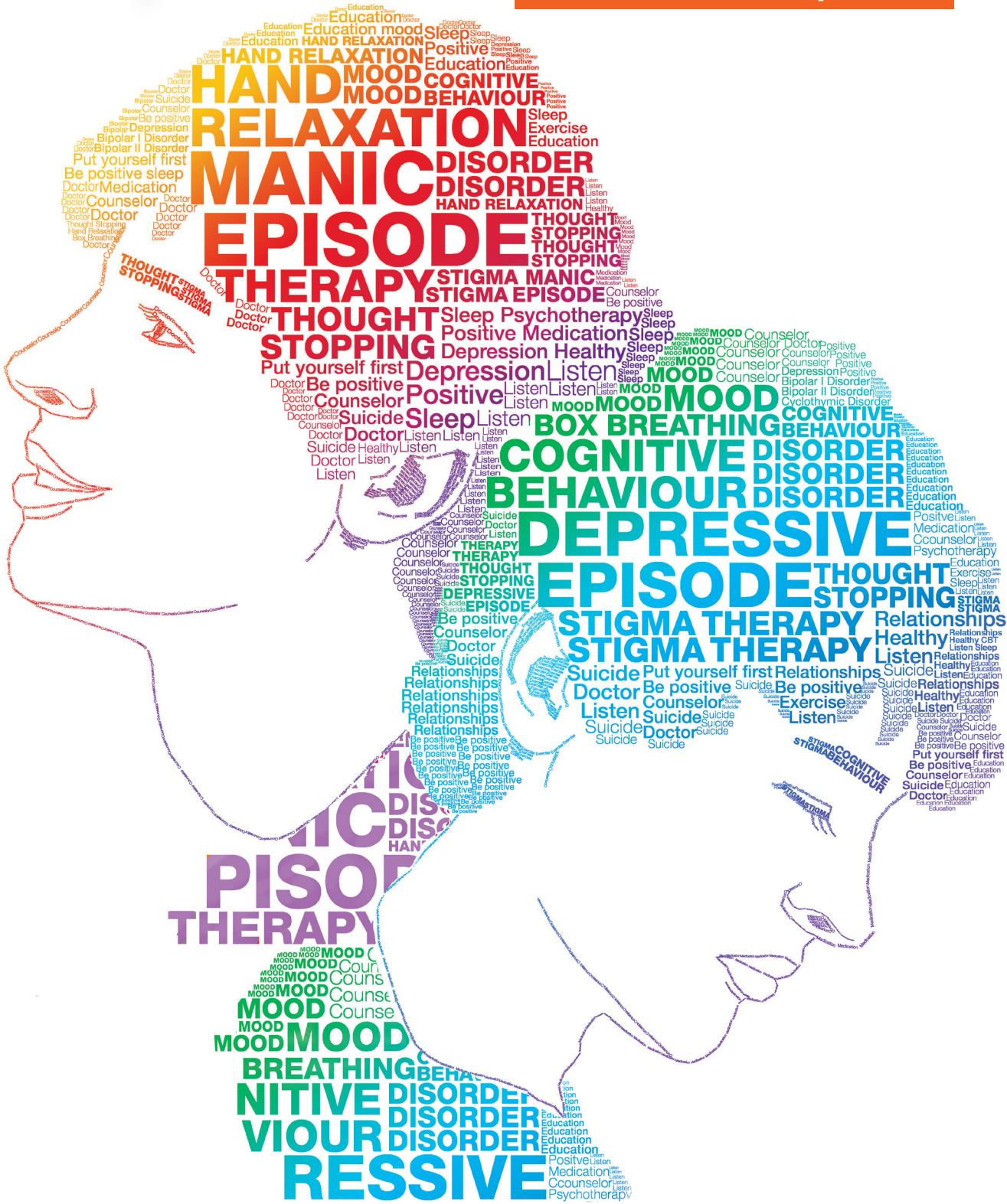


# bipolar disorder

TeenMentalHealth Speaks...





## credits

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### Where?

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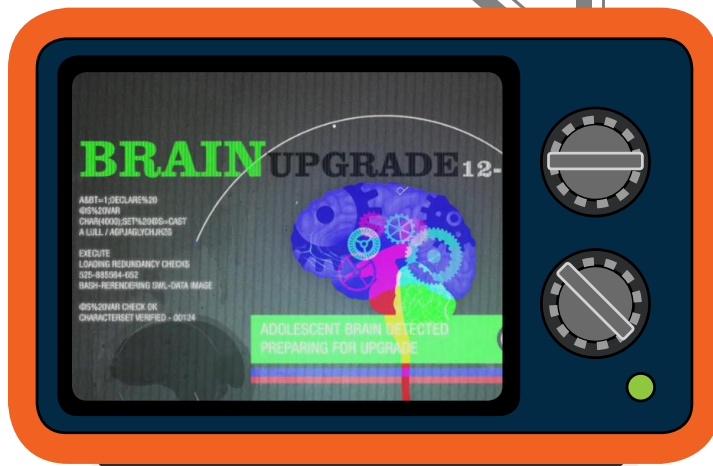
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# M TeenMentalHealth Speaks... Magazine

Channel: teenmentalhealth1



YouTube

## TOC

- |           |                                |           |  |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>7</b>  | why does mental health matter? | <b>16</b> | how is Bipolar Disorder treated?             |
| <b>8</b>  | how the brain works?           | <b>17</b> | having a good support system                 |
| <b>11</b> | what is Bipolar Disorder?      | <b>18</b> | tips to help increase overall mental health  |
| <b>12</b> | who gets Bipolar Disorder?     | <b>21</b> | dealing with stigma                          |
| <b>13</b> | what causes Bipolar Disorder?  | <b>22</b> | helping someone coping with Bipolar Disorder |

# *From the desk of Dr. Kutcher*

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**A**dolescence is an exciting time of life. There is so much to do, so much to explore, so much to learn. All of this can be at times exhilarating, challenging, scary, painful or whatever. There will be successes and there will be failures. There will be times that we look back on and say “I wish I had not done or said that” and there will be times that we look back on and say “I see that doing or saying that was the right thing to do”.

