

This printable version of the DRA Online Resource Center Fellowship Traditions Discussion, will be modified and updated from time to time. Some of the information included is from individual members of our Fellowship and may not accurately reflect the opinions of DRA World Services Inc. or the Fellowship of DRA as a whole.

# Dual Recovery Anonymous



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## DRA

For those of us  
who experience both  
chemical dependency  
and an emotional  
or psychiatric illness

## DRA Online Resource Center Fellowship Traditions Discussion

With an explanation of the DRA Preamble by Tim H.  
Internet Version, revised 1/2004

### Dual Recovery Anonymous

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The discussion and information about DRA's 12 Traditions on the next several pages is general in nature and is merely suggestive. It is based on the combined practical experience of various DRA members. Members also offer some of the techniques they have used while using the Traditions as guidelines for running their DRA Groups. It is intended to help stimulate group discussion of DRA's 12 Traditions and/or to be used to expand one's personal dual recovery through added insights and possibilities regarding the Twelve Traditions of Dual Recovery Anonymous.

This booklet, copied from a section of the DRA Online Resource Center, is dedicated to increasing understanding of DRA's 12 Traditions. It is meant to be a dynamic document. As our Fellowship grows and shares its experience, we will add new insights and techniques. Please feel free to send your comments and ideas to the webmaster via email at: [webmaster@draonline.org](mailto:webmaster@draonline.org) Or send them to the DRA World Services Central Office at the address on the front of the book.

## **The 12 Traditions of Dual Recovery Anonymous**

- 1. The primary purpose of D.R.A. is to carry the message of recovery to men and women who experience a dual disorder.**
- 2. D.R.A. has two requirements for membership; a desire to stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, and a desire to manage our emotional or psychiatric illness in a healthy and constructive way.**
- 3. We welcome men and women of all personal beliefs, our program is one of personal freedom and choice.**
- 4. Our groups and service work are guided by the principles of the 12 Steps of D.R.A.**
- 5. Each group is independent, to better meet the recovery needs of our members. We are sensitive to the well being and unity of other groups and to D.R.A. as a whole.**
- 6. To maintain our primary purpose, we avoid all outside distractions. We need not become involved in financial entanglements, lend the D.R.A. name for outside activities and issues, or become drawn into public controversy.**
- 7. Every DRA group ought to be self-supporting.**
- 8. D.R.A. is a volunteer, self-help organization. To carry out our service work, we may employ special workers, form committees and coordinate projects.**
- 9. Our individual dual recovery depends on D.R.A. unity. We carry the message through our personal recovery and our service work.**
- 10. D.R.A. is a non-professional program. We do not provide chemical dependency, mental health or other social services. D.R.A. has no opinion regarding the appropriate use of medications or other methods of managing our symptoms.**
- 11. In D.R.A. we share an equal partnership in dual recovery. Our traditions and service work help us maintain the integrity of our program, to provide for others and to enhance the unity of D.R.A. as a whole.**
- 12. Personal anonymity is the right of every D.R.A. member. We practice anonymity at the level of public media.**

## What are the Twelve Traditions of Dual Recovery Anonymous?

DRA has Twelve Traditions which are designed to help guide our Meetings, Groups, Intergroups, and Service Boards to operate in ways that best nurture the recovery efforts of all members of our Fellowship. The Traditions are a set of suggestions that help DRA as a whole keep on track to best fulfill our Primary Purpose and maintain our Founding Vision.

The Twelve Traditions of Dual Recovery Anonymous are built upon the foundation of the original Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous to whom we owe our gratitude. DRA's Traditions are modified to suit the unique needs of our dual no-fault illnesses and the population DRA serves. At this time we do not have a long form of our Twelve Traditions or a book that fully explains our Traditions in depth. Many answers can be found in our Preamble and our Questions & Answers document. DRA World Services suggest that Group Representatives share their problem solving ideas and issues through the **Group Information Exchange** in our online public forum or contact the World Service Central Office for advice. Groups are also well served to borrow the collective wisdom found in AA's traditional version of the Twelve Traditions where applicable.

### The Twelve Traditions of DRA are designed to help members in several ways:

**Network:** DRA provides a Network of support and information not only to its current members but also to those who may need us in the future. Sharing information and opening lines of communications between Individual Members, Groups, Intergroups, Service Boards, and the World Services Central Office reminds us all that we have an equal partnership in dual recovery. Networking through the Central Office by mail or phone, Sending articles to The Vision - our quarterly newsletter, Participating in the Group Information Exchange on our web site, And helping each other at the Group level are all powerful ways of strengthening our Fellowship and adding resources to further our personal dual recovery goals. *Network means connecting:* We are connecting or drawing together DRA members and Groups to develop the working structure of DRA.

**Unity:** DRA must forever remain a united Fellowship with common goals. Our individual recoveries are greatly enhanced by DRA Unity. The Twelve Traditions help our Groups and Intergroups maintain a cohesive, safe, and comfortable atmosphere no matter where a newcomer walks into their first DRA Meeting. Though each Group is autonomous it is also aware of how its actions can influence other DRA Groups and the DRA Fellowship as a whole. *Unity means uniting for a common purpose:* To help one another achieve dual recovery and to prevent relapse.

**Service:** When DRA members are ready, they can choose to engage in service work. Lending a helping hand at a DRA function or filling a Group Service Work Committee Position helps us maintain our recoveries and helps make DRA accessible to others. We share the responsibility of helping carry the message of Dual Recovery Anonymous to those who want it. We want our message of hope and recovery to be there for other's and DRA Service Work at any level is a wonderful way to help achieve this goal. *Service means DRA Service Work:* We carry our message and provide support to other people who experience dual disorders.

