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MAY Safety Talk

Topic: Depression and Bipolar Disorder



We all experience changes in our mood. Sometimes we feel energetic, or irritable, or sad or “down”. These moods usually don’t last long, and we can go about our daily lives. Depression and bipolar disorder are two mental illnesses that change the way people feel and make it hard for them to go about their daily routine.

Depression

Depression is a mental illness that affects a person’s mood. It impacts the way people think about themselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around them. It’s more than having a “bad day” or “feeling blue”.

Signs of depression include feeling sad, worthless, hopeless, guilty, or anxious a lot of the time. Sometimes a person feels irritable or angry. People lose interest in things they used to enjoy and may withdraw from others.



It can make it hard to focus on tasks and remember information. Depression can change the way people eat and sleep. Males often experience anger or irritability rather than sadness. Young people and older adults may experience lasting changes in mood that are mistakenly dismissed as a normal part of growing up or of aging.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is another mental illness that affects mood. With bipolar disorder, people experience episodes of depression and episodes of mania. People with mania may feel like their thoughts are racing and may feel hyperactive. They may also feel unrealistically confident, happy, or very powerful. Many people don’t sleep much when they experience mania, and may act without thinking, including doing risky things they wouldn’t normally do.

People usually experience periods of wellness between episodes of depression or mania, although the frequency and type of episode can vary greatly.

Depression and bipolar disorder can affect anyone. They are likely caused by many different factors that work together, including family history, biology, the environment, life experiences, personality, and physical health problems.

Many people blame themselves for their feelings or wonder why they can’t just “get over it”. Depression and bipolar disorder are real illnesses, and they deserve care and support. People can and do recover.

What can be done about it?

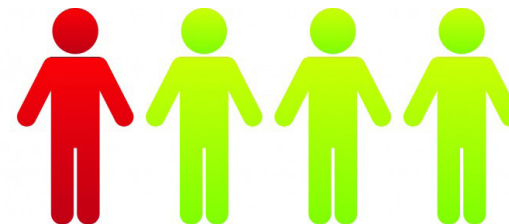
A type of counselling called cognitive-behavioural therapy (or ‘CBT’) is common for mood disorders. It teaches people how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours work together. It also teaches important skills like problem solving, managing stress, realistic thinking, and relaxation.

Taking care of your well-being is especially important if you’re working through recovery. Regular exercise can boost your mood and help manage stress. Eating well and learning or maintaining healthy sleep habits are also very helpful. It’s always important to spend time on activities you enjoy, find relaxation strategies that work for you, and spend time with loved ones.

Do you need more help?

Contact a community organization like the Canadian Mental Health Association to learn more about these illnesses, as well as support and resources in your area.

www.cmha.ca



One in four people has a mental illness.
You can be the one that helps.