

The Two Faces of Bipolar Disorder ~ What Does It Mean and How It Affect Your Personality or Someone You Love, Regain Control Vol.8



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Introduction

Bipolar is a condition which wreaks havoc on those that it affects. If you suffer from Bipolar, chances are good that your family suffers with you. No matter if you are that family member trying to learn to cope or you are the person that has been diagnosed, there is hope out there.

Although there is no cure for Bipolar, just yet, there are many ways in which you can improve your chances of living a long and happy life. The good news is that the process doesn't have to be difficult either.

The ups and downs are what make the most problems for individuals. Being happy and go lucky one minute is wonderful but when it is followed by serious lows and depressed moods the next, there's even more to worry about.

In this e-book, you will find a number of different scenarios that will help you to ultimately learn to cope with bipolar and all of these ups and downs. Through an understanding of your condition as well as help in dealing with the beneficial tools we will teach you, you will be able to improve the quality of life that you and your loved ones share.

Chapter 1: Understanding Bipolar To Get Help

Most individuals that suffer from bipolar have one goal. That goal is to live a life that is as normal as can be. To get through today without having any emotional problems, to make it through the big meeting at work without having people wonder what is wrong with you and to simply be able to enjoy your daughter's graduation are all additional goals that you may have.

Before you can fully learn to cope with bipolar, you need to fully understand your condition. You need to know what things happen, as best that you can, so that you can then trigger your coping mechanisms to work for you.

There is no 100 percent sure way of stopping these things from happening to you. But, there are countless things you can learn to do to help you to improve your outlook.

To get to that point, we will start by giving you all of the information you need about your condition so that you can better understand what is happening to you. If you are a family member who just wants to help someone that has bipolar, then by all means, you too can learn all that you need to in order to deliver the help that you can give to them.

Bipolar: The Medical Side

Bipolar is a condition in which there are extremes in moods and life experiences. There is no doubt that bipolar is a health condition that is serious and disabling to those that have it. It is a mental illness and it does require necessary treatment.

You may have heard bipolar called Manic Depression or that a person suffering from it has a manic depressive condition. But, what scientists have come to learn is that manic style behavior is only one extreme of this condition. The other part of it is that of depression. Both of these conditions are vitally serious to your well being and even to your life span and must be treated.

While doctors do not have a cause for bipolar, they are working on finding one. Along with that, you can be sure that there are many scientists looking for a way to cure the condition. Yet, until that happens, we need to examine what we do know about bipolar and what it does to the person that you are.

For most people bipolar starts when they are just in their teens. Some believe that it is triggered by puberty. Others

will not develop this condition until they are in their early adult years. Bipolar can last your life time, too.

For most individuals, bipolar is a condition that doesn't happen all of the time. You don't go in and out of moods ore other experiences within seconds and you don't do this all of the time either. For example, some people will have bouts that last for several weeks. Others will have them for a few months at a time. Although it is possible to have bipolar in which your symptoms flare all of the time, this is really the rare case.

If you don't get help for bipolar, your condition is likely to continue to worsen. There is no doubt that depression itself is a killer. Therefore, not getting help is simply not an option. But, the good news is that there are medications, treatments and therapies that can help to reduce the symptoms and help you to cope with your condition.

Do You Have Bipolar?

The first question that you need to ask is if you have this condition. Learning the signs and symptoms will help you to weigh the need to seek out medical attention. If any of your symptoms are severe or you are considering harming yourself, you must seek immediate medical attention as soon as possible. 8

Bipolar individuals will go through an alternating pattern of highs and lows that play on their emotions. The highs are called episodes of mania.

The lows are episodes of depression. The intensity of these highs and lows will vary from person to person and from one episode to the next. For some, the symptoms can be quite mild but for others they can be quite severe. In addition to this, you may also have very normal times too.

During the manic phase, there are a number of symptoms that can be observed.

- You may feel extremely happy and optimistic. You may feel euphoria. You may also have an inflated self esteem or ego, too.
- You may have very poor judgment, and you may know this by being told by others that you've made the wrong decision.
- Your speech can be very fast. Your mind is going crazy with thoughts. You may be agitated and feel the need to move your body and your mind. Physical activity may be increased, too.
- Many will be aggressive in their behavior, often more so than is "allowable."

- Some people find this to be a time of problems with sleeping, problems with concentrating on what you should be doing. You may be easily distracted, and have problems getting tasks accomplished.

- You can be reckless or you may take chances on things that you normally would not do.

Those that suffer from the mania side of bipolar will transition from it into the depressive side. The depressive side is that which people often associated with depression like symptoms. These symptoms can include the following, more than one, too.

The depressive bipolar symptoms include:

- Feeling very sad, very guilty or feeling that all is lost. Hopelessness is a common feeling here too. The trademark of a problem is that the symptom is unfounded and is persistent.

