

## Describing a Bipolar Disorder: Learning Its Episodes and Symptoms

Emotions have its ups and downs. It is normal for everyone to feel. But for a person affected by a bipolar disorder, these highs and lows can become very extreme and hinder daily activities. There are times that the situation also became dangerous. A person cannot work because of feeling so depressed. Then the next day, this person feels great, filled with creativity and endless energy. However, some people can misinterpret such actions as being reckless and uncontrollable.

A bipolar disorder can be unpredictable and confusing. This medical condition is also chronic. Never feel embarrassed if you are affected with this type of disorder. Learning all about it is helpful to manage such medical illness successfully.

A bipolar disorder affects the ability of a person to feel various moods in a normal range. Manic depression is another term for bipolar disorder. Bipolar is used to describe two extremes or poles. People affected by this serious medical condition have mood alterations ranging from an extremely low (depression) to an extremely high (mania).

The best picture to describe such condition is the globe. The globe is divided into the North and South Pole. The mania would be the North Pole and the depression would be the South Pole. If a person experiences the symptoms of either pole for a definite duration of time, then he or she is experiencing an episode. These episodes must be thoroughly discussed with a healthcare provider.

There are four kinds of episodes associated with bipolar disorder according to APA (American Psychiatric Association).

1. Depression. Sometimes, a person can feel extremely sad for a prolong period of time. It is very impossible for him or her to eat or leave his or her bed. The things which he or she enjoys to do seem very difficult.
2. Mania. This is the other pole of a bipolar disorder. It may begin with a high or good feeling. But after sometimes a person can feel very angry and irritable. Doing risky things is not impossible.
3. Hypomania. Compared to mania, this type of episode is only mild. A person might feel very good thinking that more things are getting done. But

after a while, his or her mood changes to a full-blown depression or mania.

4. Mixed mood or mixed episode. The feelings of depression and mania can affect a person many times during the day.

These episodes can put a person at risk for committing suicide. Experiencing mania or depression for more than four episodes within a year is known as rapid-cycling. There are different symptoms for both poles of a bipolar disorder.

The mania symptoms include increased levels of energy, reduce needs for sleep, easily distracted, mind jumps, racing thoughts, more talkative, more confident, focus on doing things but accomplishes only little, and more risky even if it means things are going to be bad.

The depression symptoms include feeling blue or sad, feeling down, losing interests on the things which a person is enjoying including sex, feeling guilty, feeling hopeless, feeling worthless, sleep too much or too little, changes in appetite or weight, feeling tired, feeling too little energy, feeling restless, concentration problems, decision-making problems, and thoughts of suicide or death.

Moreover, it is also vital to learn how mood swings are triggered. Emotions and events that happened in a life of a person can be the triggering factors. Sad, unpleasant, or happy events can make a person experiences either depressive or manic episodes. Triggers or stressors include irregular schedule of sleep, misuse of drugs or alcohol, stopping medication, starting medications for depression or other herbal products, and having problems related to thyroid and other health condition.

Nevertheless, different people may experience different triggers. Some people also consider seasonal changes, illness, holidays, work problems, friends or family's disagreements, marriage, starting a recent job, starting college, love one's death as triggers. Figuring out what triggers a person can help. Keeping a mood chart to record varying emotions can determine mood swing patterns. This can be a tough task but provides many treatment possibilities.

A bipolar disorder is not more of a problem today. There are lots of treatments available. It is very important to talk to a healthcare provider to create a plan that will work best in stabilizing mood swings.