

UNDERSTANDING BIPOLAR DISORDERS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Millions of people live well with bipolar disorder with the right support and treatment.

Bipolar disorders are mental health conditions that cause extreme shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out daily tasks. These shifts go beyond normal ups and downs and can impact relationships, work, school, and overall well-being.

IT IS TREATABLE.

With the right care, many people manage their symptoms and live fulfilling, meaningful lives.

TYPES OF BIPOLAR DISORDERS

BIPOLAR I DISORDER

Involves at least one manic episode that lasts 7 days or longer (or any length if hospitalization is needed), often followed by depressive episodes.

BIPOLAR II DISORDER

Involves at least one hypomanic episode (a milder form of mania) and one or more depressive episodes.

CYCLOTHYMIC DISORDER (CYCLOTHYMIA)

Involves many periods of hypomanic symptoms and periods of depressive symptoms that last for at least 2 years (1 year in children and teens).

OTHER SPECIFIED & UNSPECIFIED BIPOLAR AND RELATED DISORDERS

For symptoms that cause distress or impairment but don't fit the above categories exactly.

THE MOOD SPECTRUM

Bipolar disorder involves episodes of mood changes that can affect thoughts, behavior, energy, and sleep.

MANIA

(or Hypomania)

An abnormally elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and increased energy that lasts for days to weeks.

Common symptoms:

- Feeling "on top of the world" or overly confident
- Needing less sleep
- Racing thoughts
- Talking more than usual
- Impulsive decisions
- Increased goal-directed activity
- Irritability or agitation
- Risky behaviors

DEPRESSION

A persistent feeling of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness that lasts for weeks to months.

Common symptoms:

- Feeling sad, empty, or tearful
- Loss of interest in activities
- Fatigue or low energy
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

WHAT CAN TRIGGER EPISODES?

- Stress
- Lack of sleep
- Alcohol or drug use
- Major life changes
- Irregular routines
- Not taking medication as prescribed
- Seasonal changes

Triggers are different for everyone. Learning your patterns can help you take steps to stay balanced.

DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT



A mental health professional can evaluate your symptoms, medical history, and family history to make an accurate diagnosis.

Treatment may include:

- Medication (mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, antidepressants)
- Psychotherapy (CBT, family-focused therapy, interpersonal therapy)
- Lifestyle strategies (sleep, routine, exercise, stress management)
- Support from family, friends, or support groups

Treatment looks different for everyone. Work with your care team to find what works best for you.

COPING & SELF-CARE STRATEGIES



PRIORITIZE SLEEP

A consistent sleep schedule helps stabilize mood.



KEEP A ROUTINE

Structure and predictability can reduce stress.



MANAGE STRESS

Try deep breathing, mindfulness, journaling, or yoga.



STAY ACTIVE

Exercise boosts mood and supports overall well-being.



REACH OUT

Talk to people you trust. You don't have to do this alone.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Reach out to a mental health professional if you:

- Notice extreme mood changes that last days or weeks
- Have trouble functioning at work, school, or home
- Experience thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Feel uncertain or need support
- You deserve support. Help is a sign of strength.

HOPE & RECOVERY

With the right treatment, support, and self-care, people with bipolar disorder can and do thrive. Recovery is possible, and you have a future filled with possibilities.

Be patient with yourself. Healing is not a straight line—there will be ups and downs. You are worthy of care, compassion, and a life of balance and joy.