- You may be very tired, often not caring about getting your tasks accomplished. You may lose interest in the things that you do daily, normally. Even those things that you love to do may not be done.

- You may be very irritable, losing your temper for no real reason.

- You may not be able to sleep although you are tired. You may not be hungry and some will lose weight because of not eating properly here.

- Some have problems with pain, too. If you have pain that there is no

real cause for, this can be a sign of depressive behavior.

- The most serious of all symptoms and signs of depressive behavior is that of thoughts of suicide. If you have these thoughts, your condition needs immediate attention.

If you think that you have any of these symptoms, then you need to work with your doctor to be diagnosed. It is necessary to get treatment and treatment really can help you!

What's The Cause?

The one thing that all bipolar patients want to know is why.

Why did this happen to me? Why do I go through this? Why can't my life be normal?

Unfortunately, there just is not an answer to that. Neither doctors nor scientists understand why or what causes bipolar to happen. But, they have some ideas of what could be behind the way you feel.

Most believe that it is a combination of factors that lead to this condition including environmental, genetics, and biological factors. Doctors believe that these conditions not only cause the onset of bipolar in people but also control when the episodes that you experience happen and how frequently they do.

Those that have bipolar have problems within the brain. There are chemical messengers in your brain that go between the nerve cells and the brain itself relaying information. These are called neurotransmitters.

In those that have bipolar, those messengers are somehow different and simply communicate in a different way to the brain triggering the symptoms that you face.

It is believed that those that suffer from bipolar have a genetic code that puts them in that position. While this genetic disposition doesn't per se actually trigger the condition to happen, those that have this coding actually have a better chance of developing it at some point in their lives.

This difference in the neurotransmitters is believed to have to do with an abnormal aspect of the genes. Your genes

that control the neurotransmitters in your brain simply developed abnormally, leading to bipolar. But, remember, just because this is the case, it doesn't mean that you are going to suffer from bipolar. It just means that it is something that you could experience.

In addition to this genetic code, most doctors believe that it is necessary for you to have some environmental effects to happen in order to trigger the problem. This can include such things as drug abuse and very stressful events. Sometimes, a very traumatic event especially those that are psychological can trigger bipolar.

Are You At Risk?

You may be at risk for bipolar if you have a family history of bipolar or other depressive conditions. In fact, in up to 90 percent of those with bipolar there is evidence of depression in the family.

Again, if you have genes that are passed down from those in your family that have these abnormalities, then you are more likely to experience

bipolar. While the exact genes are not known just yet, there are many researchers working on finding the gene that makes you more or less likely to have bipolar disorder.

Should You Go To The Doctor?

If you are reading this far into this book, then you probably realize the importance of seeking medical attention for your condition. The problem is that most that have symptoms of bipolar don't realize that they do have a problem.

Some will realize that something is not right but most will not realize just how impaired they are. In addition, most don't realize just how troublesome going through these mood swings can be for other family members. You probably don't realize what you are putting your family and friends through.

Therefore, it often takes someone else, such as your spouse, friend or other relatives to help you to get to the doctor so that you can be diagnosed for your own safety and health. Those that are concerned about their loved ones should seek the help that they need. Professional help can be quite beneficial to those that are suffering.

If a person that is suffering from bipolar does not seek out and get the help that he or she needs, not only will stresses continue to build, but physical problems can also become evident. They can be hurt in one of their episodes.

Who Should I See?

If you realize the need to seek professional help, your first contact should be your family doctor. He or she can help you to determine that there are no other medical problems causing your condition. From here, though, the person to see is that of a psychiatrist.

Do not worry; the process of seeking help in dealing with any type of mental illness including depression and bipolar syndrome is quite simple to do. Take a loved one with you that has noticed the symptoms that you are experiencing. The first thing that your doctor will ask is what type of symptoms you are having. He or she will ask you to describe both the depressive symptoms and the mania symptoms.

During your first meeting with the doctor, you'll talk about your daily life, the episodes you are experiencing and your overall health. The first thing that he or she will do is work on ruling out other medical problems and other mental health problems. Other conditions, such as mood disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, schizophrenia, and even a personality disorder, can have similar symptoms to bipolar conditions.

Your doctor may also ask you to undergo tests that will determine if there are any other things that causing your

condition. He or she will want to find out if you have physical causes to your bipolar disorder (or the likely diagnosis of this.)

This can include talking about substance abuse. Your doctor will ask and need an honest opinion about this. If you drink alcohol, use illegal drugs such as marijuana and cocaine, then you need to tell your doctor about these things. Remember, your doctor can't talk about this with anyone else. These types of drugs can alter the mood and in some people create larger fluctuations of moods.

