



WORLD BIPOLAR DAY

On March 30th, we observe World Bipolar Day, in an effort to bring awareness to bipolar disorders and to eliminate social stigma by educating and promoting sensitivity towards the illness.

Bipolar disorder affects around 45 million people worldwide and can be a life-long mental illness.

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that causes extreme mood swings, including emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and lows (depression).

SYMPTOMS

There are several symptoms that can cause unpredictable changes in mood and behavior:

- Abnormally upbeat, jumpy, or wired attitude and expressions
- Increased activity, energy, or agitation
- Exaggerated sense of well-being and self-confidence (euphoria)
- Decreased need for sleep
- Unusual talkativeness
- Racing thoughts
- Distractibility
- Poor decision-making — for example, going on buying sprees, taking sexual risks, or making foolish investments

CAUSES

- Genetics - the chances of developing bipolar disorder are increased if a child's parents or siblings have the disorder
- Stress - a stressful event such as a death in the family, an illness, a difficult relationship, divorce or financial problems can trigger a manic or depressive episode
- Brain structure and function - while brain scans can't diagnose bipolar disorder, researchers have identified subtle differences in the average size or activation of some brain structures in people with bipolar disorder.

TREATMENT

Bipolar disorder is treated and managed in several ways:

- Psychotherapy: cognitive behavioral therapy and family-focused therapy
- Medications: mood stabilizers, antipsychotic medications and, to a lesser extent, antidepressants
- Self-management strategies: education and recognition of an episode's early symptoms
- Complementary healthy activities: aerobic exercise and meditation

If you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of bipolar disorder, please seek professional help. For Keck Medicine of USC patients and Trojan family members, please contact us if you or someone you know needs help (800) USC-CARE (800-872-2273)

**FOR ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES,
CLICK ON THE
FOLLOWING LINKS:**

- **International Bipolar Foundation (www.ibpf.org)**
 - Bipolar online support groups, educational videos, and articles
- **International Society for Bipolar Disorders (www.isbd.org)**
 - Organize World Bipolar Day and other advocacy events, support educational opportunities and bipolar research and treatment
- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (www.dbsalliance.org)**
 - Find support groups, programs, and information