



Contact: Cindy Specht

Phone: 312.988.1163

Email: CSpecht@DBSAlliance.org

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Target Zero to Thrive This April

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Targets Raising Expectations for Mental Health Treatment

Chicago, IL – As part of its *2014: Year of Thriving* programming, on April 1, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) launched *Target Zero to Thrive*, a month-long social media campaign challenging mental health care professionals, providers, researchers, and individuals living with mood disorders to raise treatment goals to zero symptoms.

Of course the first priority for treatment is ensuring a person living with depression or bipolar disorder is out of crisis. However, too often the end goal established for successful long-term care is for the person to maintain a stable mood. Better, or even stable, is not always well. Every person deserves the opportunity to not just survive but thrive, and to do that we need to ensure true wellness is the end-goal for mental health treatment.

Consider this: successful treatment for cancer targets the removal of every cancerous cell—to achieve complete remission. Why, then, do we consider treatment for depression or bipolar disorder to be successful when symptoms persist, even if the person is considered to be stable? The cost of settling for reduced symptoms is simply too great. It is, in fact, a matter of life and death—for when symptoms persist, individuals who have mood disorders are:

- at significantly greater risk of relapse.⁽¹⁾
- more likely to experience significant functional impairment, making the day-to-day demands of job and family challenging, and too often, debilitating.⁽²⁾
- more likely to have life-threatening co-occurring conditions, such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes—a huge factor in why individuals with mental health conditions die, on average, 25 years younger than those without mental health conditions.⁽³⁾
- at a higher risk to die by suicide.⁽⁴⁾

DBSA President Allen Doederlein shares, “Living with a mood disorder can damage hope and lower expectations; so a person may not expect or think they deserve a full life. We, as peers, clinicians, researchers, and family, need to help them expect and achieve more—by raising the bar for treatment. Targeting zero symptoms may seem like a formidable goal, but there are over 21 million reasons and Americans living with depression or bipolar disorder to make it a goal worth pursuing!”

Mr. Doederlein concludes, “If a person doesn’t achieve zero symptoms, they haven’t failed, but if they are never given the opportunity to achieve that goal, the system has failed them.”

Join DBSA this April as we *Target Zero to Thrive* at www.DBSAlliance.org/TargetZero and learn more about DBSA's 2014: *Year of Thriving* at www.DBSAlliance.org/Thrive2014.

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The **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)** is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, depression and bipolar disorder, which affect more than 21 million Americans, account for 90% of the nation's suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses. DBSA's peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources are available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America. Through more than 750 support groups and nearly 300 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

For more information, please visit www.DBSAlliance.org or call (800) 826-3632.

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