

**THIS**

**TOO**

A MENTAL WELLNESS  
COMPANION GUIDE

**SHALL**

**PASS**

# FOREWORD

When I first started writing this film, it began from a really personally place. I chose to write about an experience I had surrounding my relationship with my own mental illness. As I kept working on it, I realized it had the potential to evolve from something that was solely a reflection of my own experience to something more universal. This in turn could not only help individuals suffering from mental illness, but also their loved ones who attempted to provide them with support.

The goal of this project is to not only serve as a companion piece to *This Too Shall Pass*, but to provide support and assistance for those dealing with mental illness and those surrounding them. Within this zine, you will find a combination of resources and strategies to help yourself or others.







FIVE WAYS

6 YOU CAN

7

HELP YOURSELF

# ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Committing to a routine can help you take control and help prevent depression and mania from taking control. For example, in order to keep the energy changes caused by depression and mania in check,

commit to being in bed only eight hours a night and up and moving the rest of the time. Aerobic exercise is a good strategy for regulating body rhythm. **N**

# PINPOINT YOUR STRESSORS AND TRIGGERS

Are there specific times when you find yourself stressed? People, places, jobs and even holidays can play a big role in your mood stability. Symptoms of mania and depression may start slow, but addressing them early can prevent a serious episode.

Feelings of mania may feel good at first, but they can spiral into dangerous behavior such as reckless driving, violence or hypersexuality. Depression may begin with feeling tired and being unable to sleep. **G**

# LEARN FROM PAST EPISODES

Pattern recognition is essential to spotting the early symptoms of an impending manic episode. Accepting support from family members or friends who can recognize early symptoms is important.

Symptoms often follow very specific patterns, and this can be learned and planned for. 2 nights of a small sleep change or the even the repeated use of a certain phrase can be examples of early warning signs. **N**

**FORM**

**HEALTHY**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationships can help stabilize your moods. An outgoing friend might encourage you to get involved with social activities and lift your mood.

A more relaxed friend may provide you with a steady calm that can help keep feelings of mania under control. **V**



# TALK TO A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

The most important step in treating a mental health condition sometimes feels like a challenging one: finding a mental health professional. A trustworthy and knowledgeable mental health professional will be a valuable ally.

It may take a little time and persistence to locate this ally or assemble a team of allies. If you're having trouble finding a mental health professional, please go to the resources at the end of this book. **N**

# RESOURCES

**This guide is not a replacement for a mental health professional. Please seek one if you feel it is necessary.**

Coping with the ups and downs of bipolar disorder isn't easy. But if you or a family member or friend is struggling, there is help. NAMI and NAMI Affiliates are there to provide you with support for you and your family and information about community resources.

Taken from the National Alliance of Mental Illness

Contact the NAMI HelpLine at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or go to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) if you have any questions about bipolar disorder or finding support and resources.

## For more specific resources, please visit:

- <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Bipolar-Disorder/Treatment>
- <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Living-with-a-Mental-Health-Condition>
- <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/coping-mechanisms>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/forty-healthy-coping-skills-4586742>
- <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/January-2019/Self-Help-Techniques-for-Coping-with-Mental-Illness>

## SOURCE KEY:

- N**: Source from nami.org (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- G**: Source from goodtherapy.org
- V**: Source from verywellmind.org



# RESOURCES

A person with a mental health condition benefits enormously from having social support. Remind your family member that you're there to help and you're not giving up.

When setbacks occur with one treatment strategy, look for alternative strategies. Try something new, and encourage your family member not to give up. A good life is possible. **V**

# DON'T GIVE UP

At the same time, remember that it takes time to heal from an acute episode. Allow your family member to rest.

Offer him or her opportunities to ease back into routine activities rather than requiring participation. A gentle approach encourages recuperation. **N**

# DON'T PUSH TOO HARD

Even in situations where your family member or friend may “go off,” ranting at you or others, it’s important to remain calm.

Listen to them and make them feel understood, then try to work toward a positive outcome. **N**

# REACT CALMLY AND RATIONALLY



Not everyone enjoys confronting problems head on, but doing so is critical to healthy communication. Make time to talk about problems. But know that not just any time is right. For example, if your family member has bipolar II and becomes angry, it might be safe to try and talk through the situation.

But if your friend with bipolar I becomes angry, your reaction may need to be different. It's more likely that this anger will turn to rage and become dangerous, including physical violence. **V**

# CONFRONT COMMUNICATE CONTINUE

You may be able to prevent a serious episode of the illness before it happens. Symptoms of mania and depression often have warning signs. The beginnings of mania typically feel good and that means your family member may not want to seek help.

Identify signals such as lack of sleep and speaking quickly that signal impending mania. A deep depression often only begins with a low mood, feeling fatigued or having trouble sleeping. **N**

# RECOGNIZE EARLY SYMPTOMS

FIVE WAYS

YOU CAN HELP

SOMEONE ELSE







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