mental Illness · ADHD · Anxiety Disorders · Autism · **Bipolar Disorder** · Borderline Personality Disorder · **Depression** · Dissociative Disorders · Eating Disorders...

[Bipolar Disorder | Depression Resources and Organizations](#)

<https://www.seroquelxr.com/patient-resources/organizations-advocacy-groups.html> ... and support to help you manage your **depression** or **bipolar disorder**. ... Mental health **organizations**, such as the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**, the...

[Bipolar Disorder | Anxiety and Depression Association of America ...](#)

<https://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/related-illnesses/bipolar-disorder>

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-**depressive** illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy, and ability to function. This is an organization for mental health professionals of all disciplines.

Still More National Websites for Depression and Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar Disorder Resources - WebMD

<http://www.webmd.com/bipolar-disorder/guide/bipolar-disorder-resources-1>
Jan 14, 2015 ... The **Depression** and Bipolar Support Alliance web site provides timely information on **depression**, anxiety, and **bipolar disorder**, and explains how ... not -for-profit, Web-based membership **organization** that seeks to improve the ... The **National** Alliance on Mental Illness or NAMI works to support and educate...

Bipolar Disorder | **Mental Health America**

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/bipolar-disorder> Clinical Trials: **National** Institute of Mental Health Clinical Trials ... in the workplace. Symptoms of **bipolar disorder** fall into two categories: mania and **depression**.

National - Mental Health **Disorders** - Anxiety, **Bipolar**, **Depression** ...

<http://losangeles.networkofcare.org/mh/links/national.aspx?id=78> A **national**, nonprofit **organization** solely dedicated to informing the public, healthcare professionals and legislators that anxiety **disorders** are real, serious and...

Still More National Websites for Depression and Bipolar Disorder

Resources in U.S.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) <http://www.dbsalliance.org>

Mental Health America <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness <http://www.nami.org>

Recovery International <https://www.recoveryinternational.org>

Resources in Ireland:

Bipolar disorder: organizations & websites www.bipolarcaregivers.org/

Recovery International www.recoveryinternational.org

Recovery Self Help Method Ireland www.recoveryireland.ie

Resources in Canada: <http://recoverycanada.org/>

International Resource:

International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF) www.ibpf.org

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