



Family and Friends

A good support system is essential to recovery. Like you, family and supporters may need help to understand the illness and how best to support you now and when you return home. Therefore, over the course of the day programme, two information and support sessions are offered to friends, families and supporters. The programme coordinator will advise you of these up-coming sessions. You can then nominate who you would like to be invited.

If you feel that the Bipolar Education Programme might be of benefit to you, then discuss it with your treating team and ask them to refer you. If you are currently in hospital, you can plan to attend the programme during the week before you are discharged and then continue as a day patient.

Remember, this intervention will be of most benefit to you when your symptoms are more under control.

The Bipolar Education Programme

Living well with Bipolar Disorder

Programme Information

St Patrick's Mental Health Services

James's Street, Dublin 8, Ireland.

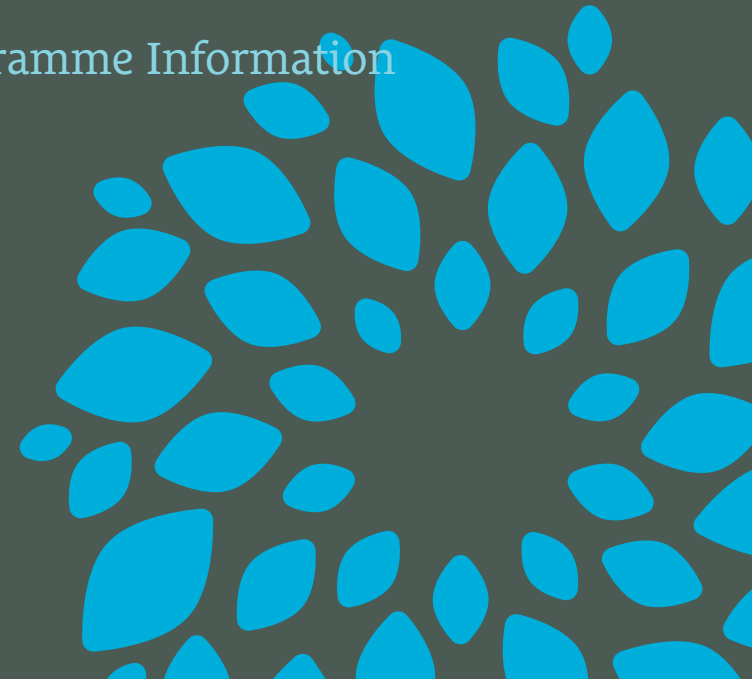
t: +353 1 249 3200. f: +353 1 679 8865.

Support & Information Service:

t: +353 1 249 3333.

e: info@stpatmail.com

www.stpatricks.ie





Our Mission...

To help people live well with bipolar disorder, by providing education and adjustment support in an atmosphere of hope and collaboration.

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder, previously known as Manic Depression, is a mood disorder characterised by extreme changes in mood, thinking and energy lasting several weeks or months. These changes are intense, can feel as if they are outside our direct control, and may significantly impact day to day life. People with Bipolar Disorder experience episodes of highs and lows called elation and depression.

How Common is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder affects about 1 in 50 Irish adults. It affects men and women equally. It can occur at any age but it is usually seen in late teens-early adulthood and affects people from all walks of life.

What Causes Bipolar Disorder?

The exact cause is not known. However research has indicated that genetic, biological and environmental factors all seem to play a part.

What are the Treatments?

Group psycho-education for bipolar disorder in conjunction with medications has been shown to delay relapse as well as reducing the number of relapses. Furthermore it has been found to lessen the number of days in hospital and overall symptoms. Psycho-education has also been shown to improve treatment adherence and treatment concordance.

Psycho-education involves learning about the illness, the signs and symptoms and what you can do in addition to taking medications to keep yourself well. This self management approach in combination with medication can improve the chances of maintaining wellness and aid in your recovery.

The Bipolar Education Programme is a group based psycho-education programme delivered over 13 weeks. The sessions are delivered and overseen by clinical staff such as mental health nurses, psychiatrists, occupational therapists and social workers. The treatment information given is based on research findings.

The programme includes firstly, a one week **Foundation Programme** (completed before discharge if you are an inpatient). These psycho-educational sessions intend to provide you with up to date information and answer commonly asked questions about bipolar disorder and treatment.

Hopefully these sessions will help you gain a better understanding of Bipolar Disorder and its treatment aspects, thereby enabling you to make sense of your own personal experience. Having a better understanding may help you to come to terms with the illness and learn more about practical self management approaches. Additionally, you will have an opportunity to meet with others who are also living with bipolar disorder.

The Day Programme

The Foundation week is followed by a 12 week one day programme focused on providing you with weekly support and intervention as you continue your recovery. These group sessions are aimed at helping you to work towards and maintain your recovery by developing a system for preventing relapse. Similar content themes are addressed but in greater depth with a focus on applying new learning to one's personal circumstances. The development of self management skills is a key objective, and the active engagement of supporters along the way is encouraged.

Factors that are important for mood stability are explored, and you can use your illness experience to help identify triggers and early signs of an approaching episode. With this knowledge and perspective it is hoped that you will be able to develop a system for monitoring and responding to symptoms that will keep your mood stabilised.