Many of us have felt very alone in our dual illnesses. Our Networking, Unity, and Service Work as guided by the Twelve Traditions of DRA help insure DRA's continued usefulness and growth. The Traditions help members and Groups develop Twelve Step DRA meetings that are a safe haven where we can experience a Fellowship of people who experience the common bond of dual no-fault illnesses. The Twelve Traditions help insure that the fear, isolation, and secrecy many of us have experienced no longer need be a part of our lives.

### The Traditional Twelve Traditions:

As AA developed the Twelve Steps which were the principles by which individual alcoholics could live, they also had to evolve principles by which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function

effectively.

Bill Wilson and the early members of Alcoholics Anonymous developed the original 12 Traditions over a period of about 20 years. Early on when Groups had problems they would often write to Bill Wilson, co-founder of AA, and he would correspond about possible solutions. Over the years this body of letters became quite large and represented what was essentially the combined wisdom of basically the whole Fellowship of AA. In 1945 it was suggested that this mass of problem solving correspondence might be distilled to some basic set of principles that could offer the Fellowship solutions for their problems of living and working together and how best to relate their Fellowship of recovering alcoholics to the world outside.

Initially Bill Wilson called this work “The Twelve Points to Assure Our Future.” He saw them as guidelines necessary to the unity, survival, and effectiveness of the AA Fellowship. He understood well that if he had called them laws or rules, recovering people with their usual mistrust of or distaste for authoritarianism would have surly rejected them. By 1950 they had become universally accepted by the Fellowship and were soon accepted at AA’s first International Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

Perhaps the best description of the Twelve Traditions this author can give is in the words of Bill Wilson Himself, “The A.A. Traditions are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. We obey them willingly because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in love.”

*Quote reprinted from AA Today, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.*

# The First Tradition of DRA

**1, “The primary purpose of D.R.A. is to carry the message of recovery to men and women who experience a dual disorder.”**

A core principle behind the First Tradition is that it’s better do one thing very well than many things badly. So sharing our Experience, Strength, and Hope, and the message of DRA is what we do. We keep it simple and keep our Meetings, Groups, and Service Work, focused steadfastly on DRA’s Primary Purpose.

## **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the First Tradition**

- “DRA’s Preamble states, “The primary purpose of DRA is to help one another achieve dual recovery, to prevent relapse, and to carry the message of recovery to others who experience dual disorders. When we have our Group’s business meetings each month this is one of the first things we discuss. How well are we carrying the message? How well are we fulfilling our primary purpose?”
- **“I’m a Group Treasurer and when our Group wants to allocate funds for special projects I always interject and ask them if this is a really good way to carry the message of DRA. For instance, we have a potluck picnic every fall. We need to pay day rent for the softball diamond and covered area at the park, insurance, and some to promote it. We always have one or two Open meetings that day and distribute plenty of literature. Since many family members and friends show up and we invite the current clients of a local treatment center, we all feel like we are not only creating unity for our local Groups but really carrying the DRA message out into new places.”**
- “DRA is all about dual recovery. We help each other to stay in recovery and live free of our addictions while managing our symptoms in a healthy way. That’s all we do really. As a Group or as a DRA member, we don’t crusade for any causes and we steer way clear of all politics and controversy. We don’t promote any causes or endorse any organizations. All we do is help each other recover using the tools of DRA. That singleness of purpose is really important to me. That’s one of the main reasons I feel so safe at my meetings.”
- **“The World is a complicated place filled with complicated problems and complicated people. In my recovery I’ve found the slogans, “keep it simple” and “First things first” a couple of the most important tools I’ve got to keep me focused on my dual recovery. If I don’t put my recovery first in all areas of my life, I increase my chances of getting stoned or forgetting to take my meds for awhile and having another devastating manic episode. It’s the same way with a DRA Group. We are all recovering people affected by dual disorders who are trying to support each other’s recovery processes. If we keep it simple and stay focused on carrying the DRA message we are all very likely to do pretty good. We can’t afford to let down our guard and get involved with a whole bunch of other issues. I know how easy it is to let myself get sidetracked and lose sight of my real priorities... staying clean and continuing to manage my bi-polar in a healthy way every day.”**
- “The DRA Preamble expands on this Tradition. It says that “The primary purpose of DRA is to help one another achieve dual recovery, to prevent relapse, and to carry the message of recovery to others who experience dual disorders.” I think that carrying the message involves just about everything that happens in a DRA Group meeting. The sharing and caring, the mutual support, and the warm welcoming atmosphere that feels safe to newcomers, reading Getting Started and Accepting Differences at the start of every meeting... Every nuance is an element of our Group actively carrying the message. We also do things like sending our Group meeting schedule and a Welcome to DRA pamphlet to local treatment and mental health centers at least once a year and occasionally hold special Open Speakers

meetings and pot lucks so people can learn about DRA and dual recovery.”

## The Second Tradition of DRA

**2. “D.R.A. has two requirements for membership; a desire to stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, and a desire to manage our emotional or psychiatric illness in a healthy and constructive way.”**

A core principle behind the Second Tradition is that there are no charges, dues, or fees for DRA membership. Newcomers do not need a referral from a professional service provider. All anyone needs to do to become a member of the Fellowship of Dual Recovery Anonymous is to read this Tradition and ask themselves if they have a desire.

### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Second Tradition**

- “As long as I say I am a member, no one can tell me I don’t belong in DRA. I like that! I’ve never much been one for joining anything—mostly I think because no one would have me. I belong in DRA. I’m part of something really good and I help people just by showing up and telling my story at meetings.”
- **“A lot’a guys still feel pretty hopeless about their chances when they first come to a meeting. We know how it feels. They don’t have to know much of anything about DRA or dual recovery to come and listen and decide whether they want to become a member or not. They don’t need an ounce of faith in the program or any real hope. All they need is some small spark of desire to get better. The hope and faith can come latter. Mostly we want them to keep comin’ back.”**
- “A friend of mine says he is addicted to food. He has a binge eating disorder. He also has a psychiatric illness. He wants to be a member of DRA and attend our local Closed meetings but he has never been an alcoholic or drug addict. Our Group discussed this and we decided it was our Group Conscience that we could not be everything to every person. We could not risk watering down our Primary Purpose and the message of DRA. Several members felt that they simply wouldn’t feel as comfortable sharing their drug culture experiences in a closed meeting with people who have never been exposed to a lifestyle that sometimes included illegal behaviors and jail time. Though recovery from some eating disorders may utilize the 12 Steps and have some similar issues with addiction, food isn’t an illegal substance or addictive in the same sense as drugs and alcohol. For the well-being of our Group and DRA as a whole, we stuck to the Second Tradition just as it is written. He is still welcome with open arms at our Open meetings.”
- **“As a Fellowship or as a Group or as an individual member of DRA, we never want to take from someone else the ability to share in our Fellowship if they feel they have a dual diagnosis and want the support that DRA offers. It is not for us to screen prospective members or set up any rules or requirements beyond this simple Tradition. No one needs my permission, or a professional referral, or prescription to become a member of the DRA Fellowship. I suppose that occasionally people who do not fit within our Second Tradition might attend Closed Meetings anyway. I think that sooner or latter they will come to understand DRA is not really for them. They will eventually feel conflicted and leave to find help elsewhere that is appropriate for their particular needs.”**
- “I’m so glad there are no rules stating DRA is only for people who have been through treatment or who

have been hospitalized due to their dual illnesses. I stopped drinking in AA two years ago after I realized my glass of wine with dinner had turned into several glasses each night just so I could fall asleep. My physician diagnosed and treated my depression with antidepressants. I still work and take care of my children and live a pretty mainstream looking life but I so need my DRA meetings. I know that if I don't continue to stay sober and manage my depression in a healthy and constructive way, I could lose everything."

## The Third Tradition of DRA

### 3. "We welcome men and women of all personal beliefs, our program is one of personal freedom and choice."

A core principle behind the Third Tradition is that DRA members are free to interpret and personalize the Twelve Steps in a way that will meet their own needs for dual recovery. Members are free to develop their own beliefs and lifestyles to support their dual recovery.

#### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Third Tradition**

- "I think this Tradition just adds to the feeling of being equal partners in dual recovery. I mean; it doesn't matter to anyone what religion you are or are not, you use the program and the Steps in a way that makes sense to you. You don't have to prove anything to anybody or meet any special requirements to belong here. All you need is to want to quit drinking and drugging and improve the quality of your life."
- **"I talked with a guy at World Services once who said there were no "Explicit Musts" in our program. The idea that personal freedom and choice are the rule not the exception in DRA gives me the feeling that I am trusted enough and smart enough to make the choices I need to make for my own well-being. Sure, I've come to depend on the help and guidance of my higher and helping powers and the people in my home Group that know me, but ultimately, no one is telling me what to do and I like that."**
- "I think the deal is, is that our personal beliefs about religion and spirituality don't even come into public play in DRA. They are our own business, our own personal quest. Dual recovery isn't about religion. Though we can draw on our personal beliefs to help us if we choose. We each must do what works best for us."
- **"The door couldn't be any wider. Our welcome mat is out there for anyone with co-occurring disorders who is looking for support for their personal dual recovery."**
- "This Tradition really meant a lot to me when I first heard of DRA. I guess there isn't a whole lot that is traditional about me or the things I believe in or do. I don't really care what anyone thinks, but I don't want to have to waste energy having to defend myself either."



## The Fourth Tradition of DRA

### 4. “Our groups and service work are guided by the principles of the 12 Steps of D.R.A.”

A core principle behind the Fourth Tradition is that by practicing the principles found in the Twelve Steps for dual recovery at the level of the Group, DRA unity is preserved and our network of support and service is enhanced.

#### IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Fourth Tradition

- “They say in the Twelfth Step to practice these principles in all our affairs. What better place to put the Steps to use than when interacting with my Group and doing Service Work for DRA?”
- **“Our Group does a lot of service projects and I love to be involved in the decision making processes. We apply the Steps and Traditions and it allows us to get things done in ways that I rarely see out in the world. I mean, we are a really diverse bunch, but no one is afraid to make mistakes because we’ve learned how to quickly make amends and move on. So we have a kind of spontaneity that produces new and invigorating ideas all the while focusing our efforts on our Primary Purpose and what’s best for DRA as a whole. Amazing what we can achieve.”**
- “DRA Groups are sort of like people. They learn and grow, make mistakes, and hopefully learn from those mistakes. Groups and people are not perfect. They need some structure and support. The Steps are said to be good principles for people to live by. They also really support the Unity of our Group by helping to make sure that our Service Work Committees are guided by principles such as love, patience, honesty, and acceptance.”
- **“Doing Service Work has helped me personally learn how to “practice these principles in all (my) affairs”. I’m really shy and I’ve never had a real job. I don’t have a lot of experience relating and interacting with a bunch of different people. Being secretary and helping out on the picnic committee has really helped me.”**

## The Fifth Tradition of DRA

### 5. “Each group is independent, to better meet the recovery needs of our members. We are sensitive to the well being and unity of other groups and to D.R.A. as a whole.”

A core principle behind the Fifth Tradition is that each DRA Group is an independent entity and manages its own affairs so that it best fulfills its Primary Purpose. By utilizing the wisdom found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Groups remain sensitive to the well-being of other Groups and DRA as a whole.

#### IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Fifth Tradition

- “Our Group takes a Group Conscience for just about everything. We’re small and have very little funding. Sometimes we need to do things a little different than the bigger Groups. I’m glad we are allowed that flexibility.”
- **“My Home Group is more than a collection of individuals. It is a spiritual entity with its own unique characteristics. At the same time, it’s a regular 12 Step DRA meeting which makes it part of the great whole that makes up the DRA Fellowship.”**

- “When we formed our Group, a lot of us wanted to call ourselves The Double Trouble Group. Then we found out that another dual recovery 12 Step organization had the words Double Trouble in its name. While we are sure it is a fine program, we didn’t want to confuse our Dual Recovery Anonymous Group with any other Fellowship or organization or show a possible outside affiliation. After we thought about it, we decided that using a name that was so closely associated with another established recovery organization might cause confusion for people trying to find meetings of either particular fellowship. We also discussed the possibility that it might sort of water down the image of DRA as a whole even though the term “Double Trouble” would be used in a generic manner. We came to a Group consensus when one member said she wished our Group name would reflect the DRA attitude of believable hope in some way... something inviting and friendly. Something based in the solution.”
- **“Our Group asks our Group Service Representative (GSR) to stay in contact with DRA World Services Central Office at least 4 times a year and to monitor and use the Group Information Exchange and public forums on DRA’s web site. When our GSR writes the World Services Office, she often does it in a way that the letters could also be published in DRA’s Vision newsletter if they wanted to. They really are articles about our Group and how we have grown, what events we have put on, and how we have solved problems. We feel that these are good ways for us to be sensitive to other DRA Groups and to the Fellowship as a whole.”**

## The Sixth Tradition of DRA

**6. “To maintain our primary purpose, we avoid all outside distractions. We need not become involved in financial entanglements, lend the D.R.A. name for outside activities and issues, or become drawn into public controversy.”**

A core principle behind the Sixth Tradition is that we stay away from those things that could tear us apart or divert our attention from our primary purpose. As DRA Groups or otherwise under the banner of DRA, we carry only the DRA message of hope and recovery.

### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Sixth Tradition**

- “I think the short version of this Tradition could be stated as “keep it simple and keep it clean”.
- **“At first, the treatment center where we hold our meetings ask us to name our Group the “(Name of treatment center) DRA Group”. We had to remind the administrator that though we would work with them in the spirit of cooperation, we could not use their name in conjunction with the DRA name or crest as it would imply an affiliation or possible endorsement. DRA is an independent organization and we wouldn’t want people to think that our meeting was part of the treatment facility. Our relationship works out really good though as inpatients get to come to our meetings and learn about DRA and dual recovery, and the treatment center doesn’t charge us any rent.”**
- “We found out the hard way that it’s best if Group members don’t loan the Group money or support the Group substantially out of proportion to the rest of its members. If the Group can’t afford to carry the message beyond our regular sharing in meetings , then so be it. We will grow and be able to do more Service Work latter. We found that money issues could quickly lead to resentments within the Group. Our recoveries depend upon unity and harmony and we could not afford the distractions money issues lead to. From now on our Group Service Work Committee will hold a Group Conscience

of our whole Group before we approve outreach projects and our Treasurer will give a full treasurer's report at every business meeting."

- **"A few members from our Group wanted us to sponsor a softball team for a local league and supply them with tee-shirts that would have the DRA Crest and our Group name on them. Several members of the team were from our Group or were friends and family members. When we discussed it in depth, several of us felt that sponsoring a softball team really didn't have much if anything to do with carrying the message of DRA. Some Group members had no interests in sports at all. Some members were concerned that wearing the DRA Crest might publicly identify individuals as probable members of the Fellowship and compromise their anonymity. In our business meeting we also discussed the "lending the DRA name" issue. Since the team was a separate entity than our Group, most thought it was an outside organization. Our treasurer was concerned that the costs associated with sponsoring the team might not be the best use of our limited Seventh Traditions funds. One member suggested that sponsoring teams was too much like a commercial promotion. In the end, we decided that the team could be viewed as an outside distraction and probably was not really DRA or Group business. Our Group's conscience was that sponsoring a softball team simply raised to many issues that might compromise various aspects of DRA's Twelve Traditions. We came to the conclusion that our Seventh Tradition funds were to be used only to support our Group and carry the message. When we spent those funds it should be on things that are not controversial."**

- "I love the idea of issue advocacy. I've been into some social cause or another since I was a kid marching for civil rights with my parents. After I got into DRA and dual recovery I felt like I was both blessed and gifted with several new issues to crusade for such as getting more public funding for integrated services for people with co-occurring disorders, insurance parity for mental health, the anti-stigma campaign, and educating substance abuse and mental health treatment centers about the need to treat those of us with dual disorders in an integrated way. I thought that this would combine wonderfully with my efforts to spread the word about DRA."

"I was fortunate enough to have my enthusiasm for this new endeavor tempered by my sponsor. She suggested that I start slow and that I make sure—very sure—that everything I was planning on doing in my personal advocacy work didn't violate DRA's Traditions. She pointed out to me that I could not do any issue advocacy even for these worthy related issues under the name of DRA or as a spokesperson for or service representative of DRA. As a DRA member or Group Service Representative I could only carry the message of DRA. No political, medical, or social issue advocacy. Of course, as a private citizen I could advocate for anything I wished to."

"We decided that I would be good at letting the community know about DRA and our meetings, but that I should only offer DRA World Service approved literature and meeting schedule information when I was wearing my DRA hat. When I was doing other advocacy work, I would do it strictly separate from my DRA service work."

- **"Our group's meetings aren't really big. Usually 5 to 10 members show up and that's fine. We've been blessed with excellent 7th Tradition support and every few months we end up with a couple hundred extra dollars sitting around. Trying to figure out what to do with this extra money tended to become a point of contention at business meetings. We don't really have enough people in our Group Service Work Committee to do much outreach work beyond what we we're already doing and we don't have a Group bank account. What we finally decided to do twice a year was to send anything over three months running expenses to the**

**DRA World Service Central Office. We know that it will be used to carry the message of hope and recovery that way and everyone agreed that it was being spent on our primary purpose.”**

## **The Seventh Tradition of DRA**

### **7. “Every DRA group ought to be self-supporting.”**

A core principle behind the Seventh Tradition is remaining free of outside influences. Certainly money is needed to fulfill our Primary Purpose, but outside funds often come with strings attached. We must be ever vigilant to remain free of such outside influences. It is best if Groups can support themselves through the contributions of their members.

#### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Seventh Tradition**

- “Self-support is one of our goals. We aren’t quite there yet. Half of our members don’t have jobs so it is tough for them to give every time the basket is passed. What we do have plenty of is Fellowship and personal support for each other. That’s what really counts. I feel that as long as we can keep the door open for ourselves and newcomers, we are doing fine.”
- **“Our Group had a big debate recently on self-support. Some of us thought that getting free space for our meetings was not being self-supporting and other’s thought it was just fine. We seemed to have a pretty even split on this issue so what we did was to take a Group Conscience as to if this donated space would cause any problems for DRA as a whole and if it appeared to suggest any affiliation or endorsement with the church that let us use the meeting room. After much discussion, we decided that in our situation right now, holding our meetings in donated space was doing no harm. We decided to take another Group Conscience on this matter a year from now.”**
- “We were taking in more than we were spending so decided to save three months running cost and send anything over that to the DRA World Services Central Office so they could better spread the message. We can change that if we need some extra to put on a dance or something, but as a rule of thumb we decided that three months ahead was a prudent reserve to have on hand.”
- **“We do our 7th Tradition half way through the meeting right before the smoke break. They always remind everyone that there are no dues or fees for membership and that any contributions are strictly voluntary. Then they say what the money is used for. In our case it’s for coffee, DRA approved literature, and the rent.”**
- “We pay a token rent of only \$10.00 per month. We feel that is a good-will gesture to the church and helps us remain independent and self-supporting. At first we couldn’t afford it but we made sure we left the room cleaner than we found it with the chairs in perfect order and everything spotless.”
- **“Our Group probably wouldn’t be considered self-supporting yet on all levels. We use an empty conference room at the treatment center for no charge and they even supply us with coffee and snacks and have let us use their copy machine and paper to print up schedules. More than half of the people at our meetings are inpatients who are going through treatment and we ask that they do not contribute at our Seventh Tradition break. However, we feel that self-support happens on more levels than just financial. Our members support each other in our personal dual recoveries through meetings, phone and email networking, sponsoring, and our service work. We give back to the Fellowship and the treatment center by sharing**

**our recovery and hope with clients and their family members as our weekend meetings are Open DRA meetings.”**

- “Record keeping is really important. The club charges us half of whatever we bring in from our Seventh Tradition for rent. We have two meetings a week and pay our rent at the end of each month. We pretty much run on a shoe-string from month to month. We need to know how much is for rent and how much we have left for coffee, DRA literature, and things like printing meeting flyers. It’s not rocket science but good bookkeeping stops problems before they get started.”

## **The Eighth Tradition of DRA**

**8. “D.R.A. is a volunteer, self-help organization. To carry out our service work, we may employ special workers, form committees and coordinate projects.”**

A core principle behind the Eighth Tradition guides us to steer clear of the profit motive where our Primary Purpose is concerned. Twelfth Step work is never charged for but we may hire people and pay for needed services to support the work of our Group Service Work Committees, Intergroups, National Service Committees, and World Services Central Office.

### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Eighth Tradition**

- “I’m happy that DRA happens because of the volunteer efforts of recovering people just like me. I feel that this is MY thing... separate from all the doctors, housing authorities, and treatment team professionals I have to deal with. The whole thing here is empowering... self-empowering.
- **“I guess some people could actually work for DRA. Maybe at the World Services Office or a big Intergroup. People with special skills maybe. I mean, I’m sure DRA has to hire lawyers and bean-counters sometimes and people to do the things that aren’t Twelfth Step oriented but need to be done just the same.”**
- “We have a yearly pot-luck picnic to celebrate the anniversary of our Group. Each year we ask for volunteers to organize and publicize it. We call it our picnic committee. Once we get four or five people who are willing, they vote on a chairperson and figure out the best way to structure their committee to get the various jobs done. At our monthly business meetings their chairperson gives a report on their progress and we discuss issues like funding and take the Group Conscience when needed to make decisions on things like when, where, and how much. We have a pretty big Group and we’ve found that forming smaller committees like this for special projects is very effective and saves a lot of time and chaos.”
- **“We make up DRA meeting schedules for the groups in our area. We pay a quick-print shop to print and fold them because ink-jet cartridges are just way too expensive and the ink runs when it gets wet. We think this is the same as employing special workers so we can do our service work.”**
- “I think of DRA as a total program of freedom and choice. We volunteer to come to meetings. We volunteer to participate and share. We voluntarily decide to help ourselves and even reach out to help others. We volunteer to help out with service work. We volunteer to be in dual recovery one day at a time.”

- **“I remember the first time a person came up to me after a meeting and told me how helpful what I had shared during the meeting was to them. I was surprised because I was just dumping some feelings and frustrations I was having about a fairly personal issue. It was then that I realized that just by sharing honestly I had somehow made another person feel less alone. By helping myself I had touched another persons life in a positive way. There is a lot more to this self-help business than first meets the eye. DRA meetings are a process that somehow is bigger than all of the individual elements that make up the group. It starts with self help maybe but that soon grows into mutual support and love.”**

## **The Ninth Tradition of DRA**

### **9. “Our individual dual recovery depends on D.R.A. unity. We carry the message through our personal recovery and our service work.”**

A core principle behind the Ninth Tradition is that our Groups provide the environment that most of us need to best nurture our dual recovery. Basically, this Tradition builds upon the First Tradition. Without Unity, our Groups and our message may not be there for the next person who needs them.

#### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Ninth Tradition**

- “I think that the fact that the Steps and Traditions sort of keep us on track working as a group for the good of everyone in DRA teaches us a lot about living and getting along in the world. Before DRA all I remember is ego trips and arguments. Sure there is tension sometimes when we are planning things, but we have tools to use (the Steps and Traditions) so we get over it and move on.”
- **“This is a WE program. We can do together what we could not do alone.”**
- “I took a turn at being secretary for my Home Group once. It really helped me feel like an equal partner in my Group. Before that, I didn’t really feel connected to the inner workings of how things got done. Now I’m the Group Treasurer. Each Service Work Committee Position I take a turn at doing is like a little piece of the mosaic that makes up DRA. Not only my Home Group, but the Fellowship. It’s like, when I chair a meeting, or share my story with a newcomer, or am holding a service position, it all adds up to making sure DRA is there for myself and other’s when we need it.”
- **“I heard a guy tell my story at my first ever DRA meeting. I was still in treatment and there was this guy in the H&I meeting that had been through all the same things I did including the multiple commitments, the jail time, and life on the streets. But here he was—clean and sober and looking so calm and together. That was the first time I ever felt really hopeful. I am so grateful now that he and his Group took the time to bring their meeting into the hospital. I’ve never seen that guy since, but he just might have saved my life that day.”**
- “Our primary purpose is to help one another achieve dual recovery, to prevent relapse, and to carry the message of recovery to others who experience dual disorders. We can’t do that if we are busy arguing over trivial matters or competing with each other for the spotlight. We need to put principles before personalities. That’s why we hold Group Conscience meetings as often as needed and review the Traditions at our Steps and Traditions study meetings.”
- **“I tell my story in DRA meetings pretty often. If I don’t have any current burning hot issues to share, I just tell my story. I have a short and a long version depending upon how busy the meeting is. Some of the regulars may get a little tired of hearing it but that’s ok. There’s**

often newer members who might relate to my story, and telling my story over and over helps me to fully accept my past, get over any shame, and keeps me focused on my own dual recovery. The main thing though is that by telling my recovery story, how it was — what happened — and what it’s like now, I am telling the story of DRA. I am carrying the message of recovery and believable hope. I can’t tell you exactly how or why the Steps and DRA works, but I can tell you my story, how I manage my dual illnesses on a day to day basis. That’s a form of service work and really, it’s how it works. One person with a dual disorder talking to another.”

## The Tenth Tradition of DRA

**10. “D.R.A. is a non-professional program. We do not provide chemical dependency, mental health or other social services. D.R.A. has no opinion regarding the appropriate use of medications or other methods of managing our symptoms.”**

A core principle behind the Tenth Tradition is that we leave the doctoring to the doctors. We don’t offer advice on meds or professional therapeutic services. DRA is a voluntary self-help mutual support program.

### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Tenth Tradition**

- “There is no such thing as a DRA Treatment Center or a DRA Mental Health Program. There’s just a network of self-governed DRA 12 Step Self-Help Groups spread around the world that hold DRA meetings in an attempt to help each other in our dual recovery. That’s what we do. We help each other.”
- “These meds tend to work so differently on everyone that keeping away from giving advice on which ones are good and which ones are not is probably a really good idea. What might save one person’s life may make another guy climb the walls. Best to just share about how I’ve use the Steps and the tools to best manage my psychiatric disorder and leave the medication advice to the doctors.”
- “Medications and stuff are often discussed or shared about at meetings. Face it, getting them dialed in right and getting use to the side effects can be a real hassle. Rather than telling someone they are taking to much or to little or the wrong medication, what I try to do is to remind them that they can talk honestly with their doctor about what they are experiencing. That the doctors really do want to know and maybe after the meeting I’ll talk with that person so they can figure out good ways to describe their feelings to the doctor. Lots of times people just don’t know how to put into words what sensations they are experiencing. It’s all new and it can be confusing.”
- “I like the fact that DRA is not run by a bunch of people in lab coats or business suits. It really is powered by us—the Members who make up the Fellowship. The DRA Preamble says that there must always be a clear boundary separating the work of DRA from the work of chemical dependency and mental health professionals. To me that is really an empowering concept. I need the help of my doctor and treatment team, but DRA is my thing not theirs. It’s run by you and me. It is we who are in dual recovery who make it happen and keep it going so other new people can come and share in our growing circle of support.”

# The Eleventh Tradition of DRA

**11. “In D.R.A. we share an equal partnership in dual recovery. Our traditions and service work help us maintain the integrity of our program, to provide for others and to enhance the unity of D.R.A. as a whole.”**

A core principle behind the Eleventh Tradition is Unity and Fellowship. There are no leaders or bosses in DRA. Members who do service work are serving the Fellowship and expanding their own dual recovery. When members are ready, they appreciate how important the Unity of DRA as a whole is and usually offer to pitch in and help in some way. This “Service Work” is the basis that keeps our Fellowship growing and fulfilling our Primary Purpose.

