

If the person, at any time during the manic phase or depressive phase, **talks about suicide or discusses suicidal thoughts**, he/she must be brought to a hospital or doctor without delay.

➤ **Help for bipolar disorder in the Montreal area**

- ❑ *Montreal Children's Hospital:* **514-412-4449**
- ❑ *Douglas Hospital:* **514-761-6131 Ext. 2113**
- ❑ *PEPP-Montreal:* **514-888-4453**
- ❑ *Association québécoise des dépressifs et maniaco-dépressifs :* **514-529-5619**
- ❑ *Revivre:* **514-738-4873**
- ❑ *Kids Help Phone:* **1-800-668-6868**
- ❑ *Suicide Action Montreal:* **514-723-4000**
- ❑ *Drug Help Line:* **514-527-2626**
- ❑ *Head & Hands:* **514-481-0277**

**Websites:**

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
[www.ndmda.org](http://www.ndmda.org)

➤ **Resources about bipolar disorder**

**Books:**

**The Bipolar Child**, by D. Papolos and J. Papolos, 1999

**The Bipolar Disorder Survival Guide**, by D.J. Miklowitz, 2002

**The Depression Workbook: A Guide for Living with Depression and Manic Depression**, by M. E. Copeland, 1992

**An Unquiet Mind**, by Kay Redfield Jamison, 1995

AMI-Quebec has many programs to help families and people suffering from mental illness. If you recognize yourself or someone you care about in this pamphlet, please contact us and we will direct you to an appropriate resource.

514-486-1448  
[www.amiquebec.org](http://www.amiquebec.org)  
[outreach@amiquebec.org](mailto:outreach@amiquebec.org)

# BIPOLAR DISORDER

(MANIC - DEPRESSION)



## AMI-QUÉBEC Action on Mental Illness

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*Paul goes to the beach with his friends. On the way to the beach he is extremely talkative and cheery. He brags about how he does not need to sleep anymore because he has so much energy. He is full of new and brilliant ideas and doesn't understand why his friends can't see how smart he really is. He's invincible! He feels great! Why is everyone around him so slow these days? As the day goes by he demands more and more attention and when his friends don't listen he screams at them to be quiet. His friends think he's weird but they are also getting worried.*

*The following week Paul is invited to go to the beach again. But this time, he can't even get out of bed. He has no interest in seeing his friends - or anyone for that matter. Everything feels dull and black. Did he ever have a good day? Why can't he just snap out of it? Nothing cheers him up and he feels as if nothing ever could again. How was it possible to feel such emotional extremes? Does anybody else ever feel this way...*

***Yes! There are many other people who feel this way.***

It is not uncommon to experience such intense highs and lows. 1 in 100 people have what is called bipolar disorder, where moods swing from deep depression to the intense highs of mania.

These mood swings, which are out of proportion or totally unrelated to events in a person's life, affect thoughts, feelings, physical health, behavior and functioning. There are generally periods of normal mood in between the highs and lows where the person feels OK. If left untreated the moods will continue to swing from one extreme to another and it will become more difficult to help the person become stable again.

### ➤ **MANIA**

Often begins with a *good mood* - a good mood that lasts and lasts until it becomes a *great mood*. Feelings of being very creative, energetic and on top of the world are very common. Usually, a person experiencing mania does not understand that there is anything wrong and angrily blames anyone who points out a problem. After a while the person can also become very irritable and snappy. Some other **warning signs**:

- ❑ *Needs little sleep* yet has great amounts of energy
- ❑ *Talks so fast* and about so many things that others can't follow the person's thinking
- ❑ *Imagines special connections* with God, celebrities, or political leaders
- ❑ *Does reckless things* such as spending too much money, being sexually promiscuous, or making foolish business investments, and

does not have any concern about the consequences

- ❑ *Is hyperactive*; starting a lot of projects at the same time or not being able to relax and sit still
- ❑ *Feels invincible* - like nothing can hurt him or her

### ➤ **DEPRESSION**

The onset of depression can come in many forms; a person can begin by feeling anxious and worried about anything and everything. Or he or she can have feelings of sadness that don't go away. Or maybe the person's body starts feeling very heavy all of a sudden. Some other **warning signs** to look for:

- ❑ *Sleeps too much or too little* and still feels tired
- ❑ *Feels intense sadness and despair*; the person feels helpless, hopeless and worthless
- ❑ *Loses pleasure* in seeing friends, going out or doing extracurricular activities
- ❑ *Cannot concentrate* on homework, TV, etc...
- ❑ *Has no self-esteem* and feels like there is no future, everything is bleak and hopeless
- ❑ *Appetite decreases or increases* to abnormal levels
- ❑ *May become irritable*, angry, or even aggressively violent