
Bipolar Disorder: What Really Happens

What happens inside the head of one who has Bipolar Disorder? Is it easily controlled or does your body take over? Over the course of time, people view the world differently and their moods could change within a split second. Staying inside, secluding yourself from what life has to offer. Sometimes, it is not easy to see from the outside but only from your brains point of view is where it comes to life. Hearing others stories and what direction it lead them and outcomes is a major way to pick apart what the disorder really is and how it could impact anybody's life, even in the early stages.

Before going further in, Bipolar Disorder is a serious medical condition that has major effects on your brain, mental health, relationships, self care, and possibly even physically. These types of people have mood swings that go from mania, a high point, to depression, a low point. The disorder usually happens in late teens and adulthood, this illness usually lasts your whole life. You may experience a lack of sleep, mixed emotions, anxiety, depression, mood swings, and a change in everyday activities. These episodes may cause hospitalization, treatments like medication, or therapy to get back on track and to a stable condition. Bipolar disorder may not always be something the world can see, but maybe something that is an internal struggle.

Symptoms differ between adults and children in some ways but the difference is very slight. There are many types of Bipolar Disorder that one may be diagnosed with. Starting off, Bipolar I Disorder is when someone has one manic episode followed by another depressive episode. Bipolar II Disorder is when someone has one major depressive episode but never any manic episodes. Cyclothymic Disorder is when someone has at least two years of depressive symptoms. Some other types may be induced by alcohol, drugs, or a certain type of medical condition. Anxiety, melancholy, psychosis, and pregnancy may also cause a type of Bipolar Disorder that may become worse if not taken care of. Moods will shift during episodes and people may even have periods of time without mood swings between episodes. These are known more of severe mood swings, a lot different than someones normal mood swings (Mayo Clinic).

Bipolar Disorder may impact an individual on a day to day basis and may include the symptoms of isolation, abuse of drugs and alcohol, damaging relationships, and poor performance at work and school. A time where severe help should be seeked is when one has depression or starts to have suicidal thoughts or actions. Long hours during the week may mess with how someone performs at their job and poor work ethic (Pacific Grove Hospital).

An individual does not always have to go through this with medical attention to help with the symptoms. There are many ways and steps that someone could take to manage the stress. Take regular breaks, take a walk, try deep breathing, or even listen to relaxing music. Letting go of stress is a good way on the journey of where to go from then on. Calling a friend and talking about what is going on in your head or talking about something unrelated may take your mind off a certain topic and let your mind roam less. Do not ignore the symptoms and take your medication as prescribed, do not mess with the cycle. WebMD states, "It's not uncommon for people with bipolar disorder to need extra sleep -- 8 to 10 or even up to 12 -- hours a day. Your doctor may be able to change your dosing time or amount to help reduce drowsiness or other

side effects at work.” They also say an important way to stay on track and keep a positive mentality through the process is, “If you’ve taken time off from work, pace yourself as you return. This is a time when working part-time may be the best option” (Goldberg).

Taking your medication is a major part of getting through Bipolar Disorder and getting to a better state of mind. Lithium is the first type of medication and work to stabilize moods. This may take weeks or months to work and side effects may include nausea, shaking, dry mouth, frequent urination, and weight gain. Anticonvulsant medications treat seizures within bipolar disorder and mania. Medications within this type are Depakote, Lamictal, and Topamax. Side effects include nausea, weight gain, dizziness, drowsiness, and blurred vision. Some also take antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications (Burgess). All of these medications and treatments help to stabilize your body and brain, this is not an alternative to staying on track of your mental health in other ways.

Not everything that people read must come from medical websites that tell them information about the disorder. Real life stories are also posted all the time to show people that this is a real thing that happens all the time. For example, a male at age 23 started showing signs of bipolar disorder, he had never felt symptoms like this before. The male explained, “I remember feeling a rush of adrenaline and like my arms were on fire. I remember my hands shaking a lot, and a lot of anxiety for the first time in my life. I struggled through the final because I physically didn’t feel right.” He later was placed into the psych ward and began having paranoid delusions. The male later on started taking medications for these delusions but started to lean off of them. After a while, he started losing sleep over them and explained one severe incident, “The second episode of mine was more severe. I had fantastical paranoid delusions, thinking I was the antichrist, the messiah or both. I believed the news channels were broadcasting me live on TV as the messiah/antichrist was in the local hospital for all the world to see... I had many auditory hallucinations, from anyone from my classmates and professors to God.” This forced him to drop out of graduate school and focus on himself, but not too much later he was in a severe accident when he got lost during an episode. After many hospital trips, he was finally diagnosed with severe Bipolar I Disorder with psychotic effects and put back on medication. Now currently the male says he has not had an episode in four years (NAMI).

There are two types of severe episodes that may occur with someone that is diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. The first type of episode is called a manic episode. During this episode people could experience any of the following; energy bursts, trouble sleeping, irritability, doing risky activities, talking fast, or feeling like everything is running fast around them. Another type of episode is called a depressive episode. This type could experience any of the following; trouble sleeping, decreased energy, feeling sad or down, forgetfulness, eat too much or too little, suicidal thoughts, or feeling depressed (NIMH).

If anyone around you or close to you are having these symptoms or are diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder there are many things that can be done. First off, learn about the condition and ask the individual what may trigger some of their symptoms or actions. Second, offer help and support to them, maybe help create a support plan, “A support plan reassures both partners that they will know how to respond to a very high or low period. This can reduce anxiety around the idea of the person with bipolar becoming unwell.” Someone may also communicate feeling more to help others open up and share their story. There is so much a partner could do to help the other get through this difficult period in their lives and offering and being the support is one of the biggest (Burgess).

So, what really goes on inside someone's body when these episodes take over? The brain takes over the body and sometimes nothing can be done. Many people in the United States struggle with this disorder and many receive help and treatment to improve. Keeping up with lifestyle and with an individual's mental health is one of the best ways to improve the disorder. The brain is a tricky organ and can do a lot more than one thinks it can. This disorder may be discovered through many ways, being brought to life through actions and symptoms. Bipolar Disorder is a serious condition and should be taken seriously and should consult a doctor during early symptoms and stages to get the correct medical help.

References

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