

How Sleep Affects Bipolar Illness

Extreme highs and extreme lows can create sleep problems with people who suffer from bipolar illness. Poor quality of sleep makes it difficult to cope with the illness, which can precipitate and trigger bipolar episodes. One must learn how to sleep better while living with this disability. Doing so minimizes the chance of accelerating the illness. I have for many years struggled with this problem and still to this day find it difficult to control my sleeping habits. I find myself frequently staying up late, getting up late the next day tired and missing out on the majority of the day. It has been proven that sunlight is a contributing factor in managing bipolar illness.

It is very important to read and discover the common sleep problems associated with bipolar disorder, understand the unique relationship between sleep and bipolar disorder and get tips for sleeping better. The symptoms of Bipolar have wide ranging negative effects on individuals living with it, even when compared to others with ADHD or other mood disorders.

Doesn't it make sense that lack of sleep is a deterrent in managing bipolar illness? Mania is associated with days and days of sleepless nights. Excessive activities and substance abuse commonly occur during this time and can be very destructive I have, in the past, depended on marijuana to help me through the day, and it had an adverse effect on my behavior, ultimately causing a negative outcome. For many people with bipolar disorder, the beginning of sleep issues can be a trigger for episodes to come. A period of sleep deprivation or even a bout of jet lag can trigger a manic episode. Researchers for many years have studied the correlation between sleep and bipolar disorder.

Common sleep problems associated with the illness include insomnia, reduced need for sleep, hypersomnia, sleep apnea and delayed sleep issues, all of which I have experienced for most of my adult life. I have experienced insomnia many times. When falling asleep, staying asleep can be exceedingly difficult. I can't tell you how many times I have had bouts of sleeplessness and if and when I did fall asleep, the duration of sleep was no more than three hours. People with insomnia feel tired and want to sleep, although it's out of reach for them to achieve it. People experiencing manic episodes don't require sleep. Their energy remains for days. When I have insomnia, I count sheep, but when I am manic, which is now infrequent, I want to know what the sheep's' names are. Even though these individuals do not feel tired, the effects of sleep deprivation start taking its toll. While Insomnia is a common problem associated with bipolar disorder, a new study suggests that excessive sleepiness in bipolar deserves to be looked at more closely. Norwegian researchers compared sleep profiles of 563 people with bipolar 1 or bipolar 2 and found 40% experienced insomnia, which includes trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, (NIMH). I personally can identify with this phenomenon. For of all the dysfunctions related to bipolar illness, getting proper sleep is the most singular obstacle I face in maintaining control of my illness. Researchers found that people with hypersomnia were significantly more likely to have bipolar 1 and to be younger. Insomnia was associated with bipolar 2 depression and longer illness duration. The study which appeared in the journal "ACTA PSYCHIATRICA SCANDINAVICA" was titled, "Sleep problems." It may be a bit technical in content, but one can get the gist of its meaning if read carefully several times. Take it from someone who knows not to discount how important it is to monitor your sleeping habits. Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. A few of the quickest ways to tackle this problem is medication management, proper diet and exercise.

"How Sleep affects Bipolar Illness", "Ronald G Rossetti "MBA, Article # 8, Volume 1, Series # 1, International Alliance for Mental Health, (2017)