We can look at this time of life as an opportunity for emotional, social and thinking growth and see many positives. Unfortunately, in my opinion, there is a social tendency to think about the adolescent years in negative terms. And, I for one am getting a little bit tired of hearing these kinds of negative stories. Where are the positive stories?

This does not mean teens don't have their struggles. Nor does it mean that the social, personal, educational challenges faced by teens aren't also faced by adults! Everyone has their challenges. Part of growing through the teen years is learning how to successfully overcome life's challenges.

Woven into these joys and sorrows of adolescence is the reality that some of the most concerning illnesses arise during that time. They include such things as: Depression; Panic Disorder; Schizophrenia; etc. Drug misuse and even drug abuse are other challenges that arise. Unrecognized and untreated they can have negative impacts during teenager-hood and for adulthood to come.

The good news is, we have lots of effective and positive ways to help teens and families who are facing the challenges of mental disorders. This does not mean that the usual ups and downs of teen life will go away.

These Magazines will help you and your families learn about some of the most common medical illnesses of adolescence – mental disorders. I hope that this will help you and your family better understand what these are, how to identify them and what you and your family can do to help.

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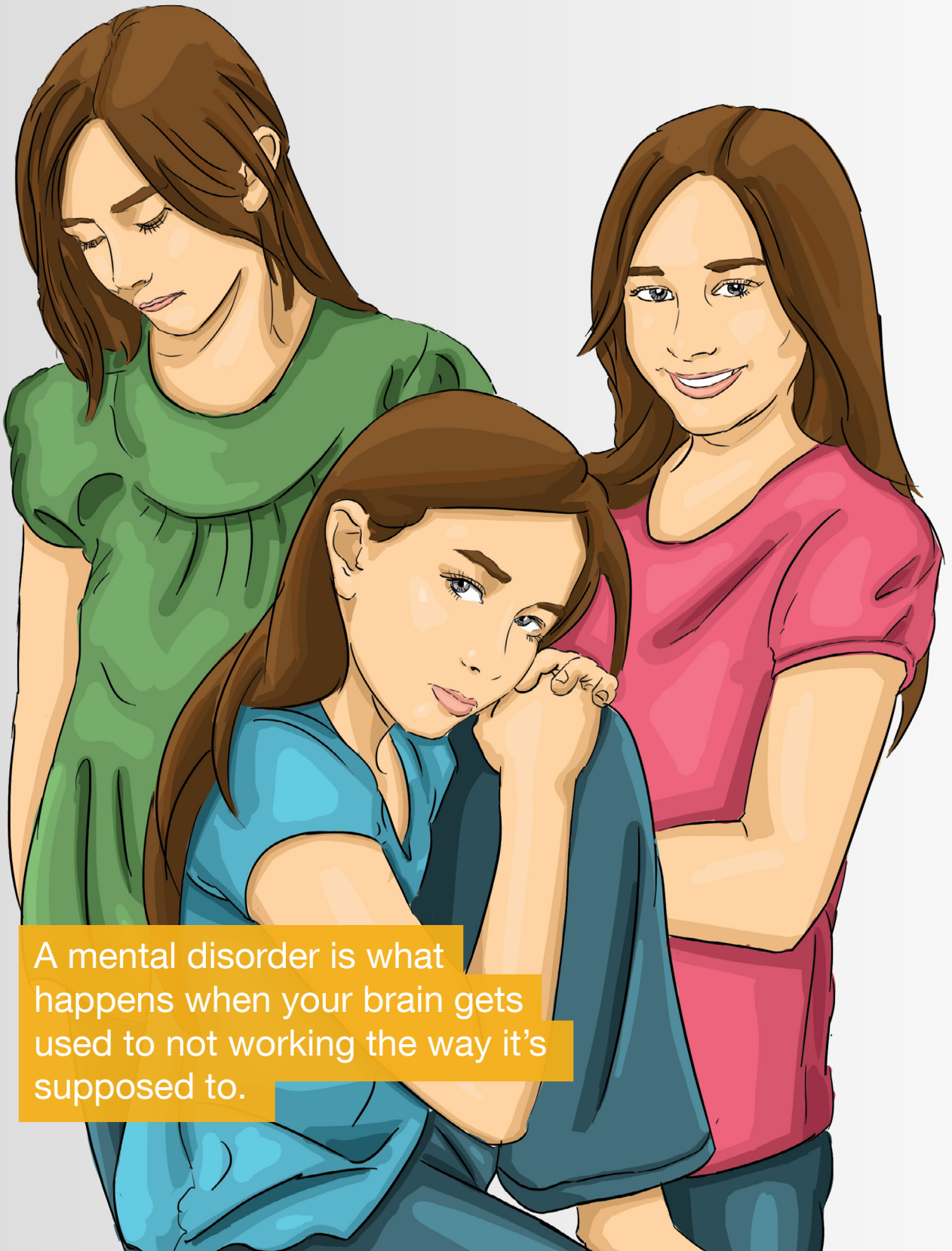
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# TRANSITIONS

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Available on Amazon.com and the Apple iBookStore. The App is free for download at the Apple App Store & online: [teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/transitions](http://teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/transitions)



A mental disorder is what happens when your brain gets used to not working the way it's supposed to.



# ? why

## mental health matters

**M**ental health refers to the health of your brain. It's what is going on inside your head. Your mental health affects every aspect of your life, including your school performance, your physical health, your feelings, your self-esteem, and your relationships with other people. Having good mental health makes it easier for you to cope with stress and live your life the way you want to live it. Looking after your mental health is really important.

Many people experience mental health problems as teenagers. Mental health problems are when your brain is having difficulty working as well as it should. Usually, this happens when you are in a difficult situation, like if your parents are going through a divorce or someone you love dies. When this happens, you may need some extra help from a trusted adult (like a family member, a teacher, or a neighbour) or a counselor. Sometimes, however, our brains can work differently than usual for no apparent reason, causing us problems. For example,

they can make us feel sad all the time or feel anxious when there is no real danger. When this happens, it is considered a mental disorder.

