Four Summer Activities for People With Bipolar Disorder

by JANE BRASIL

Summer Activities for Bipolar

Summer is a season that most people look forward to with great anticipation. For those suffering from bipolar or a depressive illness, it can be an especially exciting time. The long days and warm weather can enable us to soak in the sunshine that we so desperately need. It is a welcome reprieve from the dark stormy days of winter.

Although every day may not guarantee bright sunshine and happy times, we have many activities to choose from to bring harmony and joy into our lives. Even when we are feeling low, there are things we can do to bring us peace and tranquility. Choosing the right activity can refresh us.

Because not everyone enjoys the same activities, it is really important and worthwhile to keep a mental list of the types of activities we really love. It is not about doing things that our friends enjoy. It is about spending time doing things that we enjoy.

There may be days that we desperately need silence and solitude.

Take Some Time Out for Solitude and Reflection

During a time when I was deeply troubled, I simply did not know what to do to feel better. I thought that maybe I needed people around me to take my mind off of the pain. However, the opposite was true. What I needed was solitude and reflection.

I did something that I had never done before. I grabbed my beach chair, stopped to get ice and something cold to drink along with a book that I bought at the store. It was a self-help book that I had never read. I went to the beach by myself. It was exactly what I needed! I came home with a new perspective.

Knowing when we need to be alone is as important as knowing when we need people around us. The choices we make can have a huge impact on our mental wellness. Even the small ones.

Go on an Adventure

There are times that we need to try something new or adventurous. Going camping with friends or family is a great change of pace. Sleeping under the stars, fishing or canoeing in a stream, cooking outside, bonfires and roasting marshmallows! Camping provides it all.

Summer is also a perfect time for whale watching or taking a scenic boat tour. There is something about the ocean that is rejuvenating and exciting. It is best to do research before the summer begins to make plans ahead of time or at least know what days and times these tours are available and what the cost is.

Planning ahead can prevent anxiety about what to do and when to do it. For those suffering from any bipolar

disorder or depression, feelings of anxiety are not in our best interest.

Indoor Activities During Rainy Days

Rainy days do not have to be depressing. There are many enjoyable activities that can help us pass the time.

If we like crafts or if we have other creative talents, this can be a perfect time to concentrate on these abilities. Coloring books for adults have become very popular, so if you liked coloring as a child you will love coloring as an adult!

If you are not feeling creative, going to the movies might be a perfect solution. Rainy days can also provide an opportunity to work on a household chore that you have been putting off and at the same time provide you with a sense of accomplishment.

Outdoor Activities for the Sunny Days

Finding a summer activity that involves exercise is especially beneficial for anyone suffering from bipolar disorder. Riding a bike, walking on the beach, or hiking are activities that provide not only the benefits of exercise but enable us to enjoy the beauty of the nature around us. Playing tennis or badminton are other great forms of exercise.

Summer is also a perfect time for attending outdoor concerts or performances. Listening to the sounds of beautiful music under the stars is not only entertaining and enjoyable, but It can lift our spirits and renew our energy.

These are all ways that we can nurture and heal ourselves. Although therapy and medication can be part of our ongoing treatment, we always need to be proactive in finding other ways to help ourselves.

We need to strive for self- awareness so that we can better help ourselves to maintain a healthy mental outlook. Choosing healthy activities that we enjoy is as important as choosing a profession we love or friends that are supportive.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

It is important to remember that whether it is choosing a summer activity or a therapist, everything will have an effect on us. We can try an activity that we think we would like, but we can end up not enjoying it at all. We can change our mind, or we can change our plans. We are a work in progress. Our needs can change from season to season. Our paths can change from year to year.

In a way, people who have bipolar disorder have an opportunity that others might not have. We know how important our mental health is and we know that we need to be more aware of the choices we make to bring out the best in ourselves. We are warriors. We do not take things for granted, and we don’t make choices lightly. We become focused because we need to be, and we know in our heart that we must never expect perfection in ourselves. We know that better than most.

So, have a great summer and remember our golden rule. Don’t sweat the small stuff!