

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

Bipolar disorder is a serious disorder of the brain. It may severely disrupt your life. At times, it may cause you and your loved ones great pain. But there is hope. Although there is no cure, treatment can help control your symptoms. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional. He or she can offer guidance and support.

### **What Causes Bipolar Disorder?**

The exact causes of bipolar disorder aren't known. It is known that the disease runs in families. Genes that affect nerve cells in the brain may be inherited, but as yet these genes have not been found.

### **Who Does It Affect?**

Over 2 million people in this country have bipolar disorder. Most often, it strikes young adults. It can affect children and older adults as well. Bipolar disorder affects both men and women. It can strike people of all races, cultures, and incomes.

### **Ups and Downs**

Bipolar disorder is sometimes called **manic-depressive illness**. That is because it causes extreme mood swings. At times the person may feel almost too happy. These times are often followed by great despair. In some cases, both extremes may occur at once. More often, mood shifts back and forth. These mood swings may occur just once in a while. Or they may happen four or more times a year. Without treatment, they will likely recur throughout life.

### **Manic Phase**

During the manic phase of bipolar disorder, you feel like you're on top of the world. Even the worst news can't bring you down. You'll likely feel as if you can do anything. And sometimes you may try. You may take great risks, thinking you can't be hurt. You may also talk too fast, and your thoughts may race. You may go for days without sleeping. And you might achieve a lot in a very short time.

### **Depressed Phase**

In the depressed phase, you feel intense sadness and depression. You may also feel worthless, tired, and helpless. Even the things you value most don't give you pleasure. At times you may want to die. You may even think about taking your own life.

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### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.  
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.