

# Family Support

FOR FAMILIES OF ADULTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

December 2016  
Volume 20

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## Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

Created for and led by individuals living with mood disorders, DBSA provides hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of those impacted by bipolar or depression. DBSA provides an extensive array of resources online at [www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org) to offer 24/7 support and education to people living with a mood disorder and their loved ones. Check out the DBSA Wellness Tracker app and the 6-hour online Living With a Mood Disorder course, both of which are free.

DBSA has nearly 300 chapters offering over 700 support groups so that individuals can receive in-person support, too. The Kalamazoo chapter of DBSA holds weekly support groups on Mondays from 7-9pm at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church at the corner of Oakland and Romence in Portage. The group is open to people living with a mood disorder as well as to their loved ones.

I was able to speak to Steve Zylstra, current President of the Kalamazoo DBSA. He said that meetings typically begin with a brief check-in from the entire group, then someone with lived experience will speak about a given topic, then for the last hour the large group breaks into small groups for more in-depth discussion about how people are doing. During the small group meetings, caregivers will have their

own group separate from those who have a mood disorder. On the second Monday of the month, Andrea Deming, the group's professional advisor and a limited licensed psychologist, will present a topic and/or respond to questions during the "Ask Andrea" segment.

## Navigate at InterAct

There has been much attention focused recently on early psychosis intervention. Research shows that treatment in early stages or after the first episode of psychosis can slow, stop, and even reverse effects of psychosis. The most effective treatment modality for early psychosis intervention is called Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC). Key components of a CSC program include case management, family support, psychotherapy, medication management, supported education or employment, and peer support. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has made grants available for CSC programs and InterAct of Michigan received a SAMHSA grant for the Navigate programs being run in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

Navigate was developed with support from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) as part of their research project Recovery After Initial Schizophrenia Episode (RAISE). It being implemented across the country and participants in a Navigate program can expect to work closely (usually weekly) with their Navigate team for 6-12 months, then meet less frequently for 12-18 months before determining what services may be needed on an ongoing basis.

InterAct's Navigate program began to be offered in Kalamazoo in July 2016 is open to individuals between the ages of 15-30 who have been experiencing symptoms of

Find out about community events, meetings, news and more at:

[www.kazoocmh.org](http://www.kazoocmh.org)

## Families In Action

~ 2017 ~

Thursdays, 6:30-8:30pm

March 9 – May 25

Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm

September 19 –

December 5

Must be registered to attend  
Free 12 week education group  
Contact Heather for more info  
(269) 364-6961



**FREE!**

Second Tuesday  
of every month

6:30-8:00pm

KCMHSAS

418 W Kalamazoo Ave

Fourth Monday  
of every month

6:30-8:00pm

Victory Baptist Church  
308 W Milham Ave

**NO REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED!**

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psychosis for 18 months or less. Because it is grant funded, individuals who are interested do not need authorization from KCMHSAS in order to participate and people residing outside of Kalamazoo county can also participate. The only cost, for those uninsured, could be medication.

Anyone interested in learning more about Navigate in Kalamazoo should contact the Team Supervisor, Phyllis DeWaters, at 269-488-9647 or visit [www.interactmich.org/our-programs/naviagte](http://www.interactmich.org/our-programs/naviagte). Phyllis points out that participants and their families have 24/7 access to support from the team, so they are not alone in times of crisis. The team will provide education and skills to help individuals bounce back after they have experienced an episode of psychosis.

The program at InterAct has four main components: a prescriber for medication, family therapy and education, individual therapy, and a vocational/educational specialist to help the individual work toward meaningful life activities that can boost recovery. Navigate is person-centered and strength based with a focus on helping people get back on track with their life goals. The response to the program has been positive and they are currently accepting new referrals.

### Intensive Crisis Stabilization (ICS)

KCMHSAS introduced an ICS program in October 2016 as part of our efforts to become a certified community behavioral health clinic (CCBHC). The goal of the ICS program is to avoid hospitalization and to have the individual begin working toward recovery while in the community. Individuals are referred to ICS through the pre-admission screening process, either to divert from inpatient admission or as a step-down from an inpatient stay.

Referrals need approval from one of the KCMHSAS Emergency Mental Health Clinical Supervisors.

The ICS team consists of a team supervisor, case managers, clinicians providing 24 hour on-call availability, and a psychiatrist. In addition to treatment planning, components of ICS can include office or home/outreach contacts, coaching via phone to the individual on the team and/or their family, medication management, assistance with applying for benefits, coordination of transportation, emergency screening, ongoing assessment, and linkage with appropriate ongoing care if needed. ICS is open to both youth (age 5 and up, no autistic diagnoses) and adults. An individual can remain with the ICS team for up to 30 days. Treatment planning is individualized and specific to the current crisis. Each person is treated on a case-by-case basis, depending on their needs.

### Minimizing Holiday Stress

Holidays can be stressful for everyone. There is pressure to buy, bake, clean, shop, and socialize more. Having a mental illness in the family can complicate events and add even more pressure, but by planning ahead, you can minimize stress.

