



**Depression and Bipolar  
Support Alliance**

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For Immediate Release

## **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Presents “I to We” Mental Wellness Weekend November 11-12**

CHICAGO—The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) will present the “2016 DBSA I to We Leadership Weekend” on Friday, November 11, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday, November 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls, 1989 Front Street, Cuyahoga Falls. Mental health and civil rights advocate Melody Moezzi, JD, will serve as keynote speaker. This interactive community mental health event is free of charge and open to the public, though participants are asked to register at [DBSAlliance.org/AkronRegistration](http://DBSAlliance.org/AkronRegistration).

All too often, people with mental health conditions are marginalized as having little to contribute to society. It is not widely understood that these conditions, for the most part, present only episodic challenges and that the people who live with them can and do have rich, fulfilling lives. DBSA’s Leadership Weekend was created to shift the focus in mental health from eliminating illness to building wellness; from isolation and fear to a community of support; and from individual views to powerful, collective voices. It is also intended to provide inspiration and learning for people whose lives have been touched in some way by a mood disorder. DBSA is proud to partner for this event with DBSA Akron Area, DBSA Pathways to Healthy Families, DBSA Solon, DBSA Wayne & Holmes Counties, Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment (BeST) Center at NEOMED, Cleveland Clinic Akron General, Community Support Services, Portage Path Behavioral Health, and University Hospitals Case Medical Center–Mood Disorders Program.

(more)

The opening day of the weekend (November 11), will promote dialogue and action towards changing public perception of mental health disorders. It will also connect individuals to community resources, and celebrate the contributions of people living with mental health conditions. Keynotes, including Moezzi, will examine new findings in depression and bipolar disorder as well as how to utilize positive psychology to build and maintain wellness. On day two (November 12) DBSA's Leadership Forum will be presented, designed for parents, young adults, grassroots mental health advocates, peer specialists (people with mental health conditions trained to support others with the same conditions), and DBSA chapter leaders and support group members. Participants will learn how to provide support to people living with mood disorders and how to advocate for change in mental health. Keynote sessions will discuss the power of storytelling and building resilience.

"Those of us who live with depression or bipolar disorder know firsthand that they can be isolating, debilitating conditions," said DBSA President Allen Doederlein. "That's why transforming from I to we is so important. Together, as a community of peers, we exponentially increase our power to turn illness to wellness and public fear to understanding!"

Melody Moezzi, JD, is an Iranian-American activist, attorney, and award-winning writer. She is author of two books as well as articles for the New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, Guardian, Huffington Post and bp [bipolar] Magazine. A United Nations Global Expert, she has appeared on CNN, BBC, and NPR, providing commentary on issues ranging from mental health to feminism to Islam in America. Moezzi is a graduate of Wesleyan University and the Emory University School of Law and Rollins School of Public Health.

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder, two of today's most prevalent and devastating mental health conditions. Led by and created for individuals living with these conditions, DBSA provides hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders by providing free, scientifically based tools and information focused on an integrated approach to wellness; supporting research; and working toward equitable treatment for people with mental health conditions. In 2015, DBSA programs and resources directly touched 3.4 million people. For more information go to [www.DBSAAlliance.org](http://www.DBSAAlliance.org). (more)

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
"2016 DBSA I to We Leadership Weekend"  
November 11-12, 2016**

Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls,  
1989 Front Street, Cuyahoga Falls.

**Friday, November 11, 2016**

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Changing society's perception of people who live with mental health conditions.

**Saturday, November 12, 2016**

9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

DBSA Leadership Forum on how to support people living with mood disorders and advocating for mental health.

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