



BIPOLAR DISORDER

It's normal for people to experience a range of different emotions. However, when your mood is swinging from one extreme to another, this can interfere with everyday life.

What are the symptoms of bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder is characterised by extreme mood swings. These can range from extreme highs (mania) to extreme lows (depression). Episodes of mania and depression can last for several weeks or months.

During a period of depression, your symptoms may include:

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Having no motivation or interest in things
- Having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself

The manic phase of bipolar disorder may include:

- Feeling very happy, elated or overjoyed
- Talking very quickly
- Feeling self-important
- Not feeling like sleeping
- Being delusional, having hallucinations and disturbed or illogical thinking

Despite what some people may think, bipolar disorder is fairly common with one in every 100 adults being diagnosed with this condition at some point in their life. However, with the right treatment and support, most people are able to reduce the severity and number of episodes of depression and mania to allow as normal a life as possible.

For more information on Bipolar, visit the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/bipolar-disorder

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The exact cause of bipolar disorder is unknown. Experts believe there are a number of factors that work together to make a person more likely to develop the condition.

Some people may develop bipolar disorder after a stressful life event, some people may develop bipolar disorder after being ill, or bipolar disorder may run in your family.

If you think you have bipolar disorder, you should seek help from your GP or another medical professional. It may seem like a big step, but the sooner you see a doctor then the sooner you can begin your road to recovery.

HOW CAN BIPOLAR BE TREATED?

Treatment for bipolar disorder usually involves a combination of prescribed medications, talking therapies and lifestyle advice, such as doing regular exercise. You may also benefit from self-management programmes which help people take an active part in their own recovery, or support groups which enable people to share helpful ideas and help them realise they're not alone.

If you are worried about anything you are experiencing, you can call to the **Student Wellbeing Service Drop-In** (via the Student Guidance Centre information desk) Mon-Fri, term time, 12.30-1.30pm, or you can **email** studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk to book an appointment with a Wellbeing Advisor.

Take5

steps to wellbeing



Give



Be active



Connect



Keep learning



Take notice

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.



There are five simple actions to help maintain and improve your emotional wellbeing in everyday life. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for emotional wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a bus or taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or interest or sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give to others

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group. Look out, as well as in, seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation

www.mindingyourhead.info

Would you like to share your story on the back of this leaflet? If so please email studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk

W: www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/wellbeing
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