A mental disorder is what happens when your brain gets used to not working the way it's supposed to. We get stuck in a pattern of feeling really down, or really anxious, or really distracted. Sometimes these patterns can even change the way our brain works. Just like how mental health affects all aspects of your life, so do mental disorders. Having a mental disorder can make it harder for you to do well in school, to get along with your friends and family, and to stay physically healthy. It makes it difficult to live your life the way you would like. Some people with mental disorders may end up using drugs and alcohol to cope, and other people may hurt themselves or think suicide is the answer.

Seek help as soon as you notice a problem. There are lots of people who can help you. Early treatment of mental disorders not only helps you right away, but the help you get can last your whole life.

# ? how

## the brain works

In order to understand how the brain changes when someone has a mental disorder, we need to know how it usually works. The brain has 6 different but completely linked functions:

### 1 Thinking

Your brain is in charge of how you store and process information, whether it's figuring out a math problem, remembering to pack your lunch, concentrating during class, or planning what you are going to do this weekend.

### 2 Feeling

Your brain also controls how you feel at any given point in time and how you express those feelings to other people.

### 3 Perceiving/Sensing

Your brain is responsible for paying attention to what is going on around you. It does this by interpreting information from your senses - sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. You see with your brain, not with your eyes!

### 4 Physical

Your brain controls how your body moves and reacts – from obvious things, like being able to move your hands, to things you don't even think about, like breathing or digesting your food.

### 5 Behaving

Your brain controls how you interact with the people around you and your environment. It's your brain that tells you what to do or say in different situations.

### 6 Signaling

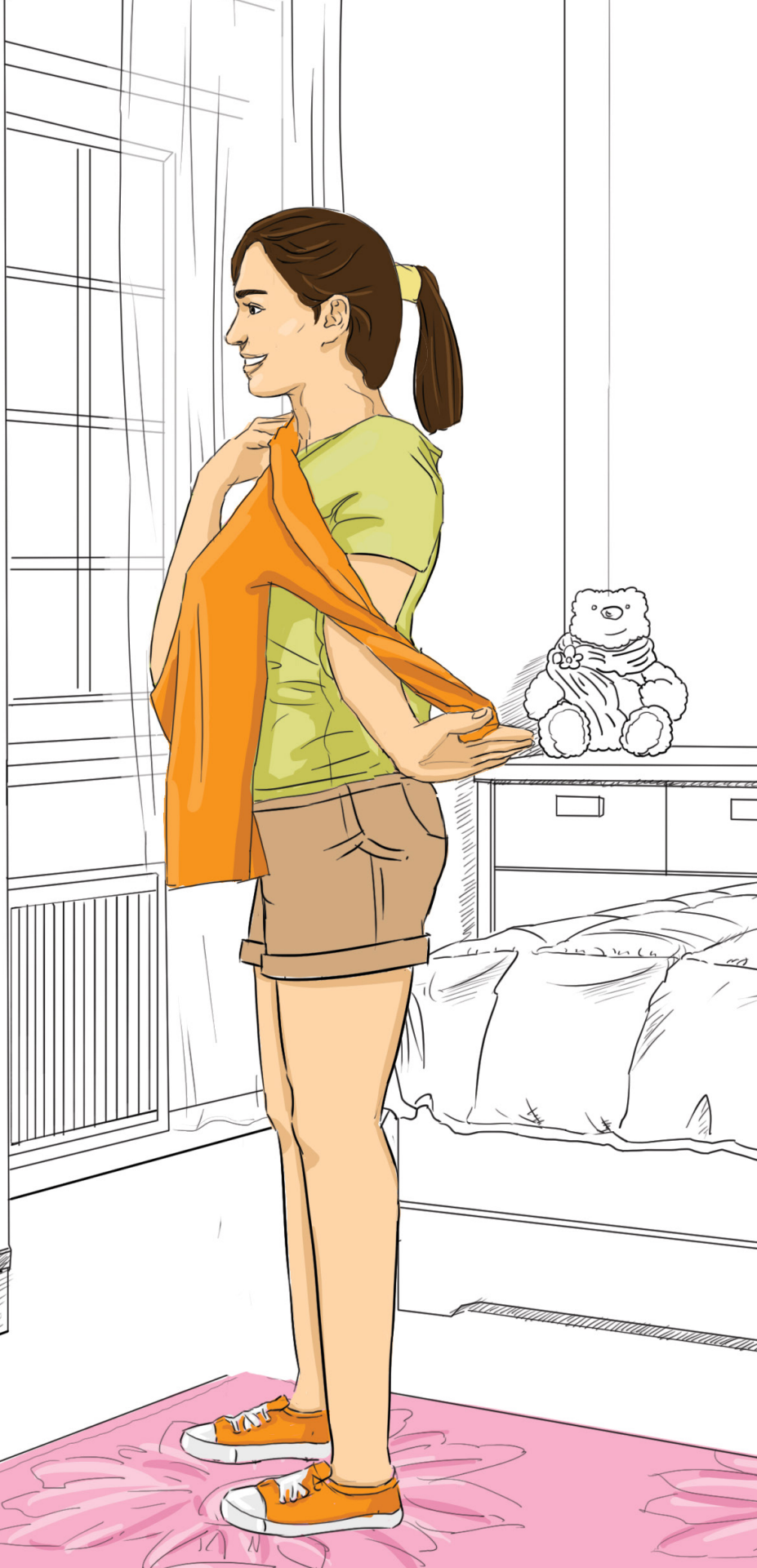
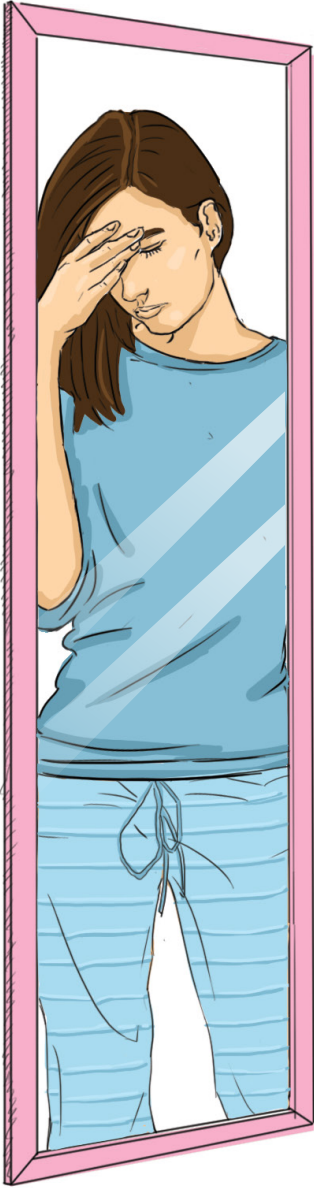
Your brain also plays an important role in protecting you from danger. It keeps track of the information from your senses in order to alert you that you may be in trouble, like if you touch a hot stove and you immediately pull your hand away. Your brain is what stopped you from being badly burned!

