

# Think you know about mental illness?



# Bipolar Disorder

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is working to change the way you think about mental illness. Our goal is to eliminate misconceptions about and to promote a better understanding of mental health. It's time for us to change the way we think about mental illness. It's time to think again.

## What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a serious mental illness marked by significant mood swings that can affect someone's ability to stay focused and complete everyday tasks like work and even sleep. People with bipolar disorder may feel very happy, energetic, and active at times. But they may also experience periods of depression, where they are very sad, inactive, and have low energy. These mood swings are not the normal ups and downs that everyone goes through at times. They can last for weeks at a time and affect someone's ability to think clearly. These symptoms can damage relationships, affect performance in work and school, and may sometimes lead people to attempt to hurt themselves or attempt suicide.

## What are the signs & symptoms?

Symptoms often start in the late teen or early adult years. Doctors are not sure of the cause, but there may be genetic factors that contribute to bipolar disorder, which sometimes runs in families. People may have manic episodes, depressive episodes, or mixed episodes. Sometimes behavior problems go along with mood episodes. A person may drink

too much, use drugs, or take a lot of risks.

Manic episode symptoms include:

- Feeling very "up," "high," "jumpy," or "wired"
- Trouble sleeping.
- Being more active than usual, talking very fast about a number of topics, or becoming very agitated or irritated for little reason

Depressive episode symptoms include:

- Feeling very down or sad
- Sleeping too much, or sometimes too little
- Feeling worried, empty, or unable to enjoy things
- Thinking about death or suicide

## What type of treatment is available?

Treatment can control symptoms of this disease. Medication and therapy can both help manage this illness. For more information, call the Mississippi Department of Mental Health help line at 1-877-210-8513.



All information obtained from the National Institute of Mental Health at [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).

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