

Personal Growth Concepts™

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Q&A Forum - Review

Bipolar Disorder

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Fellow Q&Aers,

At last, we have a new agency brochure. If you would like a copy, you can pick one up at the office or call the office and we will be happy to mail one to you. Please help us spread the word about the great counseling, coaching and smoking cessation services that we provide.

Both Janice and Mike have recently become providers with Mental Health Network, the group that provides mental health and substance abuse services to Health Net members.

I recently attended a day long training on bipolar disorder. Janice & I attended a presentation on the Psychopharmacology of Substance Abuse Treatment - new options for opiate/heroin addicts. Yesterday, Mike, Janice and I heard an excellent presentation on Pathological and Problem Gambling in Connecticut.

Our staff and their guests recently attended the Downtown Cabaret in Bridgeport and saw Messhuganuns. All had a great time.

Today, the bulletin board in our Stratford office was updated - look for our great cartoons and informational articles. Soon there will be a newer and large bulletin board in our Naugatuck office with cartoons, announcements and articles of interest.

We are still looking to add names to our Q&A list. If you know someone who could benefit, why not talk them into joining. They can sign up at our website or by sending me an email.

You may want to change my email in your address books if you haven't done so already as I am transitioning to jpacheco@personalgrowthconcepts.com

Now to our Q&A (and I didn't make this one up - it came to us from a Q&A participant living in Utah!)

Q: Please explain bi-polar disorder and how a person with this disorder interacts with other people. Are bi-polar people dangerous?

A: Bipolar disorder (previously known as manic-depressive disorder) is a mental illness characterized by serious changes in mood from depression to hypomania or mania. Most know what depression is - feeling down, low, lack of energy, difficulties in sleeping and eating are some of the characteristics. Hypomania is indicated where a person's energy level is excessive, they tend to take risks without thinking, can stay up for extended periods of time without feeling fatigued. Often in this phase, they become hypersexual, compulsive spending, speeding and road rage. A full manic episode is characterized by total lack of control, often where the person loses touch with reality. Moving from a down phase of bipolar to an up phase may take a long time or may happen rather rapidly. If the person cycles from down to up to back down again 4 times in one year, they are known as a rapid cyler. Sometimes people have both up and down feelings at the same time. For example they may be high energy and very busy but tell you how tired they are feeling. This is what we call a mixed episode.

Bipolar disorder is in vogue right now. It is highly genetically linked and occurs more frequently in those born during the winter months. Manic and hypomanic episodes tend to occur more frequently during the summer months and depressive episodes more so during the winter months. There are always exceptions to the usual patterns.

Bipolar disorder is treatable - treatment is more effective if begun early and usually involves medication and therapy. Medication compliance is very important. The person needs to take the medication prescribed, just as it is prescribed, even when they begin to feel better. Getting off of medication for a bipolar is almost assurance that there will be regression or a relapse. Lithium is a commonly used and the most efficacious medication but it has some side effects. Some medications help the depressive phase and others called mood stabilizers, help prevent or limit the hypomanic or manic phases. It is very important that someone be properly evaluated and receive the right diagnosis and treatment. The risk is, if they are seen as only depressed, they may be put on an antidepressant that, as it lifts their mood, could push them up into a hypomanic episode. Usually, a mood stabilizer like Depakote may be used in conjunction with an antidepressant.

Bipolar disorder is very highly coordinated with substance abuse disorders. People who are bipolar often do not know they are bipolar, and tend to learn that self medicating helps them manage some of their symptoms. This is like playing Russian roulette. This is dangerous and often results in years of ignorance and futile attempts to help oneself. These people have what we call a dual diagnosis, i.e. two primary disorders, bipolar and substance abuse or addiction.

As to how a person with bipolar disorder interacts with others, that would depend upon where they are in their cycle, their personality and history. In the depressive phase, they may become withdrawn, distant, detached and emotionally and physically not available. In the hypomanic and manic phases, they often become pretty self centered, reactive to anything that threatens what they are doing or want to do and argumentative and can become physically aggressive and assaultive. There is a high correlation between domestic violence and bipolar disorder. So, in answer to your last question, yes, bipolar people can be dangerous. In the up phase to others by their risk taking and propensity to violent behaviors and, in the down phase, to themselves since they are at a heightened risk of self harm and suicide. That is why proper diagnosis and treatment is so important.

Quote: "When you reach for the stars, you may not quite get them, but you won't come up with a handful of mud, either." --Leo Burnett

Bonus 1: Kids and God

These are examples of why I think God loves kids so much! Actual prayers of children

Dear God,
I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday. That was cool.
Eugene

Dear God,
Did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?
Norma

Dear God,
Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you have?
Jane

Dear God,
Who draws the lines around the countries?
Nan

Dear God,
I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay?
Neil

Dear God,
Thank you for my baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.
Joyce

Dear God,
It rained for our whole vacation and is my father mad! He said some things about you that we are not supposed to say, but I hope you will not hurt him anyway.
Your friend,
(but I am not going to tell you who I am)

Dear God,
Please send me a pony. I never asked for anything before, you can look it up.
Bruce

Dear God,
I want to be just like daddy when I get big, but not with so much hair all over.
Sam

Dear God,
I think about you sometimes, even when I'm not praying.
Elliott

Dear God,
I bet it is very hard for you to love all the people in the world. There are only four people in our family and I can never do it.
Dan

Dear God,
Of all the people who worked for you, I like Noah and David the best.
Rob

Dear God,

My brothers told me about being born, but it doesn't sound right. They are just kidding, aren't they?
Marsha

Dear God,
If you watch me in church Sunday, I'll show you my new shoes.
Mickey

Dear God,
We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school, we learned that you did it. So I bet he stole your idea.
Sincerely, Donna

Dear God,
I do not think anybody could be a better God. And, I'm not just saying this because you are God already.
Charles

Dear God,
Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.
Larry

Bonus 2:

A little boy is telling his Grandma how everything in his life is going wrong... school, family problems, severe health problems, etc.,

Meanwhile, Grandma is baking a cake. She asks her grandson if he would like a snack, which, of course, he does. "Here, have some cooking oil," she offers. "Yuck" says the boy.

"How about a couple of raw eggs?" she asks. "Gross, Grandma!"

"Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?" "Grandma, those are all yucks!"

To which Grandma replies: "Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!"

Bonus 3: Fwd: God's Email

One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the evil that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. He called a female angel and sent her down to Earth. When she returned she told God that it was indeed bad on Earth. She reported that 95% is bad and 5% is good. God thought a moment and decided He had better send down a male angel to get both points of view.

When the male angel returned he confirmed that Earth was in decline, 95% was bad and 5% was good. God thought about what He could do about the situation and decided to e-mail the 5% that were good with a little pep-talk, something to encourage them, something to help keep them going. Do you know what the e-mail said?....

> ...
> ...
> ...
> ...
>
> ... Oh! you didn't get one either ??

Special reminder bonus:

"God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart".

End of bonuses (for this Q&A) - but, have hope, I have over 1,000 saved and ready to pick from for our next Q&As

The information provided in this email is presented for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for the advice and treatment of a licensed professional clinician, doctor, coach or pastoral counselor.

To unsubscribe, type unsubscribe-Q&A in the subject line of an email back to me. jpacheco@personalgrowthconcepts.com

We wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do!

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