#### discover://

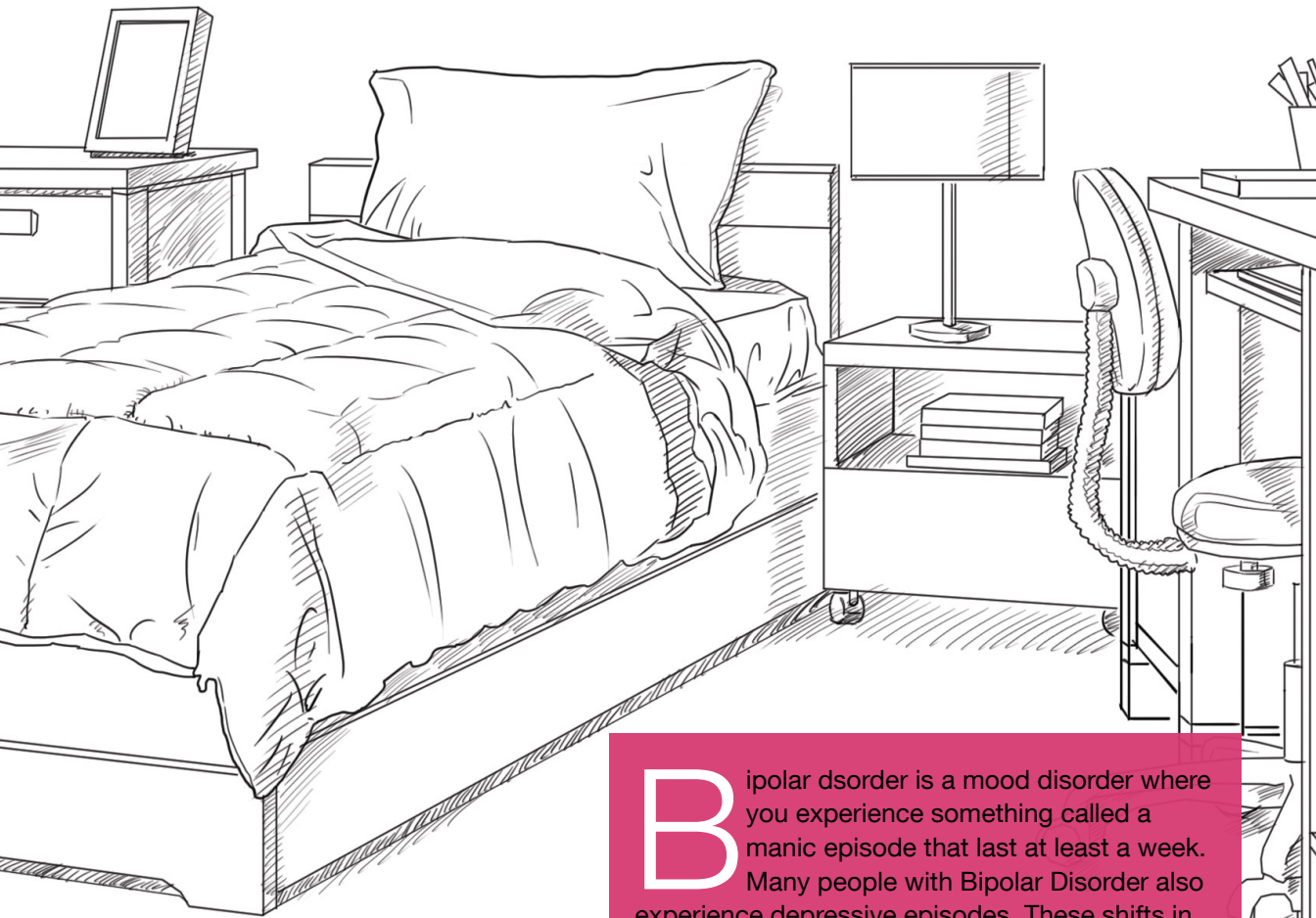
To learn more about the teenage brain, check out: [teenmentalhealth.org/understanding-mental-health/the-teen-brain](https://teenmentalhealth.org/understanding-mental-health/the-teen-brain) and [youtu.be/EGdlpaWi3rc](https://youtu.be/EGdlpaWi3rc)



When a person has a mental disorder, one or more of these brain functions are not working properly. And because these brain functions are all interconnected, when one function isn't working properly, the other brain functions will also be affected. In the case of a mood disorder, many of these brain mechanisms are not working the way they should, affecting the way you think, feel, and behave. Bipolar Disorder is one type of mood disorder, where people cycle between periods of mania (i.e., feeling really elevated or irritable) and periods of either normal mood or depression (i.e., feeling really sad and low).



# what is Bipolar Disorder?



**B**ipolar disorder is a mood disorder where you experience something called a manic episode that last at least a week. Many people with Bipolar Disorder also experience depressive episodes. These shifts in mood can happen over hours, days, weeks, or even longer.



# what is a manic episode?

A manic episode (also called Mania) is a period of time when your mood is extremely elevated, euphoric, or irritable, and you are much more active and energetic than normal. On top of that, you may also:

Sometimes people in a manic episode don't realize there is a problem because they like the excitement and positive feelings they experience. Unfortunately, manic episodes can get much worse and hurt your judgment and ability to think rationally to the point where you do something dangerous. Some people with Mania become psychotic and lose touch with reality.

