



# DUAL DIAGNOSIS ANONYMOUS

## MEETING HANDBOOK

### TYPES OF MEETINGS

In DDA there are ten 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) Culturally Specific Meetings (Includes DDA in other languages, Veterans', BIPOC meetings)**

Culturally Specific DDA meetings include, but are not limited to, Spanish-speaking meetings, Veterans' meetings, and meetings at treatment and recovery centers serving underrepresented populations. Individuals that don't identify with the specific group types may attend with unanimous approval of the group. DDA currently provides literature in six languages (English, Spanish, German, Italian, Dutch, Russian).

## **5) LGBTQIA+ Meetings**

LGBTQIA+ groups are for individuals that identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These meetings allow the space for allies.

## **6) 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.

## **7) 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.

## **8) 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.

## **9) Online Meetings**

DDA online meetings are held on the zoom platform. All are welcome to attend, including members of our extended family. Online meetings are 1 hour in length and can include other meeting types listed in this document, including: gender specific, culturally specific, LGBTQIA+, Step Study or others.

## **10) 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](http://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?

**FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THIS HANDBOOK  
PLEASE CONTACT OUR CENTRAL OFFICE  
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