

Bipolar Disorder

FACT SHEET

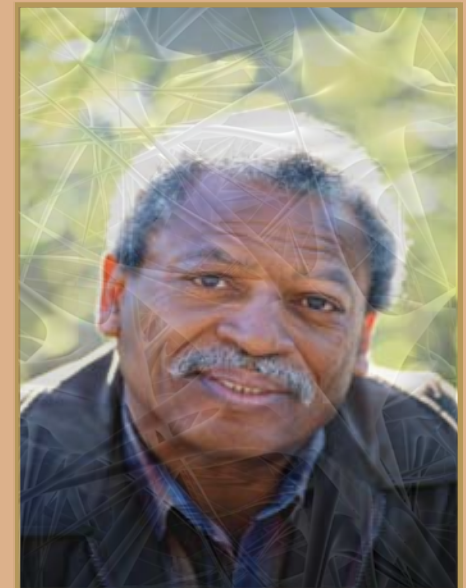


Did you know that Bipolar Disorder

Is a brain disorder causing unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to function? Bipolar disorder is also known as manic-depressive illness. It may cause severe shifts in mania or "up" moods and depression or "down" moods. This disorder affecting thinking, judgment, and social behavior is a treatable medical condition. Bipolar Disorder is most often treated with medication.

Could be caused by

- A family history of the disorder
- An imbalance of certain chemicals in the brain. When the levels are too high, mania occurs. When the levels are too low, depression occurs
- Environmental stress, drug use, an illness or another event



Symptoms

Common symptoms of depression or "down" mood:

- Feeling sad
- Losing interest in things
- Gaining or losing weight
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired
- Feeling worthlessness or guilt
- Thinking about death or attempts at suicide
- Appearing restless or doing things more slowly

Common symptoms of "mania" or "up" mood:

- Feeling unusually great
- Sleeping less
- Talking too much
- Racing thoughts
- Distracted easily
- Fidgeting
- Exhibiting poor judgment and impulse control

Quick tips for helping people with these symptoms of Mental Illness

- Always acknowledge what the person is saying. Do not discount their emotions. On the other hand, do not enter into a "therapy session." Keep the boundaries firm and the purpose of the conversation clear for persons who are talking too much, have racing thoughts, or feeling sad.
- Help focus the person on the topic of the counseling session. (If it is possible), try to gently bring the topic of conversation back to the purpose of the counseling session if a person is distracted and talking about another topic.
- Find a quiet room to talk with the person who may be easily distracted, have difficulty speaking, or has impaired attention.
- Try to understand the feelings of others and be patient. Speak slowly and repeat information for persons who are easily distracted, manic and not concentrating. Speak in a calm and positive tone to decrease anxiety.
- Convey interest and concern towards the person. If the person is sad, reassure the person that you are there to help and you care. You could say, "You are not alone in this. I am here for you."
- When explaining complex topics, speak in short, simple and logical sentences. For example, use concise and concrete words and introduce one topic at a time if the person is easily distracted, manic, and has impaired attention or memory.
- Write down important facts in logical order and repeat if necessary to the person. Give the person a list of the important facts that were discussed and the decisions that were made.
- To conclude the session, summarize what you discussed with the person during the session. Ask if there are questions. If there are no questions, gently but firmly tell the person the session is ended. You can also stand up as a signal to the beneficiary that the session is ended.

Additional tips for helping people with symptoms of Mental Illness



If the person is starting to exhibit unusual behavior (such as pacing up and down the room or talking too fast) speak softly and calmly, in simple sentences and direct the person back to his/her chair, or ask him/her to speak more slowly. Reassure the person that together you can work through the issues. If the person does not stop the unusual behavior or threatens to take his/her life or hurt him/herself or others do the following:

- ◇ Use your own judgment regarding your personal safety.
 - ◇ Stop the session using established protocol your office has developed. You can call your supervisor immediately without alarming the person.
 - ◇ Give some distance between the person and you.
 - ◇ Do not leave the person alone until someone has arrived in the room.
 - ◇ Do not criticize or threaten the person.
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Web Sources:

- eMedicineHealth - www.emedicinehealth.com
- Medline Plus - <http://medlineplus.gov>

Article:

- Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder/Manic and Depressive Episodes - <http://www.seroquel.com>

Publications:

- Medical News Today - www.medicalnewstoday.com
- Helping a friend with Depression or Bipolar disorder - www.dbsalliance.org
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration on-line publication "Mood Disorders" - <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/OWH09/default.aspx>
- Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General - <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/features/surgeongeneralreport/home.asp>