- 1 feel really confident, like you can do anything (even if impossible)
- 2 feel like you don't need to sleep (e.g., feel rested after only a couple of hours of sleep)
- 3 feel super talkative, like there's a buildup of words inside you that need to get out
- 4 feel like your thoughts are racing and jumping from one idea to another really quickly
- 5 feel easily distracted by small and unimportant details
- 6 feel motivated to move around and get things done, often without accomplishing goals
- 7 feel like nothing can go wrong, even when you do really risky things, like having unprotected sex, using drugs, speeding, or blowing all your money.

# what is a depressive episode?

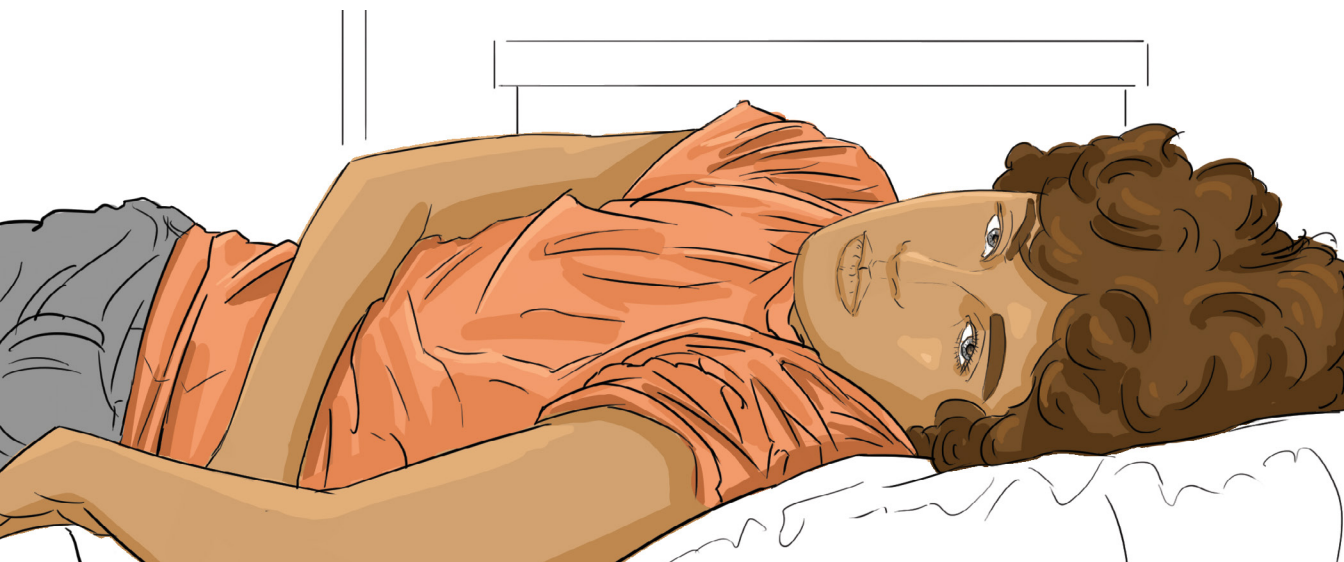
A depressive episode is a period of time when your mood is really sad and low. You may also:

- 1 lose interest in the things that you used to like to do
- 2 eat much less than normal or much more than normal
- 3 sleep much less than normal or much more than normal
- 4 move restlessly or barely move at all
- 5 feel really tired and lack energy
- 6 lose feelings of pleasure or enjoyment
- 7 feel worthless, hopeless, or guilty (without a good reason)
- 8 have trouble concentrating or making decisions
- 9 have thoughts of death and dying, including suicidal thoughts and plans
- 10 attempt suicide

## discover://

Check out this video on Bipolar Disorder:  
[youtu.be/nF36KwJwYMY](https://youtu.be/nF36KwJwYMY)

Everyone feels sad or has a bad day occasionally but when someone has Depression, his or her sad feelings last for long periods of time, often to a point where the person feels hopeless and can't function.





# ? who

## gets Bipolar Disorder

Approximately 1% of Canadians will develop Bipolar Disorder at some point in their lives. It affects both males and females equally and usually starts in the late teens or early adult years.

[Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, Mental Health and Well-being, 2002]



# ? what

## causes Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar Disorder is thought to be caused by a combination of your genetics (which you inherit from your biological family) and your environment. If someone in your immediate family has Bipolar Disorder, your chances of developing the disorder are much higher.

## types of Bipolar Disorder:

**1 Bipolar I Disorder**  
This is when a person experiences at least one manic episode. He or she will likely also experience depressive episodes. These mood changes can last hours, days, weeks, or even longer.

**2 Bipolar II Disorder**  
This is similar to Bipolar I Disorder, except that the person experiences at least one hypomanic episode, instead of a manic episode, and will also experience depressive episodes. Hypomanic episodes are a less severe form of manic episodes.

**3 Cyclothymic Disorder**  
This is when a person switches back and forth between periods of hypomanic symptoms and periods of depressive symptoms. The person's symptoms are not severe enough to be considered a manic or a depressive episode, but they still cause a lot of distress or impairment. These mood swings last for at least 2 years, and usually much longer.

### discover://

To learn more about Bipolar Disorder, check out [teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/bipolar](https://teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/bipolar)

# ? how

## is Bipolar Disorder treated

Bipolar Disorder is primarily treated with medication and psychotherapy. Although ongoing psychotherapy is not usually needed long-term, there is a good chance that someone with Bipolar Disorder will always have to be on medication (although the type and amount may vary). Most people respond well to treatment, but if the medication is stopped, the disorder will come back.

### 1 Medication

Medication can help your brain function better. A lot of different medications can be used to treat Bipolar Disorder, including:

- ▼ **Mood stabilizers**, which treat both your manic and depressive symptoms.
- ▼ **Antidepressants**, which can be used to treat depressive symptoms in certain people but are not right for everyone.
- ▼ **Anti-psychotic medications**, which treat both mood and psychotic symptoms.

It is really important to take your medications as prescribed when you have Bipolar Disorder. Even though you might feel better, remember that the medication is an important part of your care. supportive environment.

### 3 What else can help:

- ▼ Having a good support network of friends and family.
- ▼ Following the Mental Wellness tips on page 18!