The Mayo Clinic staff recommend the following steps to prevent holiday stress and depression:

- 1) Acknowledge feelings – especially if you're dealing with grief or loss. You can't force yourself to be happy.
- 2) Reach out – if you're feeling lonely or isolated, seek support and companionship through


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KCMHSAS

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Keep Family Support  
Services up-to-date with  
your email address in  
order to receive  
information and resources.

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Do you have a book  
checked out from  
Family Support's  
Lending Library? We  
hope it is useful.

Please make sure to  
get it back to Heather  
at KCMHSAS so that  
others can use it, too.

Thank you!

participating/volunteering  
in religious community, or  
social events.

- 3) Be realistic – know that holidays don't have to be perfect or adhere to traditions from years before. Be prepared to adapt old traditions and create new ones.
- 4) Set aside differences – try to accept the people in your life as they are without expectations. Let grievances wait until they can be discussed another time. If someone gets upset, try to remember they are dealing with stress, too, and may be less effective at managing it than you are.
- 5) Stick to a budget – decide how much you can spend before you go food and gift shopping. Consider a family gift exchange, homemade gifts, or making a donation in someone's name.
- 6) Plan ahead – Pick specific days for activities and meals. Plan menus ahead and shop accordingly. Enlist others to help prepare and clean-up from events and gatherings.
- 7) Learn to say no – You may not be able to participate in every activity and need to say no to avoid feeling overwhelmed or resentful. People will understand. If you get taxed with something you can't turn down, try to remove something else from your schedule to help balance the time.
- 8) Don't abandon healthy habits – overindulgence can lead to guilt and more stress so try to stick with healthy habits that you know work for you. Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, and eat a healthy snack to keep you full so you don't go overboard with food and drink at holiday gatherings.
- 9) Take a breather – Give yourself time alone to engage in something that helps reduce your stress, such as taking a walk, listening to music, getting a massage, reading a book, doing mindful breathing, or taking a bath. Even just 15 minutes to yourself without distractions can refresh you enough to handle the things you have to.
- 10) Seek professional help if you need it – if you're doing all of these things and still find yourself struggling with persistent sadness or anxiety, difficulty sleeping, irritation or hopelessness, inability to manage routine chores, or physical complaints, you should talk to your doctor or a mental health professional about what is going on.

Remember, too, what you've learned about self-care from participating in Families In Action, NAMI Family Support Groups, or by talking with friends, family, and mental health staff. You need to take care of yourself in order to be prepared to take care of your loved ones.

NAMI offers additional ideas on how to beat winter blues: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/November-2015/Tips-for-Managing-the-Holiday-Blues>



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## Co-Occurring Disorders

Dual diagnosis, comorbidity, or co-occurring disorders; these phrases are used to describe the existence of a mental health condition and a substance use disorder at the same time. Co-occurring disorders are quite common. NAMI indicates that about a third of all people living with mental illness and half the people living with severe mental illness will experience an issue with substance abuse. Vice versa, a third of people who abuse alcohol and more than half of people who abuse drugs will experience a mental illness. For most clinicians, gone are the days of recommending that clients seek treatment from separate providers. Integrated treatment, combining mental health and substance use disorder treatment, has become the standard.

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) states, "...we need to first recognize that drug addiction is a mental illness. It is a complex brain disease characterized by compulsive, at times uncontrollable drug craving, seeking, and use despite devastating consequences— behaviors that stem from drug-induced changes in brain structure and function. These changes occur in some of the same brain areas that are disrupted in other mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia. It is therefore not surprising that population surveys show a high rate of co-occurrence, or comorbidity, between drug addiction and other mental illnesses."

It may be useful for loved ones of a person who is struggling with a substance use disorder to keep in mind that generally no one asks to become dependent or to regularly abuse alcohol or other drugs anymore than one would ask to have a serious mental illness. People with co-occurring disorders may be prone to more shame due to the stigma associated with both. It's important

to provide support while still maintaining healthy boundaries. Each situation is as unique as each individual, thus one family's boundaries may not look like another's.

It sounds confusing, but HelpGuide.org puts it simply, "The best way to help someone is to accept what you can and cannot do. You cannot force someone to remain sober, nor can you make someone take their medication or keep appointments. What you can do is make positive choices for yourself, encourage your loved one to get help, and offer your support while making sure you don't lose yourself in the process." More information here: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/substance-abuse-and-mental-health.htm> The website recommends being patient, educating yourself, setting boundaries, and seeking support.

In the Kalamazoo area, there are a variety of places where loved ones of those struggling with co-occurring disorders can find support, which can greatly help in setting boundaries, being educated, and staying patient. Here are a few ideas about free support groups:

- Family and Friends Program at the Gilmore Community Healing Center on Tuesdays from 6-8pm at 1910 Shaffer Street
- Families Against Narcotics (FAN) meetings from 7-9pm in Kalamazoo on the first Thursday and third Monday of the month at 2401 Gull Road, in Battle Creek on the second Tuesday of the month at 90 E. Michigan, and in St. Joseph on the third Thursday of the month at 910 East John Beers Road
- There are numerous Al-Anon meetings in Kalamazoo county and a current list as well as information can be obtained by calling their answering service at 269-343-4328
- You can also find support online at [www.intherooms.com](http://www.intherooms.com) or [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)

