Famous People With Bipolar Disorder Who Shine Light on Mental Illness

by KATE TURNER

10 Stars With Bipolar Disorder You May Not Know About

Even with all the information out there today, bipolar disorder still holds a stigma — and as a result, a lot of misinformation is perpetuated. Thankfully, these celebrities with bipolar disorder are willing to share their illness with the world as they work to normalize it.

Take a look at these 10 celebrities of today and yesteryear who have openly discussed their bipolar disorder in public.

1. Catherine Zeta-Jones

Welsh superstar Catherine Zeta-Jones was diagnosed with bipolar II disorder — characterized by less intense symptoms of mania — back in 2011.

Zeta-Jones's mental health struggle was brought into the spotlight with the news that she had sought help for her bipolar at a treatment facility shortly after her husband, Michael Douglas, battled stage four throat cancer.

"I hope I can help remove any stigma attached to it, and that those who don't have it under control will seek help with all that is available to treat it," she told *InStyle* magazine.

2. Demi Lovato

Singer and former Disney star Demi Lovato has been open about her mental health struggles since she was diagnosed in 2011. At the time, the star entered rehab for treatment for her drug addiction, bulimia, and self-harm — and there she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Rather than hiding her diagnosis from the public, Lovato has used her celebrity status to raise awareness and encourage those struggling to get help.

"I knew that there were two options: I could either not talk about my stint in rehab and hope that it went away, or I could talk about it and inspire people to get help for their issues, as well, so that's exactly what I did," she told *Women's Health*.

3. Jane Pauley

Journalist Jane Pauley, best known for anchoring NBC's *Today* and *Dateline*, was diagnosed with bipolar disorder

in 2001 — though it wasn't until later that she shared her struggles with the world.

In her 2004 memior, *Skywriting: A Life Out of the Blue*, Pauley revealed her diagnosis — which she believes was triggered by several medications she was taking. Since then she's remained candid about bipolar disorder and has been working to raise awareness about mental health issues.

4. Stephen Fry

At 37, Stephen Fry was diagnosed with bipolar disorder after a lifelong struggle with his mental health.

In 2006, years after his diagnosis, the comedian put out the documentary *Stephen Fry: The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive* to showcase the illness and defeat stigma and prejudice. Fellow bipolar stars Richard Dreyfuss and Carrie Fisher were among the many subjects featured.

"I want to speak out, to fight the public stigma and to give a clearer picture of mental illness that most people know little about," Fry said.

5. Carrie Fisher

Carrie Fisher, who sadly passed away in December, was known for her bipolar disorder advocacy just as much as she was known for her role as Princess Leia in the *Star Wars* films.

The beloved actress was diagnosed in her 20s, and remained unapologetically outspoken about her struggles with the disorder and addiction throughout her life. She shared messages of hope and healing throughout her career, inspiring others with mental illness and helping break down the stigma against them.

"We have been given a challenging illness, and there is no other option than to meet those challenges," she wrote in a column for *The Guardian*.

"Think of it as an opportunity to be heroic — not 'I survived living in Mosul during an attack' heroic, but an emotional survival. An opportunity to be a good example to others who might share our disorder."

6. Vivien Leigh

Hollywood starlet Vivien Leigh had the misfortune of struggling with bipolar disorder in a time when resources were not remotely close to what's available today. Over the course of her career she suffered two miscarriages, contracted tuberculosis, was hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital and received electroshock therapy.

With the lack of treatment available, Leigh struggled with addiction and tragically died at the age of 53 following another bout of tuberculosis.

Image courtesy of Express.

7. Patty Duke

Patty Duke was another starlet not afraid to open up about her struggles with bipolar disorder. She penned two memoirs, *Call Me Anna: The Autobiography of Patty Duke* and *A Brilliant Madness: Living With Manic-Depressive Illness*, which delve heavily into her experiences with the condition.

Duke's son, actor Sean Astin, has set up the Patty Duke Mental Health Project to share her legacy and continue

her work with speaking out about bipolar disorder.

“Her whole point when she wrote her book and announced it to the world was to destigmatize mental health disorders,” Astin told *People* magazine. “Thirty years later, it has worked. It’s not perfect now; there is a lot to do. My mom was one of the first celebrities to take that initial step. It was really worth it to her.”

Image courtesy of ABC News.

8. Krizz Kaliko

Rapper, singer and songwriter Krizz Kaliko was diagnosed with bipolar disorder while in high school. He named a track off his second album, *Genius*, after the illness.

"In the school bathroom vomitin', he's shaken up, mood swings who swings when waking up/Dude seems cool, but really breakin'up," Kaliko raps.

"If he could escape from this, he'd even pay to make this his last day/Then a ray from the sky shined on him, and God smiled on him/And now the whole world gets to hear him sing."

Image courtesy of Strange Music.

9. Russell Brand

Actor and comedian Russell Brand struggled with addiction and his mental health as a teenager, and was eventually diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and bipolar.

Not one to shy away from sensitive topics, Brand often discusses his struggles with bipolar disorder, and even references the condition in his stand-up.

10. Eric Millegan

Known for his role as Dr. Zack Addy on *Bones*, Eric Millegan revealed that he has rapid-cycling bipolar disorder in an article on *Huffington Post* in 2010.

“I was hoping that I could say stuff about mental illness that maybe people didn’t know. You know, speak up for bipolar disorder and let people know a little bit more about it that they may not have known. And hopefully give inspiration, or consolation, or comfort to other people who are bipolar,” he wrote.