### 2 Psychotherapy

In addition to medication, psychotherapy (a.k.a. talk therapy) can also be helpful for dealing with the stress that you experience when you have Bipolar Disorder. There are a few different kinds of psychotherapy that might be helpful:

- ▼ **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**, which helps you learn to problem solve and change your thoughts and behaviours from negative to positive.
- ▼ **Family-focused Therapy**, which helps your family better understand Bipolar Disorder and learn better coping skills.
- ▼ **Psychoeducation**, which teaches you how to better understand Bipolar Disorder and how to manage your symptoms.

#### discover://

To help make sure you get the best treatment for you, check out:

[teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/evidence-based-medicine](https://teenmentalhealth.org/for-families-and-teens/evidence-based-medicine) and [teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/med-ed-booklet](https://teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/med-ed-booklet) and [teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/communicating-with-your-health-care-provider-what-every-parent-should-ask](https://teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/communicating-with-your-health-care-provider-what-every-parent-should-ask) and [teenmentalhealth.org/images/uploads/communicating\\_with\\_healthcare\\_providers\\_student\\_version.pdf](https://teenmentalhealth.org/images/uploads/communicating_with_healthcare_providers_student_version.pdf)



# having a good support system

For someone with Bipolar Disorder, having a good support system of trusted people is really important.

- 1 understand the challenges that having a mental disorder creates for you
- 2 notice when you're not acting/feeling like yourself
- 3 be there for you when you need them
- 4 help you cope when you're having a rough time
- 5 hang out with you.
- 6 listen to you when you need someone to talk to
- 7 give you honest and helpful advice when you need it
- 8 encourage you to have healthy coping strategies and problem solve
- 9 remind you that you're not alone

# tips

to help increase overall mental health.



- 1 Structure your day.** Give yourself something to do, even if you start small. Having some structure in your day can make a big difference in how you feel. Start with basic daily activities like showering, walking the dog, or making lunch. Keeping a daily diary or schedule can be a big help in keeping your mood stable and preventing you from feeling overwhelmed, especially if you're a visual person. Check out [teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/taking-charge-of-your-health](https://www.teenmentalhealth.org/resources/entries/taking-charge-of-your-health), a daily diary that can help you get started. This is available as an App on the Apple App Store as well.
- 2 Exercise.** Daily physical activity improves your health and mood, and helps you get rid of stress.
- 3 Sleep.** Getting 8-9 hours of sleep each night will help you feel better the next day.
- 4 Daily relaxation time.** Take time each day to relax, using techniques like Box Breathing or Hand Relaxation (see page 20).
- 5 Talk.** Talk to the people in your support network about your feelings and concerns. Sharing your feelings with someone else can feel like a weight is lifted off your chest.
- 6 Go outside.** Staying inside all the time can be really draining. Getting outside and enjoying the sun and fresh air can help you stay stress-free.
- 7 Limit caffeine.** Caffeine can make your heart race, which can make you feel worse.
- 8 Stay away from alcohol and drugs.** Although you may feel better in the short-term, alcohol and drugs will not solve your problems. They'll only give you a false sense of confidence and may make your problems worse in the long run.
- 9 Build healthy relationships.** It's important to have a good support network of people you trust.
- 10 Eat healthy.** Eating a balanced diet gives your body the fuel it needs to help combat stress. Try not to skip meals and go easy on the junk food.
- 11 Stop thinking so much.** Thinking about something over and over can make you feel worse. Try not to let yourself replay negative thoughts and situations in your mind. Distract yourself, if necessary!
- 12 Be realistic.** Bipolar Disorder can affect the way you understand what is going on around you. When you are in a manic episode, dangerous and risky things might seem like a better idea than they are. Likewise, when you are in a depressive episode, events may seem worse than they actually are. Remind yourself that Bipolar Disorder can skew your judgment and perspective, and things may not be quite like they seem. If possible, ask someone you trust for their opinion.

If these tips don't help, do NOT get discouraged. Just like learning to play the piano or driving a car, some of these skills require practice and patience. For more help, talk to your school counselor or visit your family doctor. Your family doctor will be able to help you find the treatment that works best for you and can recommend places for you to go if you need more help.





## Box Breathing

Box Breathing can help your heart rate return to normal, which helps you to relax. Here's how you do it: If possible, sit and close your eyes. If not, just focus on your breathing.

**Step 1:** Inhale your breath (preferably through your nose) for 4 seconds.

**Step 2:** Hold your breath for 4 more seconds. You're not trying to deprive yourself of air; you're just giving the air a few seconds to fill your lungs.

**Step 3:** Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds.

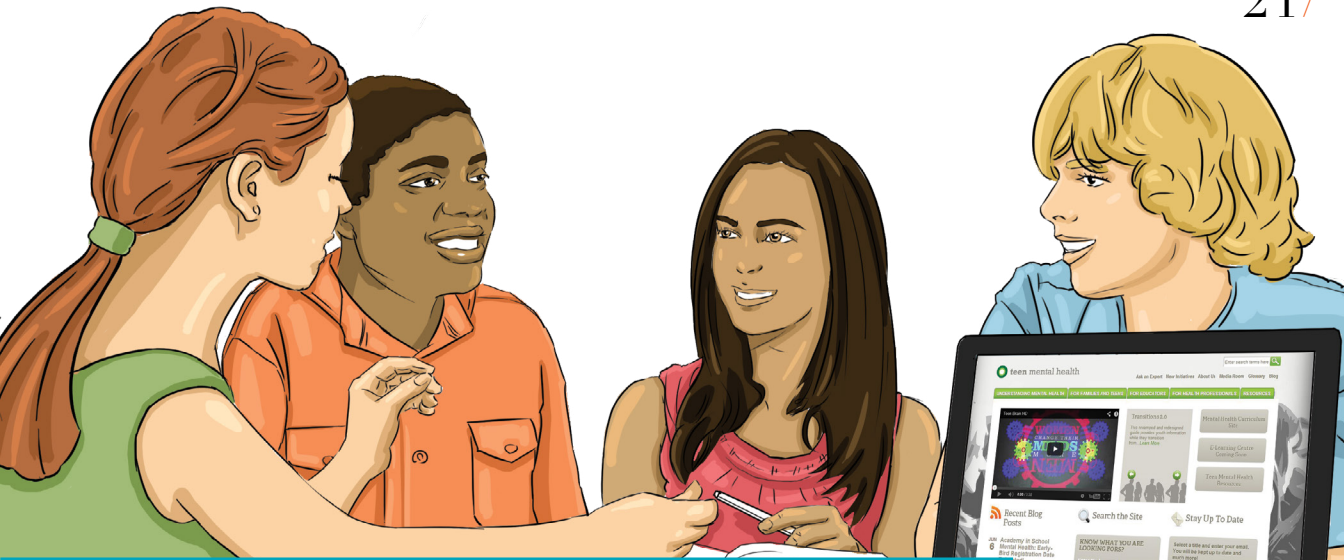
**Step 4:** Pause for 4 seconds (without speaking) before breathing in again.

