

# ***May is Mental Health Month***

## ***Facts about Bipolar Disorder***

### **What is Bipolar Disorder or Manic-Depression?**

The two names are often used interchangeably. With Bipolar Disorder, people experience mood swings from extreme sadness and hopelessness to extreme euphoria, and can engage in irrational behavior. People usually have more even moods in between these changes. The depression and mania can last for days, weeks or even months.

### **How common is Bipolar Disorder?**

More than [10 million Americans](#) have Bipolar Disorder, which often develops between the ages of 15-25. It is a very serious illness that can result in the loss of jobs, friends and marriages. It can also lead to drug abuse and suicide.

### **What are the symptoms of depression in Bipolar Disorder?**

- Intense sadness, hopelessness, and feeling of worthlessness
- Crying spells
- Inability to experience joy or pleasure
- Problems concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling tired all the time
- An increase or decrease in sleeping and/or eating
- Thoughts of death and/or suicide

### **What are symptoms of mania in Bipolar Disorder?**

- Feeling high, excited and very important
- Having grandiose, unrealistic ideas
- Sleeping very little and not feeling tired
- Increased physical activity
- Irritability, distractibility and rage
- Speaking and thinking very fast
- Reckless behavior such as spending sprees, driving dangerously or provocative sexual behavior

### **What causes Bipolar Disorder?**

Researchers think it's a biological or genetic disorder that runs in families. Hormones and a brain chemical called serotonin are thought to be involved. It can be triggered by an upsetting life event or for no apparent reason.

### **How Can Bipolar Disorder Be Treated?**

Bipolar Disorder can be treated successfully with medication and counseling. A combination of these two therapies is usually the most effective treatment. If you or someone you know needs treatment, see your primary doctor for a referral to a mental health specialist, or call the [Washington Recovery Help Line](#) for a referral: 1-866-789-1511.

For more information, contact: The Office of Consumer Partnerships - [dbhrconsumerpartnerships@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:dbhrconsumerpartnerships@dshs.wa.gov).  
***Washington State Department of Social and Health Services – Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery***