

Extra information

The following websites may be useful for you:

- www.mdf.org.uk
- www.mind.co.uk
- www.aware.ie

Contact

The Emotional Health Service

42 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BW

T: 020 8487 5470

Opening hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5.00pm

Friday: 8.45am to 4.45 pm

W: www.afcinfo.org.uk/emotionalhealthservice

Emotional Health Service



Bipolar affective disorder

(manic depression)

Information for young people

What is bipolar affective disorder (BPD)?

Diagnoses of BPD (also known as manic depressive disorder) are made following assessments by child and adolescent psychiatrists who work in Tier 3 CAMHS. If your EHS clinician is concerned about you possibly having BPD they will refer you to Tier 3 for an assessment.

BPD, also known as 'manic-depressive disorder' causes young people to have extreme changes in mood, both high and low. These mood changes are more extreme than would be considered normal and felt to be unusual by the young person.

Individuals with BPD swing between mania (feeling high) and depression (feeling low) for different lengths of time, sometimes with periods of feeling normal and well-balanced in between.

- **Mania** is an exaggeration of feelings of wellbeing, energy and optimism which can make you lose touch with reality. This can mean that thoughts become confusing and it becomes difficult to deal with life effectively.
- **Depression** is the opposite of mania, depressed individuals feel low and lack energy. You may feel like crying more than usual and find everyday tasks take a huge amount of effort and sometimes you cannot complete them.

Different types

- **Bipolar 1:** at least one extreme mood change (manic or depressive) that has lasted longer than a week and can last a number of months if untreated.
- **Bipolar 2:** more than one period of major depression, but only short or manageable periods of extreme highs.
- **Cyclothymia:** mood changes that are less extreme or distressing, but may last longer.
- **Rapid cycling:** more than four changes in one year (this can happen in type 1 and type 2).

Episodes of change in mood can occasionally be mistaken for BPD. However, often there is a simpler reason for changes in mood such as exam stress, relationship difficulties or worries.

BPD affects less than 1% of people and tends to first be recognised after the teenage years. We don't yet know for sure what causes BPD, but we do know that it can run in families and episodes can be triggered by stressful life events.

Despite BPD being relatively rare, young people often suffer from moods that change unsettlingly quickly. There are a wide number of things that can cause these extreme changes which will be considered in your appointments.

What kind of help works?

Medication is often prescribed for BPD, but this varies depending on the age and individual circumstances of the individual.

Psychological therapies are also recommended for BPD. It is helpful for you to learn how to recognise that your mood is changing quickly so that you can get help at the right time and avoid extreme episodes. To help you with this, you could keep a mood diary so that you can identify things that are helpful in controlling your mood, as well as things that are unhelpful.

