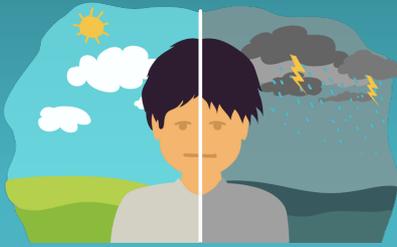


Bipolar Disorder



What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder is a mood disorder that causes significant changes in mood, energy levels, activity, and thinking. It is characterized by distinct episodes of mania that generally alternate with periods of clinical depression. These episodes are distinct from each other

and can be followed by periods of normal mood. Bipolar Disorder is quite different from other common mood disorders (specifically depression) in that episodes of hypo/mania occur with many of the symptoms listed below occurring simultaneously or in clusters. When diagnosing Bipolar Disorder, it is always important to start with a comprehensive evaluation as other mental health diagnoses and contributing factors must be considered and ruled out including ADHD, other mood disorders including unipolar depression, PTSD, substance abuse, personality features, anxiety disorders, etc.

What are signs and symptoms?

Mania

- Intense elation or euphoria
- Grandiose beliefs
- Elevated energy & activity levels
- Racing thoughts
- Inappropriate social/sexual behavior
- Impulsivity/reckless decision-making
- Impaired judgment
- Engaging in risky behavior
- Extreme mood shifts
- Decreased need for sleep
- Agitation, irritability, hostility
- Rapid and/or pressured speech
- Psychosis (e.g. hallucinations, paranoia, delusional thinking)

Depression

- Feeling sad or irritable
- Loss of interest in activities
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and guilt
- Difficulties sleeping or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite that may lead to changes in weight
- Feeling tired or fatigued
- Difficulties with concentration or memory
- Body aches and pains (e.g., stomach aches, headaches)
- Withdrawing or isolating from social interactions
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

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What is the treatment for Bipolar Disorder?

Medication

Medications will likely be prescribed to help stabilize mood and control the symptoms of depression and mania. Medications typically used to treat Bipolar Disorder include mood stabilizers, atypical antipsychotics, and possibly antidepressants at times. Compliance with these medications is of the utmost importance, even if symptoms appear to improve. As always, talk to your doctor about benefits and risks for side-effects.

Psychotherapy

Therapy, in conjunction with medications, can help improve management of Bipolar Disorder by teaching effective coping strategies for dealing with symptoms of mania and depression. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a particular evidenced-based therapy intervention that teaches people more effective ways of thinking and behaving to improve mood and other symptoms.

What do I do if I need help now?

If you or someone you know is in crisis, get help immediately:

- Call your doctor and/or mental health professional
- Go to the nearest hospital or emergency room
- Call 911 or the Orange County Crisis Assessment Team at (866-830-6011)
- Call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or (1-800-273-8255)

Who do I contact to find out more?

Referrals for therapy and medication management can be made by physicians, mental health professionals, other allied health professionals, or from the patient or family directly.



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