

- After a member shares his or her feelings, there is no cross-talk or lecturing of the person who has spoken. Members are asked to talk only about their own experiences as they relate to the topic of the meeting.
- If the group needs to take up a collection to pay small expenses associated with running the group, members will “pass a basket” to collect donations.

Guest Speaker

At some meetings, the leader sets aside fifteen to twenty minutes for a speaker to share his or her experiences in dealing with dual diagnosis.

Sharing

If time permits, group members are invited to speak briefly about their experiences. Again, sharing is voluntary, and some people may choose to “pass.”

Closing

To end the meeting, group members often recite the Serenity Prayer as a group. Sometimes another moment of silence is observed.

Keep Your Expectations Realistic

Only do what is necessary and don't promise more than you can deliver. Allow time for things to evolve. Meetings may be disorganized at first, but don't give up. One group leader was the only person at his meeting most of the time for many months. He went faithfully and, if no one showed up, he read books about recovery during the time allotted for the meeting. After nearly a year, others joined him. As a result, there is now a thriving, caring group in that community.

From time to time, people may slip from sobriety or not take care of their mental health. This is to be accepted. Be patient with one another and

do not judge. The group will develop in response to its members' needs and will take on a flavor all its own—a group conscience. Pay attention to the special nature of the group and do not try to force it in one direction or another.

Learn More

For additional information about DTR, please visit www.hazelden.org/dtr.



Suggestions for Starting a Double Trouble in Recovery Group

Double Trouble in Recovery (DTR) is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from their particular substance use and mental disorders. There are no dues or fees for DTR membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

DTR groups are consumer run and peer led. We strongly suggest that health care providers do not start or run Double Trouble groups.

What Double Trouble in Recovery Does Not Do

- DTR does not provide treatment other than the support mutually shared by its members.
- DTR members do not make diagnoses or dispense medication.
- DTR members do not take attendance, keep records, or do case management.
- DTR does not provide advice, advocacy, or training.
- DTR does not provide religious guidance other than the spiritual experience members derive from working the program.
- DTR does not affiliate with social agencies or other institutions.

Start by Experiencing a Group for Yourself

If at all possible, contact an existing DTR group for help in getting started. Don't "reinvent the wheel." Experience the fellowship and inform yourself as much as you can. Attend an existing group more than once and get involved.

Start with a Small Group and Select a Chairperson

If possible, try not to run the group alone. Seek out two or three others who are interested in DTR. This core group can get the DTR group off the ground, with one member acting as chairperson. This person should be out of the hospital for at least one year and have at least one year clean and sober. But this is not written in stone and, if you have to, pick the person who comes closest to meeting these guidelines. Be sure to rotate the chairperson.

Find a Meeting Place

Maintain positive working relationships with organizations in your community that promote recovery from dual disorders. You may want to ask one of these organizations for the use of their space to hold regular DTR meetings. You will want to work out agreeable terms, such as length of time the space is available each week and cost. Group members chip in what they can to defray the cost. However, donations should be voluntary.

Be sure to clarify in advance who is responsible for letting people into the building before the meeting and who is responsible for unlocking and locking the doors. It is important that group leaders prepare the space before the meeting starts.

The place where the group meets should be safe, properly lit, and heated. Find a space with adequate seating and privacy. The space should be free of ringing phones and other noise distractions.

Understand the Meeting Format

DTR meetings follow a traditional Twelve Step format. Most groups meet for sixty to ninety minutes. Following are the standard elements of a meeting.

Welcome

Before the meeting starts, the group leader (and any coleaders) meet and greet people as they come in. This helps to create a climate of warmth and hospitality.

Introduction

The group leader introduces himself or herself by first name only, welcomes everyone to the meeting, and discloses his or her dual diagnosis. At this point, it is especially important to welcome back people who have been absent, including those who have returned after a slip, a relapse, or a stay in a treatment center or hospital. These members are greeted with acceptance and nonjudgment.

Moment of Silence

The leader invites everyone to observe a moment of silent reflection for members who are absent, hospitalized, or experiencing other setbacks related to their substance use and mental disorders. The group is then invited to recite the Serenity Prayer.

Readings

The leader asks various members to read key statements about DTR, including

- the DTR Preamble
- "How It Works"
- the Twelve Steps of DTR
- "The Promises"
- "On Recovery"

These readings can be found in the appendix of *Double Trouble in Recovery: Basic Guide* or downloaded from www.hazelden.org/dtr.

Group Member Introductions

Next, group members have an opportunity to introduce themselves, using their first names only, and to identify themselves as having a dual diagnosis. This step gives everyone a chance to be welcomed by the group and to feel accepted. Group members greet each self-introduction with a simple "Hi" or "Welcome."

Group Guidelines

The leader reminds members about the rules for behavior during the meeting:

- Members are not to bring alcohol, nonprescription drugs, or drug paraphernalia to meetings. This is to protect the group, the meeting place, and DTR as a whole.
- Members who have taken alcohol or nonprescription drugs in the last twenty-four hours are asked to refrain from sharing during the second part of the meeting. The leader suggests that these members speak to the group leader, to the guest speaker, or to another member at the end of the meeting.
- DTR is an anonymous program. What takes place during the meeting "stays in the room" when the meeting ends. The names of group members and what they said or did during the meeting remains confidential. This protects everyone and helps engender a feeling of trust and comfort in the group.
- Members are asked to limit their comments during the sharing time to five minutes. This ensures that everyone has a chance to talk, and that the meeting ends on time.