

Living with Bipolar Disorder

First UK National Bipolar Awareness Day 27 June 2012

Bipolar disorder is a condition in which people go back and forth between periods of a very good or irritable mood and depression. The "mood swings" between mania and depression can be very quick.

Bipolar disorder affects both men and women. It often starts between the ages of 15 - 25. The exact cause is unknown, but it occurs more often in relatives of people with bipolar disorder. The condition is relatively common with one person in a 100 being diagnosed with this condition, recent research suggests as many as 5% of us are on the bipolar spectrum.

On average it takes 10.5 years for a diagnosis of bipolar disorder to be made and during this time the patient will be misdiagnosed an average of 3.5 times

The high and low phases of bipolar disorder are often so extreme that they interfere with everyday life.

Living with Bipolar Disorder offers the reader positive, real-life solutions and support from someone who is actively engaged with her own bipolar condition and whose mother also has mental health problems. Using a practical, candid tone, this guide offers firsthand advice on how to lead a fulfilling life despite having this challenging mental-health condition. The book addresses the many questions that arise following diagnosis whether of oneself, or a family member or friend. Among the topics considered are the basics of functioning, living and dealing with people on a day-to-day basis, how to negotiate treatment, handle family and friends, maintain a positive image, and earn a living.

Hodges recognises the disorder has to be managed but she can see the positive aspect of the illness, which include: increased work capacity when in hyper-mania, the ability to tap into your creative resources and the confidence to make things happen. She also wanted to give comfort and hope to families of bipolar loved ones. ■

Bipolar disorder used to be called 'manic depression'. As the older name suggests, someone with bipolar disorder will have severe mood swings. These usually last several weeks or months and are far beyond what most of us experience. They include:

Low – feelings of intense depression and despair

High – feelings of extreme happiness and elation

Mixed – a depressed mood combined with the restlessness of a high or 'manic' period

There is still considerable stigma attached the bipolar disorder, both men and women of any age and from any social or ethnic background can develop the illness. The symptoms can first occur and then reoccur when work, studies, family or emotional pressures are at their greatest. In women it can also be triggered by childbirth or during the menopause. ■

Lynn Hodges, the author of ***Living with Bipolar Disorder***, coach and director of Creative Coaching Consultancy, has much experience with mental illness. In addition to a family history of mental health problems, Lynn has been diagnosed with Bipolar one — the most severe form of manic depression in 2004. Learning to live with her illness, Lynn designed a workshop on "Living with Bipolar Disorder" for Kent County Council and Lambeth Council, which has been well

received by both mental health professionals and patients.

For more information visit Hodges website <http://www.livingwithbipolarorder.co.uk/#>

To read an extract from *Living with Bipolar Disorder* go to <http://bit.ly/LsJ0rBII>

27 June is the first National Bipolar Awareness Day in the UK and Findhorn Press will be launching *Living With Bipolar Disorder* on that date.

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Findhorn Press is an independent publishing house in northeast Scotland which offers books, sets of cards, cds and dvds that cover a wide range of 'mind-body-spirit' topics such as nature, spirituality, alternative health (for both people and for animals), self-help, etc. We publish under 3 different imprints: Findhorn Press, Camino Guides (which focuses on guidebooks for pilgrims to Santiago de Compostella) and Earthdancer (holistic, mostly crystal, healing, and the nature/angelic kingdoms).

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