

## Understanding, Types, Causes, and Therapies of Mood Disorders

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### DESCRIPTION

Mood disorders are a group of mental health conditions that primarily affect an individual's emotional state. These disorders cause persistent disruptions in mood, resulting in periods of extreme sadness, excessive happiness, or fluctuations between both. Mood disorders can significantly impact daily functioning, relationships and overall quality of life if left untreated. The most common mood disorders include depression, bipolar disorder and dysthymia, though other variations exist. Understanding the causes, types and treatment options for mood disorders is essential for managing and overcoming them.

### Types of mood disorders

**Major Depressive Disorder (MDD):** Often referred to as clinical depression, MDD is one of the most prevalent mood disorders. It involves prolonged periods of intense sadness, hopelessness and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed. Symptoms must persist for at least two weeks to be diagnosed as MDD. In addition to emotional symptoms, physical symptoms like fatigue, changes in appetite and sleep disturbances often occur.

**Bipolar disorder:** Bipolar disorder is characterized by extreme mood swings between periods of depression and periods of mania or hypomania. During manic episodes, individuals may feel overly energetic, euphoric, or impulsive. In contrast, depressive episodes involve feelings of sadness, fatigue and loss of motivation.

**Dysthymia (persistent depressive disorder):** Dysthymia is a chronic form of depression characterized by a long-lasting low mood that persists for at least two years. Although symptoms are less severe than major depression, they are continuous and can interfere with daily functioning. People with dysthymia may experience periods of feeling better, but these improvements are temporary.

**Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD):** PMDD is a severe form of Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS), where mood swings, irritability and depression occur in the luteal phase of the

menstrual cycle (the week before menstruation). These emotional and physical symptoms are intense enough to interfere with daily life.

### Causes of mood disorders

The exact causes of mood disorders are not fully understood, but a combination of genetic, biological, environmental and psychological factors are believed to contribute. Some of the most prominent causes includes

**Genetic factors:** Family history plays a significant role in the development of mood disorders. If a close relative, such as a parent or sibling, has experienced a mood disorder, the likelihood of developing one increases.

**Biochemical imbalances:** Mood disorders are often associated with imbalances in brain chemicals, particularly neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine. These chemicals regulate mood, energy and pleasure and disruptions in their functioning can lead to mood disturbances.

**Hormonal changes:** Fluctuations in hormones can trigger mood disorders. For example, postpartum depression occurs in some women after childbirth due to hormonal shifts. Thyroid problems, menopause and other hormonal changes may also contribute to mood disorders.

**Trauma and stress:** Psychological trauma, such as the loss of a loved one, abuse, or a major life transition, can contribute to the onset of mood disorders. Chronic stress, whether from work, relationships, or health issues, can also lead to the development of depression and anxiety.

**Substance abuse:** Drugs and alcohol can have a profound impact on mood. Substance abuse can worsen or trigger mood disorders, especially when used as a means to self-medicate emotional pain.

### Symptoms of mood disorders

The symptoms of mood disorders vary depending on the type but commonly include emotional, cognitive and physical symptoms

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**Emotional symptoms:** Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, irritability, or euphoria. There may be feelings of guilt or worthlessness and a sense of detachment from reality.

**Cognitive symptoms:** Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering things. Thoughts of death or suicide may occur in severe cases of depression.

**Physical symptoms:** Fatigue, sleep disturbances (insomnia or oversleeping), changes in appetite or weight and a lack of energy are common in mood disorders. In mania, individuals may have increased energy levels, restlessness and reduced need for sleep.

## CONCLUSION

Mood disorders are complex and can significantly affect daily life, but they are also highly treatable. With appropriate interventions such as psychotherapy, medication and lifestyle adjustments, individuals with mood disorders can manage their symptoms and lead fulfilling lives. Recognizing the signs early and seeking professional help is the first step toward recovery. Understanding the underlying causes and exploring available treatments can help those affected regain control of their mental health and emotional well-being.