

FACTS ABOUT

Bipolar Depression and Mania

Information for Sufferers, Family and Friends



According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 5.7 million Americans suffer from bipolar disorder - that's approximately 2.6 percent of the US population over the age of 18. Bipolar disorder is a longterm illness that can be carefully managed through medical care.

Persons with bipolar depression are subject to extreme mood swings, from manic highs to severe depression. Sufferers may experience alternating manic and depressed states or they may experience 'mixed episodes' where they are both manic and depressed at the same time. People with bipolar disorder may be symptom-free between episodes. Episodes can result in problems in relationships, difficulty in work situations and possibly suicide.

Describing the Mania State

"The fast ideas become too fast and there are far too many...overwhelming confusion replaces clarity...you stop keeping up with it--memory goes. Infectious humor ceases to amuse. Your friends become frightened... everything is now against the grain...you are irritable, angry, frightened, uncontrollable, and trapped."

Describing the Depression State

"I doubt completely my ability to do anything well. It seems as though my mind has slowed down and burned out to the point of being virtually useless. I am haunted with the desperate hopelessness of it all. Others say, "It's only temporary, it will pass, you will get over it," but of course they haven't any idea of how I feel, although they are certain they do. If I can't feel, move, think, or care, then what on earth is the point?"

Syptoms of Mania

- Overly joyful after depressed mood
- Sleeping less
- Improper behavior in public
- Talking more than usual
- Highly irritable
- Noticeably increased energy (cleaning, finishing tasks, etc.)
- Increased sexual desire
- Decreased judgment

Distinguishing Bipolar Mood Swings from Normal Swings

Mood swings are a normal part of life. Everyone experiences periods of elation and tough times, so how can you tell if the mood swings you are experiencing are normal or may be related to bipolar disorder? You may be suffering from a bipolar disorder if your mood swings are so severe that they cause problems in your social or family life. Mood swings that lead to cause significant decreases in your work productivity for periods longer than a few days are also an indicator. Other people noticing and commenting on your mood shifts is also a sign of mood swings that are not normal. Having mood swings that get out of hand and result in law enforcement involvement should be a warning sign of potential bipolar disorder. Finally, you should talk with a mental health professional if your mood swings are accompanied by trouble sleeping, noticeable changes in energy levels or changes in your ability to think, focus or perceive reality.



SUICIDE PREVENTION
FOUNDATION

Sources of Help

Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation

www.suicidepreventionfoundation.org

(970) 683-6626

National Institute of Mental Health

search 'bipolar disorder' at www.nimh.nih.gov

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org