

Understanding Bipolar Disorder

Take an Active Role in Your Treatment

- Taking Action as a Patient -

01

What Is Bipolar Disorder?

02

The Goals of Treatment for Bipolar Disorder

03

Your Role in Treatment



Bipolar Psychoeducation & Peer Support Online
(NPO)

Supervised by

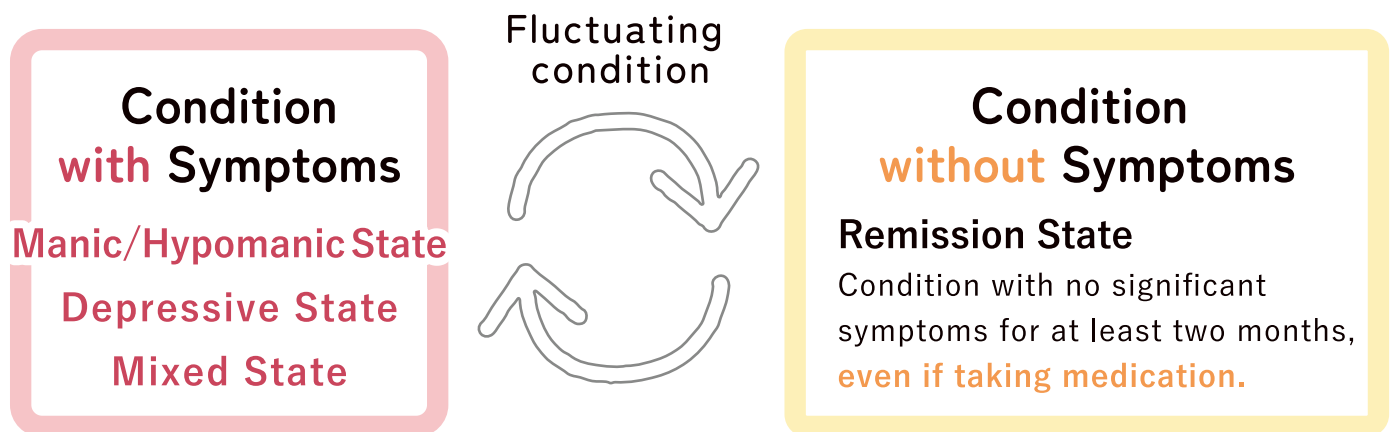
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Introduction

This pamphlet is designed to help you understand bipolar disorder, its treatment, and how you can actively engage in your care. We encourage you to read through to the end, and we hope this pamphlet helps you achieve better treatment, a better life. We would be happy if you found this pamphlet helpful.

01 What Is Bipolar Disorder?



Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a brain condition in which your mood and energy levels change over time. Unlike depression, these changes include periods of mania or hypomania as well as depression. There are also times when you may have no symptoms at all.

In a manic state, you become hyperactive, talkative, and sleepless. You have many ideas and feel capable of doing anything, which may lead to spending sprees, sexually risky behavior, reckless investments, and other behaviors that you would not normally engage in. When these changes are less severe, they are referred to as a hypomanic state. In a depressive state, in contrast to a manic state, you feel down, lethargic, unable to enjoy anything, unnecessarily blame yourself, or think about suicide. You may also experience changes in appetite and sleep.

If you experience four or more of the following symptoms, including at least one of the symptoms listed in ①, or five or more symptoms, including only “irritability” in ②, almost every day for a week or more.

Manic/Hypomanic state	① Feeling overly happy, high, excited, or irritable, accompanied by an unusual surge of energy that causes you to engage in prolonged activity, to the point where others notice that you are not your usual self.
	② Feeling an exaggerated sense of self-importance.
	③ Being able to function normally even after sleeping very little.
	④ Talking more than usual.
	⑤ Having thoughts racing through your mind.
	⑥ Being easily distracted or having difficulty concentrating.
	⑦ Acting impulsively without considering the consequences, and in severe cases, being unable to sit still.
	⑧ Even though it is apparent that it will cause problems later, you end up indulging in things that feel fun, such as uncontrollable shopping, sexually reckless behavior, reckless investments, etc.

If symptoms are severe enough to require hospitalization, it is diagnosed as a manic state (bipolar I disorder); if not severe enough to require hospitalization, it is diagnosed as a hypomanic state (bipolar II disorder).

If five or more of the following symptoms, including either ① or ②, persist most of the day, nearly every day, for two weeks or more.

Depressive state	① Feeling depressed or down most of the day.
	② Losing interest in most things and no longer enjoying previously enjoyable activities.
	③ Losing or gaining weight, or eating way more or less than usual.
	④ Having trouble sleeping, like not being able to fall asleep, waking up in the middle of the night, or waking up way too early, or sleeping way too much.
	⑤ Talking or moving slowly, or feeling an inner restlessness.
	⑥ Feeling tired and having low energy.
	⑦ Feeling worthless and blaming oneself.
	⑧ Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
	⑨ Thinking about wanting to disappear from this world or wanting to die.

In some cases, symptoms of mania and depression may occur simultaneously, which is referred to as a mixed state. When there are no symptoms, this is called a remission state. However, even if there are no symptoms at a given time, there is a possibility that the condition may change later. It is said that, compared to mania or hypomania, the depressive phase tends to be longer in most cases.

02 What is The Purpose of Treatment for Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a different illness from depression, so other medications are used. For individuals with bipolar disorder, treatment tailored to their condition and preventive measures, known as maintenance treatment, are crucial.

