



BIPOLAR

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder is a mental illness in which individuals experience episodes of both depression and mania. Episodes of mania can be experienced in a variety of ways, such as: a decreased need for sleep, pressured speech, racing thoughts, increase in goal-directed behavior, or excessive involvement in risky activities.

The three types of Bipolar Disorder are:

Bipolar I – Manic symptoms last at least one week, or they are so severe that the individual requires hospitalization. Depressive episodes may also occur.

Bipolar II – The occurrence of both depressive and hypomanic episodes (manic episodes that are present for less than one week).

Cyclothymic Disorder – Numerous periods of mild depression and hypomania. These symptoms are milder than those described in Bipolar I and II.

Who can have Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder is typically experienced for the first time in the late teens or early 20's, with no difference in prevalence between males and females. While there is a large genetic component to the development of Bipolar Disorder, it is important to note that many different factors may be involved, such as family history, the environment, as well as individual life experiences.

Should I be concerned?

Bipolar Disorder can be very challenging to treat and manage as its symptoms make it hard for an individual to seek help. The increase in energy as well as the feelings of grandiosity experienced during manic episodes may leave individuals unwilling to seek support.



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How can I help?

If there is a family member or loved one in your life who has Bipolar Disorder, be supportive and try to have a conversation with them about their mental health and how they are feeling. Try your best to understand what they need in order to relax and cope with the ups and downs of their illness. If you see the individual engaging in life threatening behaviour that could be of harm to themselves or another person, call 911.

Resources

- <http://www.amhs-kfla.ca>
- TALK (Listening Support – Kingston) 613-544-1771
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>
- <https://cmha.ca/mental-health/understanding-mental-illness/bipolar-disorder>
- http://www.camhx.ca/education/online_courses_webinars/mha101/bipolardisorder/Bipolar_Disorder_.htm