



## **Accepting Differences** (Brief)



Newcomers and visitors may ask, can a DRA program help me even with the type of symptoms that I have? Such feelings are not uncommon. We need to help newcomers recognize that a variety of symptoms are possible with a dual illness. There is no single type of dual disorder. We do share a common bond as men and women who are affected by different types of “no-fault” illnesses whose symptoms can disrupt our ability to function and relate to others effectively.

Some of us feared that we were becoming hopelessly impaired. We came to believe that we would never be “normal” again. Many of us experienced great shame and guilt. We believed that our emotional or psychiatric illness and chemical dependency were our fault. Some of us have become secretive. We tried to keep our drinking and drug use a secret, and later some of us felt a need to keep our recovery and Steps a secret. We also felt our psychiatric illness must be kept secret, especially if our recovery program included prescription medication.

We seemed to run out of ways to protect our feelings and self-esteem, and to protect ourselves from the attitudes of those around us. Many of us gradually went into a closet of denial. If there are any among us who have felt as though they were living in that closet, we welcome you. We want you to know that the fear, isolation, and secrecy no longer need be a part of your life!!!!