Treatment Objectives

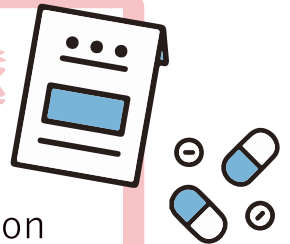
Reduce the severity of manic or depressive symptoms.
Reduce the frequency of states and prevent relapse, thereby extending periods without symptoms (remission).

Condition with Symptoms

Manic/Hypomanic State
Depressive State
Mixed State

Treatment for Symptoms

- Medication
adjusted according to condition
- Psychosocial Support



If symptoms
recur



When symptoms
stabilize

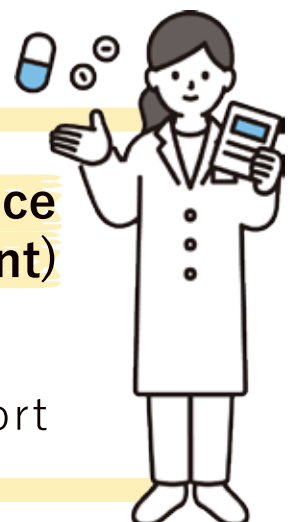


Remission State

A state in which the main symptoms have not been present for two months or more

Prevention of Recurrence (Maintenance Treatment)

- Medication
- Psychosocial Support



03 What Should You Focus on?

By actively participating in your treatment, you can reduce the severity of manic/hypomanic state and depressive state and maintain remission state for longer periods. What you can do is something only you, as the patient, can accomplish.

① Knowledge

Learn about the symptoms of bipolar disorder and the goals of treatment to deepen your understanding!



② Practice

→ Daily Activities

- Take your medication correctly
- Maintain a regular lifestyle
- Manage stress

③ Coping

→ Check Your Mood and Physical Condition!

Be aware of signs of mania/hypomania, depression, or mixed state.



Take appropriate action early.

① Learn about the illness and treatment!

In the treatment of bipolar disorder, it is essential for you, as the patient, to take steps toward remission.

It is necessary to know about bipolar disorder and its treatment.

Then, discuss with your doctor the goals you want to achieve and the available treatment options, and proceed with treatment accordingly.

Deciding on the methods to achieve your desired goals in consultation with your doctor is called **Shared Decision Making (SDM)**.



② Adhere to the 3 guidelines in your daily life

Take your medication as prescribed

You may be tempted to stop taking your medication once your symptoms disappear. However, stopping your medication increases the risk of recurrence. Do not stop or reduce your medication on your own. Always consult with your psychiatrist before making any changes.

Maintain a regular lifestyle

An irregular lifestyle can trigger mania/hypomania or depression. In particular, short sleep duration is said to increase the likelihood of manic or hypomanic state.

Manage stress

Stress can trigger symptoms of mania or depression. It can arise not only from adverse events but also from positive ones. When there are changes in your daily life, be mindful of avoiding new manic/hypomanic or depressive state. Also, consider in advance how you can relieve stress and take appropriate measures.

③ Monitor your physical condition and mood, and share them with your psychiatrist!

In bipolar disorder, physical condition and mood fluctuate. The sooner you notice these changes and take action, the milder the fluctuations in manic/hypomanic and depressive state will be. The smaller the fluctuations, the less disruption there will be to your daily life, and the more you will be able to continue living the life you want. To achieve this, develop the habit of regularly monitoring your physical condition and mood, and consult with your psychiatrist as needed.

- Record changes in your physical condition, such as sleep, activity and mood.
- Share your medical records with your psychiatrist, and ask them to adjust your medication if you experience any changes in your condition.
- Make an effort to avoid situations with strong stimuli, maintain a regular lifestyle, and engage in regular exercise.

Record changes in your
medication notebook.



Simple questions



For those who want to learn
more about bipolar disorder

Turn them into
understanding!



Unfortunately, in Japan today, there are still few opportunities for patients to acquire accurate knowledge about their illness and treatment in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. Bipolar Psychoeducation & Peer Support Online (NPO) is a volunteer group consisting of pharmacists, licensed psychologists, and people with mental illness from across Japan. We hold regular online seminars based on a curriculum. See the back page for details on lectures and workshops. If you would like to learn more about bipolar disorder, please join us.

**Psychoeducation is a form of psychosocial support
that helps patients and their families acquire accurate knowledge
about their illness and treatment and actively engage in treatment.**

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Invitation to Bipolar Psychoeducation & Peer Support Online



Official
Website



Information Sharing
X(formerly Twitter)



Video Streaming
YouTube



Recommended Programs

Comprehensive Lecture Who are new to learning about mental illness.	About bipolar disorder in general
In-Depth Lecture Who want to learn more about bipolar disorder.	About the illness/treatment/what you can do
Group Work Who want to deepen their understanding of bipolar disorder through discussion.	Let's draw "The Mood-Chart" . Let's establish healthy lifestyle habits. Let's create a 'fire extinguisher cards' Let's think about specific examples.
Who want to deepen their knowledge by reading books together.	Online book club
Who want to learn about bipolar disorder and psychological education in a casual setting.	YouTube videos related to bipolar disorder

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Bipolar Psychoeducation & Peer Support Online regularly offers online lectures, group work, YouTube videos, and other opportunities to participate online or interact in person in Japan. Why not take the opportunity to hear directly from experts who also have lived experience, and deepen your understanding? We also provide time for questions and interaction.

Register Here!
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