

# Treatment for Bipolar Disorder

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## INTRODUCTION

Bipolar disorder (BD) is a chronic mental health condition, which means it needs careful management throughout one's life. The mood swings associated with BD can sometimes be very disruptive and debilitating. There are various effective treatments for BD, and it is possible to manage with the help of correct treatment. It requires a long-term treatment plan which involves a combination of psychotherapy and medication and lifestyle approaches.

### Comprehensive Treatment for BD

It aims to relieve symptoms, restore one's ability to function, sort out the problems which are caused due to illness at home and at work, and subsequently reduce likelihood of recurrence. A comprehensive bipolar treatment plan includes:

**Medication:** It is an essential component of treatment. Various types of medications are used for the treatment of BD. It mainly includes mood stabilizers, antidepressants and antipsychotics.

1. **Mood Stabilizers:** helps to control manic or hypomanic episodes. Some common mood stabilizers are Depakote (divalproex sodium), Lamictal (lamotrigine), Lithobid (lithium), Tegretol (carbamazepine). Sometimes these mood stabilizers may take several weeks to achieve their full effect.
2. **Antidepressants:** Health professional prescribed antidepressant to help manage depression. As antidepressant can sometimes trigger a manic episode hence are prescribed alongwith mood stabilizers or antipsychotic.
3. **Antipsychotics:** When mood stabilizers and antidepressants fails to reduce the symptoms. Doctors then prescribe Antipsychotics to control episodes of depression or mania, (i.e. hallucinations or delusions). Common Antipsychotics include olanzapine (Zyprexa), risperidone (Risperdal), quetiapine (Seroquel), aripiprazole (Abilify), ziprasidone (Geodon), lurasidone (Latuda) or asenapine (Saphris)
4. **Other Medication:** Symbyax (fluoxetine+olanzapine) works as a treatment of depression & mood stabilizer. Another medication involves Benzodiazepines helps to reduce anxiety and improve sleep.

### Side-effects of the Medication

There may be few side effects involved in medication treatment, one should immediately consult Doctor. Medication should not be skipped or stopped unless the doctor advices to do so, as this may return the symptoms bipolar disorder, or worsen them more, person may experience withdrawal effects.

**Psychotherapy:** In addition to medication, psychotherapy is also recommended, which assists in coping with difficult or uncomfortable feelings, repairing one's relationships, managing stress, and regulating mood. There are various types of Psychotherapy, which are listed as below:

1. **Interpersonal and Social Rhythm Therapy (IPSRT):** IPSRT focuses on stabilizing daily rhythms, (sleeping, waking and mealtimes). A consistent routine helps in better mood management. It uses a problem solving strategy and helps person maintain routine sleep and wake rhythms.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT is based on the idea that mental illnesses can be influenced by how one think and reacts to life events. It mainly focuses on identifying unhealthy, negative beliefs and behaviors and consequently replacing them with healthy, positive ones. CBT can help identify what triggers one's bipolar episodes. A person learns effective strategies for managing stress and coping upsetting situations.
3. **Psycho-education:** Thorough knowledge about bipolar disorder (psycho-education) can help person and the loved ones understand the condition, managing symptoms and preventing complications. More knowledge will help in identify issues, avoid problems, deal with setbacks and stick with treatment.
4. **Family-focused Therapy:** This therapy involves having about 21 sessions involving psycho-education and problem-solving training, together with enhancing communication skills for both patients and their caregivers.

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Through family psycho-education you learn about: causes of bipolar disorder, how to identify triggers, the warning signs of relapse, medications and possible side-effects, psychological treatments, healthy lifestyle changes.

### Common Symptoms of BPD and BD

Various alternative treatments, or home remedies, are recommended for BD, which involves taking herbal or dietary supplements, including Amino acids, Magnesium, Omega-3 fatty acids (such as fish oil or flaxseed oil), St. John's wort (for depression).

- One should Quit drinking or using recreational drugs
- Form a healthy relationships with loved ones
- Create a healthy routine: maintain a regular routine for sleeping, eating and physical activity can help balance your moods.

1. **Light and Dark Therapy:** light and dark therapy mainly focuses on sensitive biological clock in people with bipolar

disorder. This easily disrupts disturbance that can trigger symptoms of mania and depression. This therapy regulates biological rhythms consequently reduces mood cycling - by keenly managing one's exposure to light. The major component in this therapy involves creating an environment of regular darkness by restricting artificial light for 10 hours each night.

2. **Mindfulness Meditation:** Research shows mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and meditation help to fight against prevent depression, anger, agitation, and anxiety. This approach uses meditation, yoga, and breathing exercises to focus awareness on the present situation and cut off negative thinking patterns.
3. **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture may help people by modulating their stress response. Studies shows acupuncture leads to a reduction in symptoms, and there is also increasing evidence that acupuncture relieves symptoms of mania also.