Repeat this process as many times as you can. Even 30 seconds of deep breathing will help you feel more relaxed and in control.

## Hand Relaxation

Hand Relaxation helps to get rid of the tense feelings in your body. Here's how you do it: Clench the muscles in your left hand (make a fist) really tightly for 5 seconds. Then, let go gradually (for about 15 seconds), breathing slowly and concentrating on the feeling in your hand. Then, repeat using your right hand.

With practice, you can get really good at doing Box Breathing or Hand Relaxation techniques. You can do them just about anywhere, without anyone else knowing - on the bus, in class, even when you're hanging out with your friends.



# dealing with stigma

If you have Bipolar Disorder, you may overhear insensitive comments about you and feel like you are being judged by other people. Remember that these people don't understand what Bipolar Disorder is. Although it may be hard, try not to take their comments personally. They don't realize that Bipolar Disorder is a medical condition that requires treatment, just like cancer or high blood pressure. Having Bipolar Disorder does not make you weak and does not make you less of a person than anyone else.

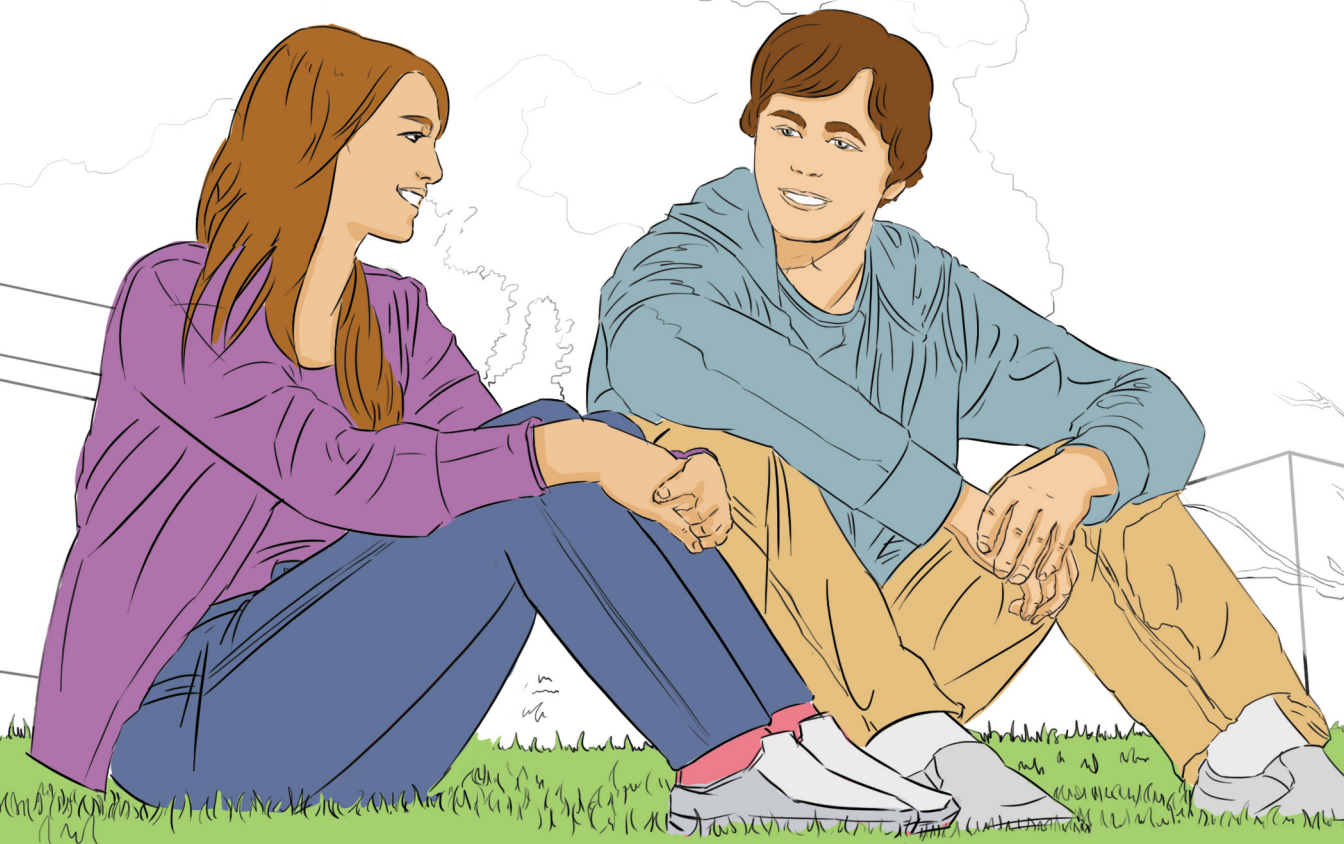
## What is stigma?

Stigma is a "polite" word for discrimination. It's a negative attitude people have about something they don't understand that can result in physical, mental, and emotional harm. When someone has a stigmatizing attitude, it means there is something wrong with their attitude- not with you. People make hurtful and judgmental comments and assumptions about people suffering from mental illness because they don't understand that mental disorders are just another kind of medical disorder. You wouldn't expect someone in a wheelchair to be able to climb stairs just because someone said "snap out of it!" This is just as true for mental disorders, like Bipolar Disorder. The best way to fight stigma is to help people better understand mental disorders.

