



BIPOLAR AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Sutton

What is bipolar affective disorder?

Bipolar affective disorder is often simply called Bipolar Disorder, and used to be called 'manic depression'. It is characterised by episodes of extreme emotion, far beyond what most people experience. These episodes can be:

- **Low:** feelings of intense depression and despair: the 'depressive' episode.
- **High:** feelings of elation, the 'manic' episode.
- **Mixed:** for example, depressed mood with the restlessness and overactivity of a manic episode.

People with bipolar disorder usually experience both depressive and manic episodes. The mood episodes may last from three weeks to over 6 months. Between the mood swings there can be stable periods. There are different types of bipolar that are characterised by the length and intensity of mood swings.

What are the treatments for Bipolar Disorder?

Treatment for bipolar disorder can involve a variety of different approaches, including psychological therapy, medication and self-help.

There are some life-style changes that can also help, including keeping a diary to keep track of your mood and learning to recognise signs of getting "high" or "manic" and getting "low." Your GP will be able to advise you, or you can find out more information on some of the websites and books listed overleaf.

If your GP thinks you may have bipolar disorder, or if you have a history of bipolar disorder and you are becoming unwell, your GP will refer you to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The CMHT provides a specialist mental health service and will provide a care package which may include medication management, psychological therapy and social support. The CMHT may refer you to other services within the Trust that specialise in particular therapies.

If the bipolar disorder is stable, your GP will be able to monitor your physical and mental health.

Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar has two extremes: the low episode and the high episode, each with different symptoms. You may experience some of the symptoms below

Low episode

Psychological symptoms

- Feeling unhappy for a long time
- Losing interest and enjoyment in things
- Not feeling confident about yourself
- Feeling irritable or annoyed
- Feeling like you can't keep still/restless
- Thinking about killing yourself
- Having difficulty making even simple decisions
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Finding it hard to start or finish things
- Feeling tearful, crying a lot

Physical symptoms

- Eating more/less and putting on/ losing weight
- Being constipated
- Not sleeping well, waking in the night
- Feeling tired and exhausted
- Losing interest in sex (loss of libido)

Behavioural symptoms

- Not seeing friends or making contact with people.

High episode

Psychological symptoms

- Feeling very happy and excited
- Being irritable with other people when they disagree with you
- Feeling important
- Thinking of new and exciting ideas
- Thinking very quickly, hopping from one idea to the next
- Hearing voices that other people can't hear (auditory hallucination)

Physical symptoms

- Feeling full of energy
- Not sleeping, or not wanting to sleep
- Doing lots of things/becoming active
- Increased interest in sex (increased libido)

Behavioural symptoms

- Making spur of the moment decisions
- Spending your money quickly and without much thought
- Becoming too friendly or too critical with other people
- Making grand plans that other people think are not realistic (grandiose ideas)
- Speaking very quickly. You may find other people find it hard to understand you

A diagnosis should only be made by a mental health specialist.



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Useful sources of information and support in Sutton

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

Websites

- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/PDF/Bipolar%20BDF.pdf
- www.mdf.org.uk/
- www.sane.org.uk/public_html/About_Mental_Illness/ManicDepression.shtml
- www.mind.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E475F6F2-2008-49F9-8CFF-2B04A208D7E7/0/Understandingbipolarordermanicdepression2006.pdf
- www.rethink.org/about_mental_illness/mental_illnesses_and_disorders/bipolar_disorder/index.html
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouraltherapy.aspx

Books

- Overcoming Mood Swings by Jan Scott ISBN: 1841190179
- The Bipolar Disorder Survival Guide: What You and Your Family Need to Know by David J. Miklowitz ISBN: 1572305258
- A Lifelong Journey: Staying Well with Manic Depression/Biopolar Disorder by Sarah Russell ISBN: 0855723572

Local non-NHS services Your GP will also be able to advise you of local services and how to contact them.

<p>The Manic Depression Fellowship - the BiPolar Organisation</p> <p>This is a national organisation that aims to enable people with bipolar disorder to take control of their lives. They facilitate local support groups; the nearest one is based at the Civic Offices, Sutton. The group runs on a monthly basis. Please call before attending.</p> <p>Address Civic Offices, Sutton, SM1 1EA Telephone 08456 340 540 or 020 7793 2600</p>	<p>Sutton Drop-in</p> <p>Sutton Drop-in, based at Belmont and Cheam, Resource Centre provides friendship and support to people with severe mental health problems. There are a range of projects and activities. Please make contact before you attend.</p> <p>Address 63 Sutton Drop-in, Downs Road, Sutton, SM2 5NR Telephone 020 8770 0172 Email suttondropin@aol.com</p>
<p>Rethink, Sutton and Merton</p> <p>Rethink is a national organisation that aims to provide practical and positive support to people with severe mental health problems and their carers. There is a local weekly support group on Wednesdays 5 to 8 p.m.</p> <p>Address Wimbledon Guild, 30-32 Worples Road, Wimbledon Emergency Helpline 0800 028 8000 Email laurajohnsonrethink@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Private Therapy</p> <p>If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommended that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:</p> <p>British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies www.babcp.com British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Other Useful Numbers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SaneLine: 0845 767 8000 (Monday- Sunday 1-11pm) Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90 (everyday, 24 hours) NHS Direct: 0845 46467 (every day, 24 hours) Mental Health Helpline: 0500 639 000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">There are other voluntary services in Sutton that may be useful but not directly linked to bipolar disorder, please ask your GP for more information.</p>	