Another possible reason for your mood swings can be due to health

problems like thyroid disorders. Here, a blood test will be required. It will test how well your thyroid is working. Many that have mood swings actually have an under active thyroid. The good news is that if this is the problem, there are medications that can treat thyroid problems.

Still there is more to talk about with your doctor. You'll want to tell him about the medications that you are taking, as these can also cause a number of mood swings. For example, medications like corticosteroids including prednisone can cause mood swings. If you are being treated for depression with medications, or for anxiety, then your medication can lead to mood swings. The medications that

are used to treat Parkinson's disease are also mood swing prone medications.

Your doctor will ask you about your diet, too. The foods you eat lead to the number of nutrients that you get. Those that are lacking in B 12 vitamins in particular can experience vast mood swings.

Any of these types of conditions can lead your doctor to determine that you are suffering from bipolar disorder. By talking with you and looking at the test results that are given to you, your doctor can determine exactly what is happening with you.

It is very important for you to communicate with your doctor about any of your needs and to be honest about your condition. By telling them about your daily life, including the bad parts, he or she can make the right decisions to help treat your conditions.

It is likely that you will find your doctor is quite experienced in bipolar disorder. That's because every year thousands of people see their doctors with worry about having this disorder. It is not as uncommon as you may think!

Once this has been done, your doctor and you can work on a treatment for your condition.

Chapter 2: Why Should I Get Help Anyway?

Bipolar is a mental illness. It is not like a cold that will go away. It is not like a broken leg which will heal on its own. Without the attention of a professional, your bipolar can and will get worse.

What happens to you will be unique. There is no way of knowing if your condition will worsen quickly or at all. But, research shows that those that do not seek help for their condition will find complications do exist for them and for their family members.

If you have bipolar, other conditions can make it even worse. For example, if you are trying to deal with anxiety, you will have a hard time doing so because of bipolar. In conditions where this is life threatening, for example if you are suffering from alcoholism, this can be a very serious problem.

If you can't keep yourself off of alcohol, then your life may be in danger. Not only will the alcohol cause problems for your health, but bipolar can make you think irrationally and you could put yourself in dangerous situations. For this reason, seeking help is a must.

For some, the length of time between depressive symptoms and mania symptoms can be very short. You could move from one symptom to the next quickly, leading to confusion and even health scares. This rapid cycling in itself will cause you quite a bit of grief.

It can get even worse, too. It is possible, believe it or not, to be in a state of depression as well as in mania at the same time. When this happens, the end result is that your mind and emotions are completely wrapped in

each other. You are agitated and annoyed. You are unable to sleep or eat. You can't get your thoughts to be organized.

Even worse, when this happens, people are more likely to think about suicide. This can be very dangerous because people in this state of mind are not thinking rationally at all and can make the wrong decision.

Another problem is that of psychosis. Bipolar symptoms that combine both mania and depression symptoms can lead to psychosis. This is a very serious mental illness in which your personality is completely disorganized. You are impaired with what is real and what is not. You are hallucinating and you are delusional. Even those that very strongly believe in things can end up making decisions the other way.

The Stress Goes Farther

Even beyond the physical risks that you place yourself under when you face bipolar, there are the just as devastating effects that it has on your relationships.

Many people with bipolar will have trouble holding onto relationships. They may move from one person to the next quickly because of the mood swings that they deal with. In addition, those that are suffering from bipolar often times make mistakes with dealing with others. They simply are confused as to what the true emotion is supposed to be during any such situations.

In addition to this many with bipolar also have financial problems to boot. They do not make the right decisions regarding money, spending on credit and making choices in products. With this comes a number of problems from having to file bankruptcy to having to burden other family members with this problem.

Sometimes, a mania episode can trigger a shopping spree. Or a depressive episode can do the same just in the wrong way.

Still, one of the worst effects of bipolar is the way that people who have it treat themselves. Many find that the only way to cope with what is happening to them is to isolate themselves from everyone.

This happens easily during depressive phases especially when an individual is having a severe episode. Without the protection they need from a loved one, they can let their suicidal thoughts take control. Because of this isolation, it is important for those that have loved ones in this condition to provide them with the care that they need to keep them safe.

As you can see, the complications of bipolar disorder can be quite severe. Because many people that suffer from this condition simply do not realize that they have it, it can easily escalate and even put people in danger just doing the things that they do everyday.

The risk of driving a car, for example is very real. If a mania or depressive mood change happens, the person can easily lose control of the car. Even worse, they may make the wrong decisions in traffic, putting others at danger along with them. This scenario can be played out with many other situations in your life too.

Getting help, though, can really improve your outlook on life and reduce your risks and complications significantly.

Chapter 3: Your Doctor's Bipolar Treatment

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