



Bipolar disorder can be managed

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Bipolar Illness affects approximately 5.7 million adults in a given year. Bipolar disorder sometimes called Manic Depression has no restrictions and affects individuals of every culture, racial group and income level. Many of these individuals can learn to manage the symptoms of depression and mania allowing them to lead very productive and successful lives.

With no special scans and laboratory tests to determine the diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, many individuals are being diagnosed mistakenly.

Bipolar illness can be diagnosed based on a clinical interview usually conducted by a specially trained provider, usually a physician, social worker, psychologist or nurse. The most important diagnostic tool is to talk openly with your mental health provider about your mood and lifestyle. It is important to track your mood, sleep cycles and daily activity to help monitor any major symptoms of depression, mania and psychosis.

Bipolar illness tends to be episodic with symptoms cycling at different times and of different intensities. Not one person has the same symptoms or experiences in their illness and it is not a moment to moment change in mood which is often misbelieved by many.

There are many steps to take to help manage psychiatric symptoms and develop stability in mood. Mental Health America provides support groups for depression and bipolar illness in the local community to help aid the treatment of mental illness.

The following guidelines have been helpful in establishing and maintaining recovery in treatment:

- Establish and maintain a routine sleep schedule of 8-14 hours of sleep a night.
- Take medications daily and as prescribed by a mental health professional. Never stop your medications without the approval of your health care provider.
- Eliminate mood altering substances from your lifestyle especially drugs and alcohol, nicotine and caffeine.
- Maintain daily purposefulness by completing self care needs and every day responsibilities.
- Learn to say no. Set limits and boundaries with others even family and friends to manage stress levels when feeling overwhelmed.
- Track your mood, sleep, medication compliance and purposefulness daily by maintaining a log for your mental health provider.
- Educate yourself and your loved ones about the illness and how they can help support your treatment process.
- Stay active in treatment with your mental health provider and seek support from community support groups.

Always remember that if suicidal ideation and/or mood instability develops, seek emergency services with your mental health provider or at your local hospital.

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