

Helpful Skills

Remember, everyone's symptoms are different, but if many symptoms persist for over 3-4 weeks, talk to your doctor/therapist. Here are some helpful tips:

- Know yourself, learn triggers for your illness and coping skills. Remember to be patient with yourself.
- Establish a consistent routine and sleep pattern.
- A balanced diet and exercise can help you better manage your illness.
- Talk about your mood changes. It is helpful to use a mood tracker to take with you to doctors' appointments.
- Talk therapy can be helpful to work through feelings and learn coping skills.
- Medications can help stabilize moods.



How Our Support Groups Can Help

- Groups are free and confidential.
- Better understand yourself or a loved one.
- Discover yourself while feeling accepted.
- Groups are specialized for specific populations.



Understanding Depression and Bipolar Disorders

re:
MIND
DEPRESSION & BIPOLAR SUPPORT



“I don't feel alone anymore, my words find a home instead of being ignored.”

-Participant

Understanding Depression & Bipolar Disorder

Depression and bipolar disorder are mental disorders, real physical illnesses that affect a person's moods, thoughts, body, energy and emotions. Both illnesses, especially bipolar disorder, tend to follow a cyclical course, meaning they have ups and downs. Nearly one in five American adults, or 43.6 million people experienced a diagnosable mental illness in 2014 according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Treatment for these illnesses can also have ups and downs. As much as we may want wellness to happen overnight, it rarely does. It is normal to wish you could feel better faster or to worry that you will never feel better. However, know that you can feel better, and that ultimately you are in charge of your wellness. There are many things you can do to help yourself.

Talk to your doctor about your treatment plan. Your doctor can provide treatment(s) and/or medication(s) that work best for you. Along the way, you have the right to ask questions about the treatments you are receiving and choose what is best for you.



Depression

Major depressive disorder is characterized by a combination of symptoms that interfere with a person's ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy once-pleasurable activities (nimh.nih.gov, 2014). The exact causes of depression still are not clear. What we do know is that both genetics and a stressful environment, or life situation, can contribute to its cause or sudden onset. Speak to your doctor if you are experiencing symptoms of depression.

- Feeling sad most of the time/having crying spells.
- Feeling that activities and people are meaningless.
- Lowered energy levels.
- Excessive guilt.
- Significant change in appetite and/or sleeping habits.
- Unexplained physical pains.
- Irritability/agitation or slower functioning nearly every day.
- Recurring suicidal thoughts with or without a plan.

If you think you might have depression, talk to your doctor. Do not try to diagnose yourself or others. Only a mental health professional can accurately determine if you have depression.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder involves extreme changes in mood, along with changes in thought, energy and behavior. It usually begins in late adolescence (often appearing as depression during the teen years), although it can start in early childhood or later in life. The illness tends to run in families and appears to have a genetic link. Speak to your doctor if you are experiencing any symptoms of mania, which include:

- Decreased need for sleep.
- Impulsive behavior such as excessive spending, careless decisions, sexual promiscuity or erratic driving.
- Elevated or irritable mood.
- Flight of ideas, racing thoughts, or racing speech.
- Frequently distracted.
- Increased mental or physical activity.
- Delusions or hallucinations.



Two Major Categories of Bipolar Disorder:

Bipolar Disorder I

Experience periods of mania and depression.

Bipolar Disorder II

Predominantly feeling depressed and does not experience a full manic episode.

Talk to your doctor if you think you might have bipolar disorder. Do not try to diagnose yourself or others. Only a mental health professional can determine if you have bipolar disorder.

If you are currently feeling suicidal:

- Call 911
- Go to a hospital
- Call Harris Center Hotline - 713.970.7000

Emergency Numbers

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Harris Center Hotline
713.970.7000

Crisis Outreach Team
713.970.7520

Houston Police Department
713.884.3131

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston
713.529.3211



Mental Health Information Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:
www.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

Quick Reference Medication Chart
www.psyd-fx.com

International Bipolar Foundation
www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org

www.remindsupport.org
713.600.1131

