

LEARNING MORE ABOUT BIPOLAR DISORDER

Research has shown that patients who are well educated about their condition may have better treatment outcomes. While your healthcare provider is the best person to ask for more information, you can also check out some of the resources below for additional information.

ONLINE

There can be some misleading information on the internet about bipolar disorder that may not be helpful. Always check who wrote the information and confirm that it is up-to-date. Try to focus on websites that are written for patients like you so that you can find the most useful information for your situation. Here are some of the websites with information about bipolar disorder, including stories from people living with the condition:



- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance**
www.dbsalliance.org

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is a national organization that offers peer-based, wellness-oriented support to patients with mood disorders, including bipolar disorder and depression.

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness**
www.nami.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the largest grassroots mental health organization in the United States. The NAMI website provides educational resources for more than a dozen mental illnesses and encourages patients and caregivers to share their voices through a popular blog and interactive discussion boards.

- **International Bipolar Foundation**
www.ibpf.org

Led by a group of parents of children with bipolar disorder, the International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF) works to empower patients and their caregivers through education and advocacy.

- **Families for Depression Awareness**
www.familyaware.org

Families for Depression Awareness (FFDA) is a national organization whose goal is to support families affected by depression and bipolar disorder.

- **Mental Health America**
www.mhanational.org

Mental Health America (MHA) is a community-based organization dedicated to the overall mental health of all Americans and driven by the overarching belief that mental health conditions should be thought of and treated like any other physical conditions.

Remember, these are just some of the websites dedicated to educating patients about bipolar disorder and not an exhaustive list. As always, talk to your healthcare provider for more resources you can trust.

People with bipolar disorder can be at a greater risk for suicide. If you are thinking about suicide or making a plan, the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** network is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week across the United States.

- **English:** 1-800-273-8255
- **Para Español:** 1-888-628-9454
- **For deaf and hard of hearing:** 1-800-799-4889
- **Veterans crisis line:** 1-800-273-8255

For text messaging, text the word "HOME" to 741741. The **Crisis Text Line** connects you to trained crisis counselors for free 24/7 support.

This handout is intended for your education and does not replace proper medical care. Please talk to your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you might have.

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FIND A SUPPORT GROUP

Support groups are meant to provide a safe, confidential environment for you to share your experiences with bipolar disorder. Most support groups are peer-led, which means that someone who is living with bipolar disorder acts as the facilitator.



What happens during a support group meeting?

While no two meetings are the same, most facilitators divide their meetings into welcome, check-in, and discussion portions. During the check-in, you are asked to share how you are feeling with the group and if there are any topics you would like to cover. During the discussion portion, any recurring themes from the check-in will be brought up for more in-depth conversation. Most of the time there is no specific agenda for a support group meeting: it's up to the participants and what they need on that particular day.



Where can I find a support group meeting?

If you are looking for an in-person support group, the DBSA has over 1,000 support groups across the United States. Visit their website to find one close to you.

If you are hesitant to attend an in-person meeting or cannot find one that's convenient for you, consider signing up for an online support group instead. These groups use live chats and/or video conferencing to provide a similar experience, wherever you may be. The DBSA hosts online support groups throughout the week.

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“It is important to know about bipolar disorder. What it is, what it means, the signs of an episode etc. Reading those books are important. However, learning about our own bipolar disorder is even more important. Just like anything, the base is necessary but we all have our architecture and our design.

– Personal story from a person with bipolar disorder

<https://www.nami.org/Personal-Stories/Breaking-Bipolar>