
FEUP
Healthy Minds

You deserve it



Contacts

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Psychological support by appointment:

Mondays to Fridays, from 9:30 to 15:30

ORIENTATION AND INTEGRATION OFFICE

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Bipolar Disorder



Bipolar Disorder (BP), or Bipolar Affective Disorder, **causes mood swings that can last for several weeks** and vary between **manic states** - feeling "up" - and **depressive states** - feeling "down".

It can affect males and females at any age, although it often develops between the ages of 16 and 24.

The **causes** of BP can be varied, including **genetic** and **environmental**. Stressful events, such as childhood abuse, can increase the chances of triggering symptoms of this disorder.

Symptoms of BP depend on the type of mood being experienced and, since they can resemble depression or psychosis, it can be difficult to diagnose at first.

Before you have a manic episode, you may initially be diagnosed with depression, for example.

Manic Phase

Common symptoms of the manic phase of BP are:

- Feeling very happy;
- Having a lot of energy, ambitious plans and ideas;
- Spending large amounts of money that you don't have available and wouldn't normally want to spend;
- Not feeling like eating or sleeping;
- Talking quickly;
- Getting bored easily;
- Feeling creative;
- Seeing the manic phase as a positive experience.

But it is also possible to experience symptoms of psychosis:

- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there;
- Being convinced of things that aren't true.

Depressive Phase

During an episode of BP depression, you may feel:

- Strong feelings of worthlessness;
- Thoughts of suicide.

The pattern of mood swings varies. There are people with only a few episodes in their life and stability between them, and others with many episodes.

The ups and downs of BP are often so extreme that they interfere with your day-to-day life.

The best way to moderate BP will be a combination of different treatment methods, aiming to control the effects of an episode and to allow the individual to live as normally as possible. Examples include:

- **Medications to prevent episodes.** These stabilize the mood and should be taken every day on a long-term basis;
- **Medicines to treat the main symptoms.**
- **Psychological intervention.** Allows you to learn to recognize signs of an episode, to monitor mood, thoughts and behaviour, and helps you dealing with day-to-day difficulties;