

## **Bipolar disorder (BPD)**

Clear Health Alliance has a program for bipolar disorder (BPD). This program will help you better know and manage your BPD. We can assist you to set health goals and create a care plan that fits your way of life. You do not have to join the program. You are signed up as a member of CHA.

### **Living with BPD**

BPD or manic-depressive illness is a brain disorder. People who have BPD may have shifts in mood, energy and activity levels. They may be unable to carry out day-to-day tasks. A person with BPD may go from having long periods of feeling “high” or overly happy. Then, have long periods of feeling “down,” worried or hopeless, and then start over again. The “high” feeling is called mania. The “down” feeling is being very sad. These feelings may make it hard to focus. They may keep you from close contact with friends and family.

We want you to know you can take control.

If you like, we will keep your doctor up to date. We will share your condition and the services we provide you. Your case manager can help you learn how to handle your BPD.

### **Things to know:**

- The cause of BPD is not known.
- One possible cause is an imbalance of chemicals in the brain.
- Symptoms of BPD may vary.
- In a manic episode, you may feel very happy and have a lot of energy. You may feel like you do not need very much sleep. You may do risky or dangerous things. After a manic episode, you may start to feel more like yourself. You may start feeling depressed.
- In a depressive episode, you may have trouble thinking or making choices. You may lose interest in things you used to like in the past. You may even have thoughts about hurting yourself. The mood swings of BPD can be mild or severe.
- The main thing to know about BPD is that it can be treated.
- We can share more facts to help you with BPD.

### **How is BPD treated?**

Right now there is no cure for BPD. Treatment can help control symptoms and improve your quality of life.

- The first step to treating BPD is to see a doctor.
- People with BPD may have other health issues. Be sure to talk with your doctor about all your health issues.
- Different types of medicines can help. People respond to medicine in many ways. Sometimes you may need to try other medicines to see which one works best for you.
- Therapy or talking can help. Therapy can help you change your conduct and manage your life. It can help you to get along better with your family and friends.
- Talk to your doctor about other treatments for your BPD.

### **What you should know about BPD medicines:**

- If you are taking BPD medicines, do not drive until you know how your medicines make you feel.
- Some medicines may cause side effects such as: dry mouth, dizziness, headache, nausea and blurred vision. You may have other side effects.
- People have many responses to medicine. Talk to your doctor before taking new medicines. These include medicines that do not need a prescription.
- Talk to your doctor about any worries you have about your medicines. Your doctor can help find a medicine that will work for you.
- BPD medicines only work if taken daily as ordered by a doctor. It can take time for your medicines to take effect.
- It is very important to take the medicine even if you are feeling better.
- Always follow your doctor's advice about the amount of medicines to take and how often to take it.
- Talk with your doctor before stopping medicines.
- We can help you know how to take your medicines the right way.
- We can help you know how your medicines work.

### **How can family and friends help?**

Family and friends play an important part in helping a person who has BPD. They will need to know as much as possible about the illness. They also can help you to take your meds the right way. To help someone with BPD, a friend or relative can:

- Be patient and knowing about mood swings
- Encourage the person to stay in treatment
- Talk with the person and listen to what he or she has to say
- Include the person in fun activities
- Remind the person that getting better is possible with the right treatment

- Never ignore comments about suicide and let the person's therapist or doctor know right away
- Family members may benefit from attending therapy together

### **What can you do?**

You can help yourself by getting treatment and sticking with it. It takes time and is not easy. But treatment is the best way to start feeling better. Here are a few things you can do to help with your treatment:

- Talk to your doctor about your treatment.
- Do mild activity or exercise. Go to a movie, a ballgame or another event or activity that you used to like. Take part in religious, social or other activities.
- Set goals for you that are within reach.
- Stay on your medicine.
- Try to spend time with other people. Talk to a trusted friend or relative. Try not to be alone. Let others help you.
- Your symptoms will improve over time, not right away. Do not expect to feel better right away.
- Learn to spot your mood swings.
- Keep a daily routine. Eat a healthy diet and sleep at regular times. Make sure you get enough sleep.

### **Support to help you manage your BPD**

- We can help you talk to your family or caregiver about your BPD.
- We can assist you in finding group programs and resources in your area.
- Tips to talk with your doctor and get the most out of your visit:
  1. Ask any questions you may have about your BPD. You can write them down and take them with you to your visit.
  2. Follow your doctor's advice. If you have questions or worries, let your doctor know.
  3. Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you are taking.

### **Important screenings:**

- Depression
- Other health conditions
- Preventive care screenings such as wellness checkups, mammograms and Pap tests

### **If you feel like you want to hurt yourself:**

Get help right away! You can call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255); TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to talk to a trained counselor. Friends or family should call the treating psychiatrist or therapist or 911 if a person with BPD talks about or tries suicide.

**For more helpful information on managing your BPD:**

- [Web MD](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Peer support groups
- Online support groups

Sources:

\*The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

Bipolar Disorder

[nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml](http://nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml), accessed November 8, 2013.

\*National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

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[nami.org](http://nami.org)

\*Publication: Bipolar Disorder

National Institute of Mental Health U.S. Department of Health and Human Services •

National Institutes of Health

[nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml](http://nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml)

\*Healthfinder.gov

Use Medicines Safely

[healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/everyday-healthy-living/safety/use-medicines-safely](http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/everyday-healthy-living/safety/use-medicines-safely), accessed November 8, 2013.

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- National origin
- Disability
- Color
- Age
- Sex or gender identity

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