



NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY AS A CAREGIVER

Your **loved one** has a diagnosis of **Bipolar Disorder**.

What's next?

Behaviors and Challenges You May Recognize

Bipolar disorder is characterized by extreme, cyclical changes in mood which can affect well-being and decision making. Bipolar is influenced by genetic factors and often manifests due to trauma or environmental stress. Your loved one is likely going through a lot. They may be experiencing:

- Uncharacteristic decision-making while manic or depressive
- Strong attractions to addictive substances
- Difficulty maintaining stable friendships and relationships with loved ones
- Intense irritability or manic rage which can lead to outbursts
- Inconsistent productivity at work: drained while depressed and energized while manic
- Challenges with impulse control and restraint
- Fear of medication damaging their creativity or numbing their personality
- Major depressive episodes: lethargy, hopelessness, isolation
- Symptoms which worsen with stress, even while on medication
- Unusual reactions to alcohol, caffeine, and other psycho-actives

This journey of navigating your loved one's bipolar diagnosis may look daunting at first. Yet, it can help to shift that compass and look at this journey as an opportunity for GROWTH. On this journey, you can NURTURE your relationship with your loved one AND yourself.

Supporting Your Loved One

You and your loved one are embarking on a growth journey and will navigate their diagnosis TOGETHER. Be PATIENT with your loved one AND yourself as you learn which coping strategies are most helpful.

The greatest gift we can give our loved ones is ACCEPTANCE of what they are going through in the moment. To help them you can also practice boundary-setting, utilize outside help, and take care of YOU! It will empower you BOTH on this journey for you to give yourself love and rest. YOU will be more able to give the care they need and THEY will witness your self-care example.

You can also provide your loved with resources. *See the next page for ways to help manage bipolar disorder.*

If you are currently experiencing a crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741-741.

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Resources for You and Your Loved One

- The **National Institute of Mental Health** on bipolar disorder <https://bit.ly/3r5DrMB>
- The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAM)** on bipolar disorder <https://bit.ly/3wDWX3Y>
- Bipolar info from **Mental Health America** <https://bit.ly/2ULATHq>
- Webinars for caregivers from the **International Bipolar Foundation** <https://bit.ly/3wHyELA>
- **BPHope** on 7 ways to support the siblings of a child with bipolar <https://bit.ly/3ebphUH>
- A guide for caregivers of bipolar disorder (PDF) from **Bipolar Caregivers** <https://bit.ly/3hDCnMK>
- Free, comprehensive meditation app called **Insight Timer** <http://bit.ly/calminisight>
- National warmline directory by **Warmline.org** <https://bit.ly/3xJFfoo>
- A self-guide on coping with current feelings by **Mental Health is Health** <http://bit.ly/currentemotions>
- Bipolar young person resource center for caregivers by the **American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry** <https://bit.ly/36yfXWX>
- Free program for managing sadness from **MoodTools** <http://bit.ly/moodtools>
- Support group local search by the **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance** <https://bit.ly/3yO9owW>
- **Bearable**, the mood and symptom tracker app for reflecting on patterns <https://bit.ly/2UmAvPt>
- A parent's medication guide (PDF) by **ParentsMedGuide** <bit.ly/3FI4Qg5>
- Free medication reminder app by **MediSafe** <https://bit.ly/3wEDrEv>
- Online community for bipolar persons by **My Support Forums** <https://bit.ly/3yTMVoa>
- **Psychology Today's** bipolar therapist search engine <https://bit.ly/3r7p1eQ>

Preventing Caregiver Burnout

We give our BEST care when we are also taking care of ourselves! Make time to recharge, even with a short moment that's just for YOU. Connecting with other caregivers is another powerful form of self-care. Learn more about our One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support program on [our website](#).

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