

Further help

First Response Service

If you or a loved one is in mental health crisis, you can call our 24-hour First Response Service on **111 (option 2)**. This service is for anyone, of any age, living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Specially-trained mental health staff will speak to you and discuss with you your mental health care needs

The Samaritans

Dial 116 123 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week - free from any phone)

Urgent Care Cambridgeshire

Dial 111

SANE

0300 304 7000 (lines open 6pm – 11pm, 365 days a year)

Leaflet updated May 2018

Leaflet review date: May 2019

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns about any of CPFT's services, or would like more information please contact: Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on freephone 0800 376 0775 or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours' service for CPFT service users

Please call **NHS 111** for health advice and support.

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.

HQ Elizabeth House, Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge CB21 5EF.
T 01223 219400
F 01480 398501

www.cpft.nhs.uk



Insight into bipolar disorder

May 2018



Pride in our care

A member of Cambridge University Health Partners

What is bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a disorder of mood. About one person in 100 is affected by manic depression. It can cause excessive swings of mood from extreme depression (a 'low') to elation and hyperactivity (a 'high' or hypomania). Mania is a severe 'high'. The moods associated with manic depression are much more pronounced than everyday ups and downs. No two people have exactly the same pattern of highs and lows and they do not necessarily alternate between them.

For example, you can have several highs in a row. Some people may move from a high to a low very quickly (rapid cycling). The causes of bipolar disorder are not fully known. It is suggested there is a genetic component. There may also be biochemical factors and environmental causes. The good news is that mood disorders are among the most responsive to treatment.

What are the signs?

The condition can vary considerably between people. Common symptoms of low mood are the same as for depression in general:

- Disturbed sleep and tiredness
- Changes to appetite and weight
- Lack of concentration
- Morbid sadness, possibly with thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Lack of energy or motivation, which may interfere with work or everyday activities

In a high, symptoms may be:

- Elevated mood, hyperactivity and irritability
- Inflated self-esteem, perhaps with delusions of being a special person
- Poor judgement, possibly including irrational spending or unwise relationships
- A sense that life has special meaning

The danger with a high is that you may not realise you are unwell until the symptoms become severe. It is possible to have high and low symptoms at the same time. This is called a 'mixed state'.

What next?

A range of support is available. Different resources may help you.

Medication

The majority of people with bipolar disorder are likely to need medication. Mood stabilisers, such as Lithium, Carbamazepine and Sodium Valproate are commonly prescribed. Anti-depressants (to control a low) and anti-psychotics (to control a high) are also often used where needed. Like all medicines, these may cause unwanted side effects. Your doctor or pharmacist can discuss this with you.

Self-help

There are a number of ways you can help yourself. You may find it helpful to:

- Keep a daily record of your feelings
- Learn to recognise early warning signs
- Talk to people - if you feel you cannot speak to those close to you, call a helpline or attend a self-help group. It may help to talk to others in the same situation as you
- Write down your preferences for future care and treatment and share this with others so they know how to help you.

Talking or psychological therapies

These involve talking and listening with a trained therapist, who will not judge you. They may be beneficial in helping you to understand and manage bipolar disorder, but for some people they arouse unpleasant emotions. This can be difficult to cope with. Your doctor can discuss this with you.

Complementary or alternative therapies

These cover a range of treatments. Many people with bipolar disorder have found therapies such as yoga, aromatherapy and massage helpful. However, any activity that relaxes you and makes you feel good about yourself can be beneficial. It is important you discuss complementary treatments with your doctor prior to use and that you advise him/her of the results.