

Providing the Irish community with information, resources, and opportunities to talk about mental health.

Bipolar Disorder

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar is a chronic mental illness characterized by dramatic changes in a person's mood, energy levels, and ability to think clearly. Those with Bipolar Disorder experience 'high' moods or 'manic' episodes, and 'low' moods or 'depressive' episodes. Bipolar is also known as manic-depression.

Symptoms

Manic Episode

- Talking rapidly
- Racing thoughts
- Increased energy, activity or agitation
- Trouble sleeping
- Feelings of power or invincibility
- Reckless, impulsive, or risky behavior
- Poor decision making
- Psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions

Depressive Episode

- Feeling sad and 'down'
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Difficulty with concentration or memory
- Feeling worried or unfulfilled
- A loss of interest or enjoyment in life
- Thoughts about death or suicide

Diagnosis

Bipolar Disorder usually appears when a person is in their late teens or early adult years.

To be diagnosed with Bipolar, a person must have had at least one manic episode. There are four categories of Bipolar each differing in how exactly the affected person experiences manic and depressive episodes.

There is no known cause of Bipolar Disorder and it cannot currently be cured. Experts believe a variety of factors play a role in the development of the illness including genetics, brain structure, and stress.

Treatment

As a chronic mental illness, Bipolar Disorder requires ongoing treatment. Beginning treatment as early as possible is important as the symptoms of Bipolar can worsen over time if unaddressed. Current treatments include

- Medications - mood stabilizers, antidepressants
- Psychotherapy - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Talk Therapy
- Electroconvulsive Therapy
- Alternative and natural medicines

4.4%

of the U.S. adult population affected at some time in their life



Similar number of males and females affected by Bipolar Disorder

This fact sheet was produced using material from

NAMI Chicago
<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Images/FactSheets/Bipolar-Disorder-FS.pdf>

National Institute on Mental Health
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>