The best way to fight stigma is to help people better understand mental disorders.

# helping coping with Bipolar Disorder

If someone you care about has Bipolar Disorder, the best and most important thing you can do is provide support and be understanding. In order to support someone else, you also need to look after yourself.





## here are a few pointers:

### 1 Educate yourself

Understanding what Bipolar Disorder is and how it affects the person you care about will help you to be a less frustrated and more supportive friend.

### 2 Listen

When you listen to and acknowledge your friend's feelings, it sends your friend the message that you care. Knowing that you have people who care about you is an important part of recovering from a mental disorder.

### 3 Be patient

Sometimes it can be frustrating when your friend starts acting differently. Take a deep breath and remember that Bipolar Disorder is making your friend act and feel this way. He/she can't just "snap out of it." Getting impatient will only make the situation worse. Stay positive and be patient. Encourage your friend to participate in his/her normal social routine.

### 4 Be aware of suicide risk

If your friend talks about death or suicide, don't ignore it or keep it a secret. Talk to a responsible adult whom your friend also trusts (e.g., parent, teacher, coach, counselor). Let your friend know that you care about him/her and his/her life. If your friend is talking about suicide, you must take it seriously.

### 5 Be the voice of reason

Your friend may think it's a good idea to stop taking his/her medications because he/she feels better. Remind your friend that the reason he/she feels better is because of the medication. The symptoms of Bipolar Disorder will come back if your friend stops taking his/her medication.

### 6 Don't try to change your friend

You don't have to solve all of your friend's problems or turn him/her into a different kind of person. Just be present and supportive.

### 7 Don't blame yourself

It is not your fault that your friend has Bipolar Disorder. Many different factors, including his/her genetic background and environment are involved. No one can "make" another person have Bipolar Disorder.

### 8 Encourage your friend to seek help

Having a friend he/she can trust, like you, is so important. But someone trying to cope with a mental disorder also needs treatment. Encourage your friend to see a doctor or school counselor to get the help he/she needs. Even if the problems don't seem that bad yet, seeking help early can prevent problems from getting worse.

### 9 Put yourself first

On an airplane, they tell you to always put your oxygen mask on first in an emergency before you assist someone else. You'll be no help to anyone if you're passed out. The same goes for helping your friend. If you burn yourself out by always putting him or her first, you won't be able to help anyone, including yourself. It's absolutely okay (and so important) to take time away to look after yourself.

### 10 Have fun together

Your friend needs someone who can have fun, relax, and laugh with him/her. These are all important parts of your friend's mental health (and yours!).

discover://

For more on Bipolar Disorder and other mental health problems, check out [teenmentalhealth.org](http://teenmentalhealth.org)

# help

These are places you can find more information about Bipolar Disorders and get help:

## **A** Family doctor

Talk to your family doctor about your concerns. Your doctor can help you decide on the best treatment plan for you and refer you to a good psychologist, counselor, and/or support group.

## **B** Library

Check your local community or school library for books to help you understand more about Bipolar Disorder and how to cope.

## **C** School Counselor or Nurse

Your school counselor or nurse may have helpful resources for you, including books, pamphlets, and contacts in the community.

## **D** Phonebook

The yellow pages have lists of local support groups, counselors, and youth health centres, some of which may be helpful for you.

## **E** Kids help phone

The Kids Help Phone has counselors who answer phone calls and online questions from young people 24/7. You can reach them at 1-800-668-6868 or at [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

## **F** Emergency

If you are feeling suicidal or are in crisis, go to your local hospital's emergency room immediately.

## **G** Internet

The internet has loads of information about mental illness; just know that not all of it is accurate. In fact, the information on some websites is more wrong than right.

## **H** Health Boards

Many communities have a health board with information on different support groups and other resources. They are often located in community centres, malls, and grocery stores.

### discover://

Teen Mental Health [www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre [www.keltymentalhealth.ca](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca)

Mind Your Mind [www.mindyourmind.ca](http://www.mindyourmind.ca)

National Institute of Mental Health [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Canadian Mental Health Association [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

Mental Health Foundation [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

CREST.BD [www.crestbd.ca](http://www.crestbd.ca)

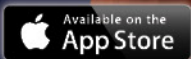
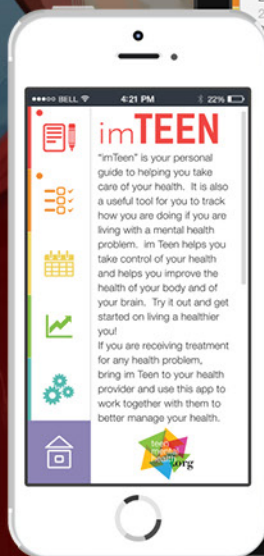
Mood Disorders Canada [www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca)

# imTEEN

Taking charge of your health



- ASSESSMENT
- CHECKLIST
- CALENDAR
- VISUAL REPORTS





# FAMILY PACK

better mental health for you & your family

Support yourself and your family members in better understanding mental disorders and how to deal with them. If you have a mental disorder, are supporting a family member with one or are interested in how you can support a friend and their family, the Family Pack can help.





panic disorder  
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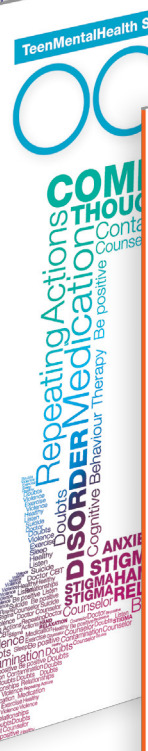
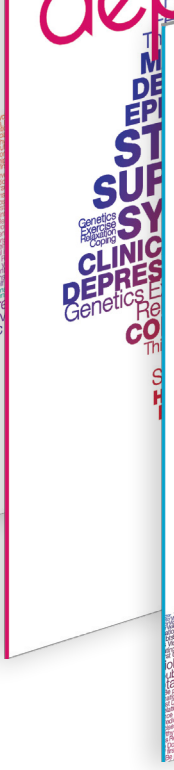
social anxiety  
disorder  
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ADHD  
attention deficit  
hyperactivity disorder  
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the  
full picture!