

## Finding a balance

# Understanding bipolar disorder in later life



### What is bipolar disorder?

- Bipolar disorder is a long-term chronic illness.<sup>1</sup>
- For someone with the bipolar disorder, changes in mood are extreme, long-lasting and can have a negative impact on their daily life.<sup>2</sup>
- People with bipolar disorder go through periods of high-energy mania and low-energy depression called “episodes.”
- For some people, the time between episodes can be several years, but for others it can be less.<sup>2</sup>

### What do episodes look like?

▲ **Mania:** feeling invincible; experiencing hallucinations or delusions; having less sleep and poor judgement; and being more active, irritable or aggressive<sup>2</sup>

▼ **Depression:** feeling empty, being unable to enjoy things, having changes in sleep or thoughts of suicide<sup>2,3</sup>

### How can I prevent an episode?

- Have a self management plan<sup>4</sup>
- Lean on your loved ones for support<sup>2</sup>
- Eat a well-balanced diet<sup>2</sup>
- Add daily exercises into your routine<sup>2</sup>

# Where can I get help?



Resources and support for mental health and addictions are available in your community.

For more information, connect with any of the following organizations:

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## ConnexOntario

Contact for 24/7, confidential and free information about mental health, addiction and problem gambling services throughout Ontario.  
[www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca)  
**1-866-531-2600**

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**Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health** [www.ccsmh.ca](http://www.ccsmh.ca) **289-846-5383**

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**Canadian Mental Health Association**  
<https://ontario.cmha.ca/>  
**1-800-875-6213**

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**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**  
[www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca) **1-800-463-2338**

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**Mood Disorders Association of Ontario**  
[www.mooddiseorders.ca](http://www.mooddiseorders.ca)  
**1-888-486-8236**

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**Senior Active Living Centres**  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-seniors-active-living-centre-near-you>  
**1-888-910-1999**

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**Community Information Centres**  
[www.211Ontario.ca](http://www.211Ontario.ca) **Dial 211**

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## Resources

**Bipolar disorder: An information guide**

<https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/guides-and-publications/bipolar-guide-en.pdf>

**Bipolar Disorder: What does it feel like? HeretoHelp** <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/bipolar-disorder-what-does-it-feel-like>

## References

1. Salem, A., Shah, N., Geraldi-Samara, D., Elangovan, N. & Krzyzak, M. (2018). Late-onset bipolar I disorder. *Cureus*, 10 (8).
2. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Bipolar Clinic Staff. (2013). *Bipolar disorder: An information guide*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.
3. Casey, D.A. (2017). Depression in older adults: A treatable medical condition. *Primary Care*, 44 (3), 499–510.
4. Dols, A., & Beekman, A. (2018). Older age bipolar disorder. *Psychiatric Clinics*, 41 (1), 95–110.

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