



## Mood Disorders

BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This document provides general information on the topic and is not intended to replace team assessment, decision-making, or medical advice.

## Intended Outcomes

Individuals will understand the symptoms, common causes, and treatment of mood disorders.

## Definitions

**Major depressive disorder:** A mood disorder characterized by extreme feelings of sadness or despair.

**Bipolar disorder:** A mood disorder characterized by episodes of mania and depression.

## Facts

- The primary mood disorders are major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder.
- Major depressive disorder (MDD) is a medical illness characterized by symptoms including:
  - Depressed mood
  - Loss of interest or pleasure in doing things
  - Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or excessive daytime sleepiness
  - Poor appetite or overeating/significant weight loss or weight gain
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Moving or speaking slowly/agitation
  - Fatigue or loss of energy
  - Feelings of guilt, hopelessness, or worthlessness
  - Thoughts about death or suicide
- Depressed mood and at least five (5) other symptoms must occur most of the day, nearly every day, over a two (2) week period and significantly affect ability to function, in order for the diagnosis of MDD to be made.
- There is no single cause of depression.
- Psychological, biological, and environmental factors may all contribute to the development of depression.



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- Research has shown that there may be a genetic component involved in depression, meaning that if an individual's parent or grandparent has had depression, the individual may be more likely to develop depression.
- Significant life events such as loss of a loved one, traumatic experiences, or drug or alcohol abuse may be triggers for the development of depression.
- Treatment for MDD:
  - Typically involves medication (antidepressants) and psychotherapy.
  - Commonly used antidepressants include citalopram (Celexa), escitalopram (Lexapro), fluoxetine (Prozac, Prozac Weekly), paroxetine (Paxil, Paxil CR, Pexeva), sertraline (Zoloft), duloxetine (Cymbalta), and venlafaxine (Effexor, Effexor XR).
  - Psychotherapy such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to be very effective in treating MDD.
  - Treatment using a combination of medication and psychotherapy is generally most effective.
- Bipolar disorder is a chronic condition that typically lasts throughout a individual's lifetime.
- Bipolar disorder is characterized by recurring shifts of mood from mania (see symptoms listed below) to depression lasting from one week to several months.
- Elevated or irritable mood must persist for at least one (1) week and be accompanied by at least three (3) of the other symptoms (four symptoms if the mood is only irritable).
- Bipolar disorder typically begins in adolescence or early adulthood.
- There is no one known cause of bipolar disorder, although research does show some evidence of a genetic component.
- Bipolar disorder is a mental illness that causes extreme shifts in mood, energy, and functioning. It is characterized by the occurrence of at least one (1) or more manic episodes.
- It is important to be familiar with the individual's warning signs of mania.
- People who suffer from bipolar disorder often experience one or more major depressive episodes (see above).



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- A manic episode is characterized by symptoms including:
  - Abnormal and persistently elevated mood or extreme irritability
  - Inflated self esteem
  - Less need for sleep (feels rested after three hours or less of sleep)
  - More talkative than usual
  - Racing thoughts
  - Easily distracted
  - Increasing activities (starting projects/relationships)
  - Impulsive behavior and excessive involvement in pleasurable activities (spending sprees, sexual activities, foolish business decisions)
- Treatment for bipolar disorder:
  - Treatment is typically needed throughout the lifespan of a person suffering from bipolar disorder.
  - Medications used in the treatment of bipolar disorder are often mood stabilizers and antipsychotics. These medications include: lithium (Eskalith or Lithobid), divalproex sodium (Depakote), carbamazepine (Tegretol), olanzapine (Zyprexa), risperidone (Risperdal), quetiapine (Seroquel), ziprasidone (Geodon), aripiprazole (Abilify).
  - These medications are sometimes used in combination to maintain stability of mood.
  - Antidepressant medications (see above) may also sometimes be used in combination with mood stabilizers.
  - Many of the mood stabilizers and antipsychotic medications have possible side effects that need to be watched for by a psychiatrist.
  - Laboratory tests and physical exams are also part of optimal treatment.
  - Generally, people suffering from bipolar disorder may benefit from treatment with psychotherapy and education about their illness, along with medication treatment.



## Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Give medications as prescribed
2. Watch for anything different/change in status of the individual, and for signs and symptoms of medication side effects.
3. Write down any noted signs and symptoms of side effects of medications and changes in status of the individual.
4. Tell your supervisor or nurse about any noted signs and symptoms of side effects of medications and changes in status of the individual according to the seriousness of symptoms as per agency policy.
5. Seek medical attention as indicated according to the seriousness of symptoms.
6. Watch for effectiveness of medication by writing down target behavior data that relate to diagnosis.
7. Make sure AIMS (Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale) test is completed and results of AIMS and any other information including weight is presented to physician or psychiatrist during scheduled appointments.
8. If you are familiar with the individual's warning signs of mania make sure you take notes and notify the physician or psychiatrist as soon as you can.

## Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. Criteria for the diagnosis of MDD include:
  - A. Happy mood
  - B. Increase in ability function
  - C. Symptoms lasting at least two (2) weeks
  - D. All of the above
2. Treatment of MDD includes:
  - A. Antidepressant medications
  - B. Psychotherapy



- C. Dietary changes
  - D. A and B
3. Criteria for the diagnosis of bipolar disorder include:
- A. Hallucinations
  - B. Manic episode
  - C. High blood pressure
  - D. None of the above
4. Treatment of bipolar disorder can include:
- A. Mood Stabilizers
  - B. Antipsychotics
  - C. Antidepressants
  - D. All of the above
5. To help watch the condition of someone receiving an antipsychotic medication, it is important to do all of the following except:
- A. Watch for any changes in the individual
  - B. Write down your observations of possible side effects of medications
  - C. Report to your supervisor on how the individual is doing every other month
  - D. Take notes on target behavior and weight to medical appointments for the physician/psychiatrists



## References

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## Learning Assessment Answers

1. C
2. D
3. B
4. D
5. C