Avoid Pit Falls in Treatment

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Tips to Stay on Track and in Control of Your Disorder

A proactive and well-rounded approach to treatment for bipolar disorder can return comfort and stability to your daily life, but the best course of action is not always the most obvious. It’s important to treat your symptoms, but thinking ahead is a very important part of bipolar treatment. To stay on track, learn from the experience of others, and avoid the common problems for those who struggle with bipolar disorder. Let's look at some bipolar habits to avoid.

Common Missteps for Bipolar Patients

Every individual will experience the disorder differently, but there are some easy mistakes to make during treatment that can be much more serious than you might imagine:

- Ignoring helpful resources. Relying on people around you for help does not mean you’re giving in to your disease, it means you have the wisdom to know how to compensate for your symptoms. It can be especially difficult to admit that you need help when you’re physically capable of supporting yourself, and it can be tempting to hide from everyone during depressive episodes. Bipolar people who insist on handling their symptoms themselves are much more likely to experience serious consequences after poor decisions.
- Uneven sleep habits. A good night’s sleep is important for focus and energy, but it can also have a powerful effect on bipolar symptoms. Studies show that sleep deprivation can trigger mania and diminish your control over emotions like irritability. On the other hand, too much sleep can sap your energy, which may prolong depressive episodes and affect your emotional control in other ways. In some cases, changes must be made to diet and lifestyle for the sake of sleep quality.
- Medication frustration. There are a few different medications for the treatment of the bipolar disorder, and the first one you try may not be the right one for you. In some cases, a medication seems promising but brings along some uncomfortable side effects. Rather than assume there’s no hope left, remind yourself that you have other options in terms of medical intervention and communicate your concerns to your medical team regularly.
- Blaming the disease. Bipolar disorder is an easy scapegoat: it changes the ways you feel, expresses and react. It’s challenging to handle, and most people around you won’t understand how it feels to live with such a burden. However, simply blaming bad decisions or emotional outbursts on your condition won’t help you sort through dilemmas and maintain important relationships. It’s important to acknowledge the disorder, but also to be accountable for your actions, how they affect others and how to better manage them.

Developing Good Habits for More Effective Bipolar Treatment

Sometimes it’s easier to simply listen to your symptoms, acting and reacting to mood swings as they hit than it is to stick to a plan or schedule. However, a routine will ultimately help you stay one step ahead of your manic and depressive episodes and could even diminish their frequency and intensity.

For good bipolar habits, you need a routine; it applies to everything in your daily life, from sleep patterns to diet to preventative measures. For instance, if your manic episodes lead to irrational spending, trust a friend to hold onto your credit cards or go shopping with you; if depressive episodes lead you to neglect important responsibilities, have a network in place to jump in and help out anytime you feel yourself slipping. Having a plan to follow will not only protect you from guilt and regret, but will also help your loved ones understand and support you more effectively.