

# **DUAL DIAGNOSIS ANONYMOUS**

## **PREAMBLE**

***Dual Diagnosis Anonymous is a fellowship of persons who share their experiences, strengths, weaknesses, feelings, fears, and hopes with one another to resolve our dual diagnosis, and/or learn to live at peace with unresolved problems. The only requirement for membership in DDA is a desire to develop healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles.***

ABOUT THE PREAMBLE

Our Preamble captures the essence of the DDA fellowship. The word preamble literally means “before walking.” Indeed, before we begin our walk, with our brothers and sisters in DDA, our preamble reinforces our identity.

The initial section of our preamble was adapted by our founder from the **Support Together for Emotional and Mental Serenity and Sobriety Program (STEMSS)**. Our preamble emphasizes the value of “sharing” in our fellowship. We can only begin to walk in our recovery by the “giving away” of ourselves. As we reflect upon our preamble, we see a full range of topics to share that contribute to our lives as “persons.” Our “Experiences” bring us to recovery and remind us that although life experiences may vary among members of our fellowship, there is a thread that connects us. The embodiment of this thread is our capacity to learn from our experiences. Our “Strengths” are pillars of support for one another. We recognize that we all have strengths. Our very presence in DDA, for many of us, is an indicator of the strength that we possess that brought us to the rooms of DDA. The expression of our “Weaknesses” allows us the opportunity to share our perceived shortcomings in an environment of support, healing, and recovery. Our fellowship, after all, affords us the opportunity to “let our guards down” without being judged. We are able to recognize why our 12th Tradition reminds us that trust is a cornerstone of our fellowship. Ironically, in the expression of our weaknesses we find “strengths.” Our “Feelings” are perhaps the strongest reminder of our “group consciousness.” We may all have unique experiences based upon our many diverse qualities. We may vary in our strengths, weaknesses, fears, and hopes but we find common ground in our human capacity to feel. Sharing our feelings circulates the life force that is our fellowship. When we consider our “Fears” we are reminded again that our fellowship is a safe haven. There are many fears born of our dual diagnosis. Some examples are; Fear of rejection; fear of failure; fear of being alone; fear of losing control or being controlled; and the fear associated with living in a world swirling in uncertainty. For many of our fellows, our inability to trust may lead to a heightened sense of vigilance and fear. There are also those of us who know the fear associated with paranoia along with the associated fear of being persecuted. We DDAers understand one another. It is through this understanding, unique to our fellowship that provides for the ““Hopes” that we share!” The DDA motto; “To Live without Hope is to Cease to Live” is a founding principle of our fellowship. There is a “rhythm” to the sharing principle of our preamble. This rhythm guides us through the sharing of our experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and feelings

bringing us finally to our hopes. As stated in our 5th Tradition, DDA has but “One Primary Purpose; to carry its message of HOPE and recovery to those who still suffer from the effects of dual diagnosis.” Indeed, we are founded upon the understanding that our recovery is predicated upon hope. We in DDA recognize that that if we are to resolve our dual diagnosis, it is the sharing within our fellowship that leads us there.

Perhaps the, most powerful expression of our preamble is our recognition of the need to “learn to live at peace with unresolved problems.” A primary barrier to recovery for many of us is our inability to live with unresolved problems. It is the strength of the group consciousness of our fellowship that opens the door to our capacity to learn to live at peace with unresolved problems. We see through the experience of our more advanced brothers and sisters that living at peace with unresolved problems is possible. Ours is a fellowship of attraction, rather than promotion. We are “attracted’ to this ability to live at peace with unresolved problems and follow in one another’s footsteps to its realization.

It is this concept of learning to live at peace with unresolved problems than opens the door for the involvement of the “Friends of DDA.” As our founder is fond of saying during our closing prayer; “We do not have to do our recovery alone, we do it as a family with our brothers and sisters in this circle.” Those members of our fellowship who do not have a dual diagnosis are our extended family. And, after all, who in our extended family could not benefit from sharing and learning to live at peace with unresolved problems? And since the only requirement for membership in DDA is a “Desire” to “Develop” healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles we are able to embrace any person who so aspires to this end in our fellowship.

For many of us, especially in the beginning “newcomer” stage the idea of recovery may seem a far off and unrealistic dream. Even so, by keeping an open mind, this does not suppress our “desire to develop a more meaningful alcohol and drug free lifestyle.” This last part of our preamble is aligned with the 4th Step of our Five Steps: We came to believe that when our own efforts were combined with the help of others in the fellowship of DDA, and God, as we understood Him, we would develop healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles.” To “develop” a healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyle implies a fresh beginning. Our preamble opens the door to our fellowship for anyone, at any stage, of their life and/or recovery.

For most of us it would be impossible to experience a healthy lifestyle without remaining alcohol and drug free. But we do recognize that there may be those, especially in our extended family, for whom alcohol does not impinge upon a healthy lifestyle. In fact, our anonymous program finds its roots in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous which we acknowledge as the “Grandmother” of all 12 Step programs. As such we acknowledge the Big Book of AA’s premise that; “If anyone is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right about-face, and drinks like a gentleman, our hats are off to him.” (Alcoholics Anonymous; Fourth Edition, P31). There are also those who may consider themselves as “recovered” from their dual diagnosis. These persons may no longer be on medications or receiving any other form of clinical intervention or therapy, but choose to remain a part of the DDA Fellowship. Since the only requirement for membership in DDA is a desire to develop healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles, our open meetings embrace anyone who shares such a desire.

Ultimately, our preamble is an invitation to become part of the DDA family. We may, or may not, be clean and sober; We may, or may not, be taking medications; we may or may not be in treatment, therapy, or recovery; We may, or may not, even want to be here, but if we have a “desire” to develop a more meaningful alcohol and drug free lifestyle our doors are open to you!