



Questions Kids Have About Pediatric Bipolar Disorder



Kids Have Questions
and They Want ***Answers!***

What is bipolar disorder?

- How did I get it?
- Will it ever go away?
- How does treatment help?

How can I cope?

- Does anyone else feel this way?
- Why should I chart my moods?
- What if I feel like hurting myself?

Can I be successful?

- What can I accomplish?
- Why can people with bipolar disorder do amazing things?

WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Bipolar disorder is an illness. It effects your energy, moods, thoughts, and the way you act.

- **It can make your body feel heavy and tired or light and energetic.**
- **It can make your mood feel sad and depressed, silly or very happy, angry or irritable, anxious or scared.**
- **It can make your thoughts too slow or too fast. This makes it difficult to concentrate.**
- **It can make you act in ways that are different from your usual personality. A quiet person may talk too much or a friendly person might not want to be around any people.**

This can be very confusing to you, your family and friends. Researchers are still learning about what causes bipolar disorder. They have discovered that it can be inherited. You didn't do anything bad to get this illness. There is no cure for bipolar disorder yet, so doctors can't make it go away completely. We all wish they could. The good news is that there is treatment for bipolar disorder. You, your doctor and parents will have to decide how to manage this illness in a way that will give you the best life. Treatment usually includes:

- **medication, therapy, changes in your lifestyle, and reducing your stress.**

All these things work together to help you become stable and stay that way!

HOW CAN I COPE?

Nobody likes to find out that they have an illness, but sometimes it can be a relief to find out that there is help. Many kids have already struggled for a long time before getting the help they need. Kids with bipolar disorder may think that they are the only ones who feels this way. You are not alone!

- **Some experts believe that there are almost a *million* other kids in America who have bipolar disorder.**

If you are reading this, then you have an advantage. You are taking the first steps to manage your illness by learning about bipolar disorder. Kids can start to take charge of their illness by “charting” their moods. This means you record or mark down how you feel at different times of the day and how your body is reacting to treatment. This helps you understand your mood swings and helps your parents and doctors know how you are doing with your treatment. Talking to your parents and doctors about how you feel is important.

➤ **Always tell someone you trust if you feel like hurting yourself or letting yourself get hurt.**

This can be a symptom of your illness and is not something to be embarrassed about. Your doctor may need to change your medicine to help you get rid of these feelings.

CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL?

Do you think that having bipolar disorder will stop you from being successful? Think again! Here are some of the things people with bipolar disorder have accomplished.

- **Walking On the Moon**
- **Inventing New Products**
- **Acting in Movies**
- **Making Movies**
- **Recording Music**
- **Writing Books and Articles**
- **Playing Professional Sports**
- **Painting Pictures**
- **Reporting the News on TV**
- **Being a Successful Business Person**
- **Being a Doctor**
- **Helping Other People**
- **Being a Great Mom or Dad**

Why can people with bipolar disorder do so many amazing things? Every brain is different. Those differences can make some things harder like controlling your emotions. But those differences can also make some things easier like being creative. So find out what your brain is good at and plan on being successful!

