

This fact sheet provides some information on Bipolar Disorder, also known as manic depression, and on services where help can be sought.

What is bipolar disorder?

An individual who has bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, experiences extreme mood swings between deep depression and elated, excited behaviour. There may also be stable times between these severe highs and lows. Some people may also experience elements of psychosis, in that they see or hear things that others don't (experience delusions, or visual or auditory hallucinations).

Symptoms

Some people may experience only highs and others mainly lows, and some people may experience both- so at times they may be extremely depressed or extremely excited (mania). A person may behave in a risky or irrational manner. The frequency and duration of the two mood states vary from person to person.

Some individuals regularly have these mood swings over a number of weeks or months, and others experience them more in certain seasons, or only rarely. For others still, their experience of bipolar disorder may happen without warning.

Someone who experiences bipolar disorder may not be aware of any changes in their behaviour or attitude. They may later be shocked when they realise what they did during the episode of mania and the effects that it had. Some people find their experience of bipolar disorder to be very disruptive and distressing, while others find themselves becoming very creative and find it an enriching experience.

Symptoms of Mania

Feelings of euphoria; feeling that one is of great importance; over-ambitious schemes and ideas; spending money extravagantly, building up debts; eating and sleeping very little; talking so fast that it can be difficult to understand ; easily irritable and angry.

Symptoms of depression

Overwhelming despair; feelings of guilt and worthlessness; inability to concentrate; difficulties in remembering things; perhaps suicidal feelings; irritability, hopelessness; weeping for no apparent reason.

What are the causes of bipolar disorder?

There is still uncertainty about the causes of bipolar disorder. However, research shows that in some cases genes or family history can place someone at a greater risk of developing it. The likelihood of a child of a parent with bipolar disorder developing the condition is about one in ten.

Distressing events, physical illnesses, alcohol or drugs can also affect the mood swings between depression and mania. An increase in stress and having insufficient coping mechanisms to deal with this stress can also put someone at risk. However sometimes a mood swing will occur without any obvious trigger.

Where can I get help?

It is much easier to manage the symptoms if help is sought immediately before the symptoms become worse. Treatment at an early stage can reduce the severity and duration of an episode of bipolar disorder. You should first see your GP who may refer you to a psychiatrist, but normally the treatments available consist of medication and psychotherapy. An admission to hospital may be deemed necessary if it appears that an individual is experiencing a severe form of bipolar disorder and may need to be in a hospital environment to receive care.

For more information on bipolar disorder and treatments available, please see Mind's booklet on the subject, which you can also order in hard copy:

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/bipolar-disorder

Local Statutory Services

Community Mental Health Teams

Website: www.cnwl.nhs.uk

Bentley House, 15-21 Headstone Drive, Harrow, HA3 5QX

Tel: 020 8424 7701 | Fax: 020 8424 7702

Community mental health teams work with patients to develop recovery goals and offer continuity of care. They assess the needs of the patient to make sure the treatment

provided is personalised. They also offer more intensive care when people need it most and help patients to work towards greater independence in managing health and wellbeing. This Team is also responsible for supporting people to apply for and manage their Personal Budget for your social care day support needs.

You must call the Single Point of Access/your GP to be referred to this service.

Harrow Home Treatment Team

Address: Mental Health Unit, Northwick Park Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ |
Tel: 020 8869 2690 (NPH Switchboard) or 020 8869 4500.

Harrow Home Treatment Team helps avoid admission to a mental health inpatient ward by providing intensive support to people in acute mental crisis in their homes.

The team includes a rapid response service (to respond to emergency and urgent referrals) 24-hours a day. Emergency and urgent referrals should be made through the Single Point of Access which is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. All patients are provided with a crisis card with details of who to call in an emergency.

Single point of access: Tel: **0300 1234 244** or **0800 0234 650**

Local Voluntary services

Harrow Carers

376-378 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middlesex HA2 6DZ

Tel: 020 8868 5224 | Email: admin@harrowcarers.org

| Website: www.harrowcarers.org

Support for carers of people who have mental health issues.

Bipolar UK Support Group Harrow

at The Bridge, Christchurch Avenue, Harrow, HA3 5BD Meeting times: 2nd Thursday of each month 7.30-9.30pm |

Website: <https://www.bipolaruk.org/harrow-support-group>

Email: supportgroups@bipolaruk.org Tel: 0333 323 3885.

A self-help group for people who experience Bipolar Affective Disorder (Manic Depression), and their carers and friends.

National Services

Bipolar UK

11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB

Tel: [0333 323 3880](tel:03333233880)

Email: info@bipolaruk.org Website: <https://www.bipolaruk.org/>

National Debtline

Tricorn House, 51-53 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8TP

| Freephone: 0808 808 4000 Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturday 9.30am to 1pm
24-hour voicemail, live chat also available

| Website: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk Fax: 0121 410 6230

Offers free confidential and independent advice concerning debts.

Websites

Bipolar Significant Others

Website: www.bpsso.org

An informal organisation offering support and information for people who do not have bipolar disorder themselves but know someone who does.

Support & Wellbeing Information Service Harrow (SWiSH)

SWiSH is for anyone in Harrow aged 18 years and over – those looking for help for themselves as well as carers and staff in local organisations.

It can offer information or advice about a wide range of local services, including where to keep fit and well, manage finances, join social groups,

look for work, start a course, access help with housing or welfare benefits or apply for a personal budget.



You can call the SWiSH helpline on 020 8426 0929, Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm. The following SWiSH partners can also help with advocacy.

This factsheet was produced by Mind in Harrow

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