

## **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar disorder, formally referred to as manic depression, is a very serious mental illness that affects one's mood and causes them to shift from extreme highs to extreme lows. While they may be feeling joyful and euphoric one moment, they could be depressed and hopeless the next. There are multiple types of bipolar disorder and some cases can be more severe than others. This is typically a life long mental disorder that can make it very difficult to function in day to day life. However, symptoms can be managed through medication and through speaking to a therapist.

The official cause of bipolar disorder is not known. However, there are several causes that are believed to be linked to the disorder. The first likely cause is genetics. If someone in your immediate family has bipolar disorder, the chances that you too might have it are much greater. The chances are particularly high if one of your parents has the disorder. The second probable cause is linked to various biological factors, meaning that the brain is altered in some way through a chemical imbalance.

There are also various risk factors attributed to the onset of bipolar disorder that are linked to the environment surrounding the individual. Traumatic events such as childhood abuse, witnessing an act of violence, or losing someone close to you can trigger the likelihood of developing bipolar disorder. Drug or alcohol abuse also increases this risk.

The two different types of bipolar disorder consist of Type 1 and Type 2. Those with Type 1 have experienced a manic episode that lasted longer than a week. They will also most often experience major depression. Both the manic episodes and the periods of depression can continue on for weeks or even months at a time if the individual does not seek medical treatment. Those with Type 2 often suffer from lengthy periods of severe depression, but typically not mania. Instead they are more likely to suffer from hypomania, which is the experience of great elation. A person experiencing hypomania may feel a great surge of confidence, be more distracted, experience racing thoughts and feel pushed to make rash decisions.

Other symptoms of bipolar disorder can vary in severity and are expressed differently depending upon the age of the individual. Younger people such as teenagers that are experiencing a depressive episode connected to bipolar disorder may appear irritable and impatient. They will likely experience a feeling of deep sadness and hopelessness. They may feel their sense of confidence or self worth deteriorate. Someone in this state will become less interested or not interested at all in activities they used to love. They will likely feel tired, distracted, and have difficulty focusing on the task at hand.

Those close to an individual with bipolar disorder will likely be able to see physical differences brought about by the illness. This could mean a change in weight, whether that be weight loss or weight gain. They might also notice that their loved one is sleeping too much or too little.

Anyone experiencing these symptoms must seek medical attention as soon as possible. If they fail to do so they face a multitude of serious consequences. For younger people this could mean poor performance at school and missing out on academic opportunities. For older individuals this could mean losing a job, losing friends, perhaps even an end to a marriage or severed connections with loved ones. The most serious and tragic consequence of not seeking medical assistance is the possibility of suicide.

As devastating as these possible outcomes are, this doesn't have to be reality. Through the help of medical professionals, therapy, and with a good support system, someone with bipolar disorder can certainly manage their symptoms and live a healthy life.

Watching a loved one suffer from a mental disorder that they aren't in control of can be a very difficult thing. While you might not be able to fully take their struggle away, you can alleviate it by ensuring they are doing everything possible to manage their symptoms. Check in with the individual to be sure they are attending doctor visits and taking any prescribed medications. It is also important to know the warning signs of an oncoming manic or depressive episode so you can seek medical attention for the individual in the case that they are incapable of doing so themselves.

When you have a loved one with bipolar disorder, you'll likely be on the receiving end of outbursts or have to deal with the consequences of poor decisions they made while not in their proper state of mind. Throughout all of this it is most important to remain patient and understanding. Remember that the individual is not in control of themselves and they need you to help stabilize them.

Tranquil Grove Behavioral Health of Raleigh, North Carolina offers a variety of different levels of treatment for individuals suffering from bipolar disorder. We treat individuals between the ages of 11 and 17 years old as well as both men and women 18 years old and older. The intensity of care is dependent upon the severity of the patient's symptoms.

Our residential treatment program is the most advanced level of care that we offer and is often ideal for individuals that have recently left the hospital or psychiatric facility. Those partaking in our residential treatment program will be given the space and support to recover from an episode under the 24 hour care of licenced nurses and medical professionals. They will be able to rest and recuperate in a private bedroom and will have access to a private bathroom. Scheduled social activities will be available to them if they would like to participate and proper COVID-19 prevention measures will be taken. The goal of this program is to get the patient back to a normal, healthy state of living. This involves working on establishing a healthy diet and sleep schedule as well as adjusting to new medications. Patients will typically remain in our program for 8-12 weeks.

For those patients that require less supervision and assistance, our partial hospitalization programming or (PHP) may be just the right fit. This program consists of scheduled hospital visits during which patients will have a variety of different types of therapy available to them,

including individual therapy, group therapy and experiential therapies. They will also learn how to adapt to newly prescribed medications. During this time they will be able to learn how to effectively manage their symptoms and maintain a healthy day to day life.

You may feel that bipolar disorder is controlling your life. At Tranquil Grove, we aim to offer a friendly, welcoming and peaceful setting for you to learn to manage your symptoms and take back control. With our help you can regain the life you always wanted and deserve.