## **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Eleventh Tradition**

- “I think this Tradition sort of sums up the first ten. I mean, there is a certain amount of responsibility required to keep DRA going. I’m really grateful that DRA was here for me when I needed it and I want it to be around for the next person. That’s only possible with a sense of Fellowship and Unity. I come here to meetings and I feel accepted and loved and even needed. To keep that safe feeling I take turns filling service positions and helping out where I can. This doesn’t take anything from me—it adds to me and my recovery and helps make sure newcomers are always welcome.”
- **“I like being an equal partner. The newcomer, the old-timer, we’re all just one drink, hit, or pill away from a relapse. Sort of keeps us all pretty humble. It takes a certain amount of recovery to fill most Group Service Positions, but beyond that, I like to see the newer people filling the service positions. Gives everyone a chance to learn and grow and heal. That’s why our DRA Group tries to rotate these positions every six months.”**
- “Service work comes in many flavors. It took me a long time before I felt comfortable sharing much at meetings. I would though stay after the meetings and help put the chairs away and empty ashtrays and stuff. Later on I started going around with the coffee pot quietly offering to fill people’s cups. This helped reduce the traffic when people were sharing and I felt good about helping. Before I knew it I was asked if I would get there early 15 minutes early and open the doors for a week while the usual person was on vacation. After a few months I got more use to sharing at meetings and chaired my first meeting. I was a little nervous but soon got use to it. Now I take a turn chairing whenever I get asked. It’s all Service Work and keeps my meeting going.”
- **“It says that our traditions and service work help ‘us’ maintain the integrity of ‘our’ program. I helped set up our meeting and the Twelve Traditions of DRA were key in guiding us. We weighed every initial decision against the advice given in the Traditions to insure that our meeting had a firm foundation that would best support everyone’s personal dual recovery. We found that whenever we had a question or a decision to make, it was most productive if we went through all the Traditions one by one, slowly, to see how it fit within DRA’s 12 Traditions as a whole.**

**We would ask if and how it affected our ability to carry the message of DRA? Did it effect who could attend the meeting? Would what we were considering place any limits on DRA being a program of personal freedom and choice? Was it compatible with the principles of DRA’s 12 Steps? Were we being sensitive to the well-being and unity of other DRA Groups and the Fellowship at large? Was it an outside issue or would it cause us arguments or resentments about finances? Did it honor DRA’s copyrights and trademarks or give the impression of any affiliations? Would it create or draw our Group into any public controversy such as political debate or issues of religion? Were we being as “self-supporting” as we**



**possibly could be? Were we maintaining our autonomy and separate identity from the day treatment center where we hold our meetings? Would it violate anyone's right to anonymity? What really happened was that a few relative new-comers were drawing on the wisdom of those who went before and we made mostly good decisions in the process of establishing our meeting. We didn't need to re-invent the wheel. By continuing to work with the Traditions our Group is able to grow and change and learn from any mistakes we might have made."**

## **The Twelfth Tradition of DRA**

**12. "Personal anonymity is the right of every D.R.A. member. We practice anonymity at the level of public media."**

A core principle behind the Twelfth Tradition is placing principles before personalities. Anonymity not only protects individuals from stigma but protects us all from mistakes that might be made by individuals who might carry the DRA name into the limelight of public media where the reputation of DRA could get mixed up with the mistakes and notoriety of the individual. Anonymity is really the spiritual foundation that allows our Fellowship and our program of recovery to work and to survive.

### **IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Twelfth Tradition**

- "I am so glad that DRA is based on the Steps and Traditions. I am proud of my dual recovery efforts but I want my name and what I say at meetings to stay right there and not go any further. I don't want people gossiping about my latest personal recovery issues. I don't want my picture spread around in some newspaper or web site identifying me as a member of DRA. My job and my lifestyle really depend on this Tradition of Anonymity and like most 12 steppers, I take anonymity very seriously."
- **"I have a very unusual last name. I like to use my full name at closed DRA meetings when I introduce myself. I don't have to, but I like to. At open meetings where anyone can attend, I only use my first name. I feel pretty confident that people in recovery from their two no-fault illnesses—members of Dual Recovery Anonymous, will hold what I say at meetings with respect and confidence, but when non-members can attend I am a little more careful. Some of those people may not understand the importance of anonymity."**
- "This sort of reinforces the Eleventh Tradition where it says we are all equal partners in dual recovery. It don't matter if you are a rock star or president of the local bank. When you come into a meeting you are simply a member in equal standing. Your outside status makes no difference. There are no stars or gurus in DRA."
- **"Anonymity at the level of public media also protects the image of the DRA Fellowship as a whole. No one so far as I know has been elected or appointed to be the official spokesperson, poster-boy or poster-girl for DRA. Our image and reputation as a 12 Step self-help organization should never be tied to how well any one person does in recovery."**

- “I was asked to give a presentation about my dual recovery to a large audience of social service professionals and students up at the college. It was being videotaped for possible inclusion in a TV documentary. I had to figure out how to talk about my personal journey of dual recovery without identifying myself as a member of any specific Twelve Step Group. I ended up using only my first name and saying that I had found support for my dual recovery through a dual focus twelve-step group. I did not give the name. I just told them how important it was to have a group of understanding supportive friends there that I could talk to about things like my depression and medications and how I was trying to cope with those issues on a day to day basis in a healthy and constructive way.”
- **“It’s the message not the messenger that counts in DRA. When I participated in a recovery program on our local cable access channel to tell about DRA, I asked them to block out my facial features. I told them how important DRA was to my personal dual recovery and how to contact the World Services Central Office, but I remained anonymous.”**

## More on the Twelfth Tradition

### Anonymity and Confidentiality in DRA

Our Twelfth Tradition states, “Personal anonymity is the right of every D.R.A. member. We practice anonymity at the level of public media.”

There are two parts to this Tradition; respecting the confidentiality of other DRA members, and not publicly disclosing that we are members of DRA. Confidentiality and Anonymity.

#### **Confidentiality:**

In DRA we recognize that all members have a right to confidentiality. Anything we hear at a meeting or in confidence from another member, whether it be in person, on the telephone, or over the Internet, is considered confidential.

One of the most important tools we have for creating a safe environment of Emotional Acceptance, Support, and Empowerment (EASE) is that anything said at meetings or in confidence to another DRA member, goes no further. This type of confidentiality establishes a foundation where trust and healing begin. We may break our own anonymity in the process of trying to help another, but we do not break the anonymity of another.

