

# Mood and Bipolar Disorders

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the topic of mood disorders, focusing specifically on one type of mood disorder, bipolar disorder. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Mood Disorders
  - a. Depression and Mania
  - b. Bipolar Disorders
2. Types of Bipolar Disorders

## 1. Mood Disorders

**Mood disorders** are any psychological disorders that are marked by a major change in a person's mood or emotions. The person, in other words, either feels very good or very bad about themselves. Mood disorders are a bit different from thought disorders or psychotic disorders, for instance.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Mood Disorders

Psychological disorders marked by major changes in mood or emotion

##### 1a. Depression and Mania

Now, mood disorders can either come in two forms. They can either be a low affect or a high affect, which is to say that the person affected can have very low emotions or feel down--depressed, in other words--or they can have very high emotions and feel very up, displaying mania.

Now, both of these--either feeling very low or very high--can affect a person's thoughts and behaviors as a result of their moods.



**EXAMPLE** For example, when a person is depressed, this can lead to certain periods of inactivity where the person isn't doing much, and also possibly suicidal feelings. Mania, on the other hand, can lead to an increased amount of activity or energy; in extreme levels, it can actually lead to psychotic symptoms like hallucinations or delusions. Therefore, a person that is very manic might feel invincible, so they might attempt to do very dangerous things.

## 1b. Bipolar Disorders

Now, besides existing in one or the other of the two emotional states, depressed or manic, a person can also switch between both extremes. This was formerly called manic depression, because it was a combination of the two states, but today we call it **bipolar disorders**.



### DID YOU KNOW

The term "bipolar" comes from "bi-", meaning "two," and "poles," referring to the two extremes.

People with bipolar disorders move between the two extremes in different cycles. These cycles generally occur less than once a year, for three to six months in length. Many times when we think of a person who is bipolar, we think of somebody who quickly switches between moods, but this isn't actually the case with most people with bipolar disorder.

Now, outside of this normal cycling of once a year or less than once a year, a person can also be rapid cycling, meaning the cycles can occur four or more times a year. They can also have different changes in mood that occur a bit more frequently than three to six months in length.

A person can even be ultra-rapid cycling, which is to say that changes occur over the course of a few days, or at the very extreme, a person could be ultradian, meaning they experience severe mood changes within a day itself. However, this is much more uncommon.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Bipolar Disorders

Mood disorders where a person switches between extremes of mania and possibly depression

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## 2. Types of Bipolar Disorders

There are several different types of bipolar disorder. We will discuss them in order of severity, but take this ordering with a grain of salt, because while some might display more severe or extreme symptoms, all three of these are serious enough to cause harm in a person's life. Therefore, all three of them should be considered to be important.

### 2a. Bipolar I Disorder

The first type to discuss is **bipolar I disorder**, which refers to a person who has been diagnosed as having at least one manic episode within the span of their life. Even if you've only had one manic episode, you could still be diagnosed with bipolar I.

Generally, though, it's not just one episode of mania. Usually, it occurs multiple times over a person's life. It also has to occur in the absence of anything that might cause it, such as drugs or medication. There shouldn't be any biological component that is specifically causing an episode from outside of the body.

Now, this may seem like a simplistic guideline, but bipolar I disorder is an extremely severe form of bipolar disorder. It can impair a person's life to a significant degree, because remember, mania involves a significant loss of control, where someone can even go so far as to experience hallucinations or delusions.

Depressive episodes are not needed to be diagnosed with bipolar I. However, many people do experience

depression along with their mania; it's simply not one of the criteria for this particular diagnosis.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Bipolar I Disorder

A person diagnosed that has had at least one manic episode, in the absence of anything that might cause it, like medication or drugs

### 2b. Bipolar II Disorder

The second type is **Bipolar II disorder**, which includes the appearance of both depression--therefore, depression is a requirement for bipolar II--as well as hypomania, which is a less severe type of mania. With hypomania, the symptoms that are being displayed are not quite as extreme as full-blown mania. Therefore, the person experiences manic symptoms like loss of sleep, a flight of ideas, rapid speech, being easily distracted, and feelings of grandiosity. However, the person doesn't experience the more extreme components, like hallucinations or delusions or any behavior that requires actual hospitalization. In addition, a person with hypomania will often display strong pleasure-seeking behaviors, especially sexual pleasure-seeking behaviors. You can see how this could be severe and have real consequences on a person's life.

A person suffering from bipolar II disorder might initially evade detection because their behavior is seen as being exaggerated or flamboyant, so the person might simply seem to very exciting and a bit strange. However, it's important to note that just because this person seems like an extreme or strange or eccentric type of person, this disorder can seriously impair their social lives, as well as their personal lives. It can place the person into situations that are physically dangerous as well. Therefore it is important to note these things and to help a person that's experiencing hypomania to seek treatment.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Bipolar II Disorder

A form of bipolar disorder that includes the appearance of both depression and hypomania

### 2c. Cyclothymic Disorder

Finally, there is **cyclothymic disorder**, which is a form of bipolar where a person experiences longer periods of symptoms of hypomania or depression--generally, at least two months in length, but oftentimes longer. In addition, they may also--but not always--experience milder symptoms of these disorders. This disorder is sometimes mistaken for a person's actual personality versus a disorder. Others may assume that the person is simply a depressed or low energy person by their nature, because the symptoms occur in long periods of time.

However, this can still lead to very serious issues for that person. Symptoms are not always mild, and it can often lead to cycles of being very excited or very depressed which can lead to dangerous behaviors again.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### Cyclothymic Disorder

A form of bipolar, where a person experiences longer periods (at least 2 months) of hypomania and depression that are generally, but not always, milder

Bipolar disorder in general, including all three types, can be treated with drugs like lithium for manic episodes, or antidepressants for depressive episodes. In addition, psychotherapy can be utilized to help a person cope with the mood episodes that they might be experiencing, to help them better understand and recognize them, so they can better cope with them on a personal level. Generally, it's best to combine both drugs and psychotherapy to receive the most effective therapy.



## SUMMARY

**Mood disorders** are any psychological disorders marked by major changes in mood, either low or high feelings. **Bipolar disorders** are a specific type of mood disorder, where a person switches between extremes of mania and depression. Most people with bipolar disorders move between the two extremes in cycles that generally occur less than once a year, for three to six months in length, but in rare cases, these cycles can be much more frequent.

There are three **types of bipolar disorders**: bipolar I, bipolar II, and cyclothymic. People can have symptoms that range from simply seeming eccentric to full-blown mania.

Good luck!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR ERICK TAGGART.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Bipolar Disorders

Mood disorders where a person switches between extremes of mania and possibly depression.

### Bipolar I Disorder

A person diagnosed that has had at least one manic episode, in the absence of anything that might cause it, like medication or drugs.

### Bipolar II Disorder

A form of bipolar disorder that includes the appearance of both depression and hypomania.

### Cyclothymic Disorder

A form of bipolar, where a person experiences longer periods (at least 2 months) of hypomania and depression that are generally, but not always, milder.

### Mood Disorders

Psychological disorders marked by major changes in mood or emotion.