Personal anonymity means honoring the confidentiality and right to privacy of others. Personal disclosures made in DRA meetings are always treated as strictly confidential. For instance, if someone has friends outside of DRA who are acquainted with other friends who are in DRA, disclosing even small apparently harmless confidences picked up at meetings may impact relationships and the lives of others in unforeseen and serious ways. What is said and seen in meetings, stays there.

Personal anonymity also opens the doorway so new members will attend. Many people are concerned that their employers, business associates, friends, or the public not find out that they have two no-fault illnesses. They are concerned that if word got out it might damage their lives in some way. Anonymity offers them an island of safety so that they can come and see if our fellowship is for them. We are guided by the Twelfth Tradition so we may best carry the message of DRA to others who experience dual disorders.

## **Anonymity:**

We practice Anonymity by not identifying ourselves as members of DRA in the press, radio, TV, or any other public media. Public media might be a web site on the Internet, a megaphone at a public event, or a cable access show if those mediums were available to the public at large.

Anonymity at that level is important for several reasons. It ensures that the mistakes of one person don't affect the fellowship as a whole. It helps us all grasp and maintain a level of humility that is conducive to personal dual recovery. It helps ensure that we all have an equal partnership in dual recovery. It helps us remain free from public controversy. It discourages members who might use or exploit their DRA membership to achieve personal notoriety or elevated status. It reminds us to place principles before personalities.

We may certainly disclose our full names and contact information in a DRA meeting or to a prospective newcomer. How else could we be of service to each other in times of need or develop friendships with other people in dual recovery. We are free, if we choose, to tell our family, friends, counselors, doctors, or clergy, that we are members of DRA and attend meetings. We don't need to hide the fact that we are in dual recovery from our significant friends, family, and the people that help us. We have the freedom to choose which individuals we wish to disclose our involvement in DRA with.

We are careful not to appear as or be personally identified as spokespersons for DRA. Yes, the general public does need to know about DRA, but our relationship with the public at large ought to be characterized by personal anonymity. Our names and faces as members of the fellowship of Dual Recovery Anonymous ought never be published or broadcast. This does not mean people who happen to be members of DRA can't become public figures or become famous. It simply means that they do so without disclosing publicly that they are in DRA.

The Tradition of anonymity does not preclude members from speaking publicly about their own personal recovery; however they do so without mentioning DRA by name or by remaining anonymous.

# Preamble

**DRA is an independent, self-help organization. Our goal is to help men and women who experience a dual illness. We are chemically dependent and we are also affected by an emotional or psychiatric illness. Both illnesses affect us in all areas of our lives; physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.**

**The primary purpose of DRA is to help one another achieve dual recovery, to prevent relapse, and to carry the message of recovery to others who experience dual disorders.**

**DRA has two requirements for membership; a desire to stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs and a desire to manage our emotional or psychiatric illness in a healthy and constructive way.**

**DRA is a nonprofessional self-help program. There must always be a clear boundary separating the work of DRA from the work of chemical dependency and mental health professionals. The DRA fellowship has no opinion on matters of diagnosis, treatment, medication, or other issues related to the health-care professions.**

**The DRA fellowship is not affiliated with any other self-help organization or Twelve Step program. DRA has no opinion on the way other groups address the problems of dual disorders and dual recovery. We do not criticize the efforts of others.**

**The DRA Central Service Office will offer support to others who wish to start DRA meetings and who wish to work with other groups to carry the message.**

## The DRA Preamble

### A Statement of our Traditions and Founding Vision

Preamble: What It Says with short explanations

**“DRA is an independent, non profit, self-help organization. Our goal is to help men and women who experience a dual illness: We are chemically dependent and we are also affected by an emotional or psychiatric illness. Both illnesses affect us in all areas of our lives: physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually.”**

Explanation:

- DRA is a program established by people in dual recovery for people who experience a specific dual disorder of both chemical dependency and emotional or psychiatric illness.
- Each illness has an impact on many areas of a person’s life.
- DRA is independent, therefore there are no outside organizations or institutions that direct or impose themselves on the Fellowship and its principles.

**“The primary purpose of DRA is to help one another achieve dual recovery, to prevent relapse and to carry the message of recovery to others who experience dual disorders.”**

Explanation:

- DRA has only one single purpose - dual recovery members help one another in dual recovery. We need to prevent relapse from both illnesses. We carry the message of recovery to help others recover from dual disorders.

(Continued)

**“DRA has two requirements for membership; A desire to stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs and a desire to manage our emotional or psychiatric illness in a healthy and constructive way.”**

Explanation:

- DRA is a membership organization with two simple requirements, a desire to manage both illnesses.
- DRA membership does not require a diagnosis or referral from a provider, there are no fees or dues.
- DRA does not define how a person should manage their emotional or psychiatric illness because there are many appropriate approaches.

**“DRA is a nonprofessional self-help program. There must always be a clear boundary separating the work of DRA from the work of chemical dependency and mental health professionals. The DRA Fellowship has no opinion on matters of diagnosis, treatment, medications or other issues related to the healthcare professions.”**

Explanation:

- DRA maintains its focus on its primary purpose, providing a Twelve Step program for dual recovery and carrying the message through the service work of the fellowship.
- DRA maintains the focus on the primary purpose by remaining outside of the arena of engaging in advocacy and public education or providing professional services.
- By maintaining the primary purpose, DRA avoids being drawn into controversial issues associated with the political or financial matters related to providing professional services.

**“The DRA fellowship is not affiliated with any other self-help organization or Twelve Step program. DRA has no opinion on the way other groups address the problems of dual disorders and dual recovery. We do not criticize the efforts of others.”**

Explanation:

- While DRA is a Twelve Step Anonymous fellowship, it is free of any direct or indirect relationship with other fellowships, or self-help organizations.
- DRA recognizes there are other fellowships that address dual disorders, addictions or emotional or psychiatric illness and that people who want support for their recovery can benefit from a diversity of approaches.