

# BIPOLAR DISORDER

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A STAFF NURSE I WAS WORKING WITH ON A PSYCHIATRIC WARD, BELIEVED THAT YOU COULD ALWAYS TELL WHO THE BIPOLAR PATIENTS WERE



BECAUSE THEY WERE THE PATIENTS WHO WOULD BE UNABLE TO WALK PAST THE OFFICE WITHOUT COMING IN TO EXPLAIN WHATEVER WAS ON THEIR MIND

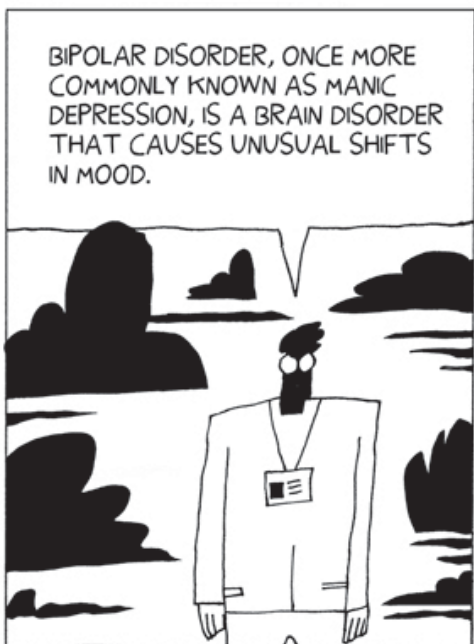
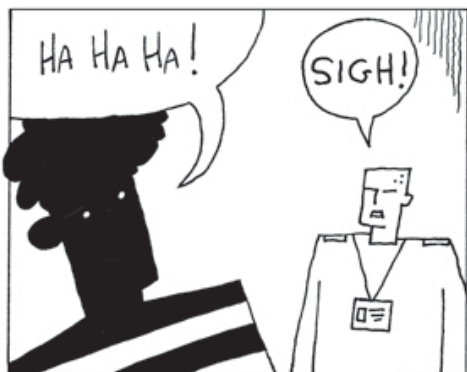


HOWEVER TRIVIAL THAT MIGHT BE.



A COW HAS FOUR STOMACHS.





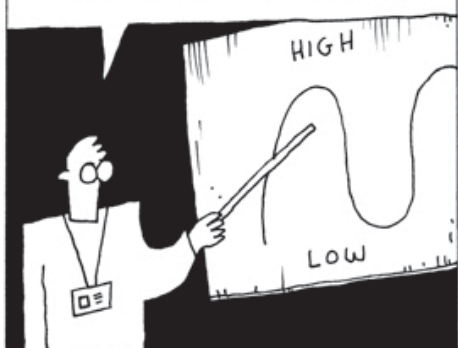
IT'S A COMPLEX ILLNESS THAT SHOULD PROPERLY BE SEEN AS A SET OF DISORDERS.



SOME PEOPLE SUFFER MORE DEPRESSION THAN MANIA.



WHILE OTHERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES LARGELY AT THE MANIA END OF THE POLE.



SOME INDIVIDUALS WILL CYCLE RAPIDLY BETWEEN THE TWO MOOD STATES.



MANY WILL TAKE WEEKS, OR MONTHS, TO MOVE FROM ONE POLE TO THE OTHER.



A CONFUSING SPECTRUM THAT CAN MAKE DIAGNOSIS DIFFICULT.



IT'S NOT UNKNOWN FOR SUFFERERS TO BE MISDIAGNOSED AS HAVING DEPRESSION OR SCHIZOPHRENIA



DEPENDING ON WHICH EXTREMES OF MOOD THEY'RE IN WHEN FIRST SEEN BY A DOCTOR.



IN A MANIC EPISODE, SUFFERERS MAY BE QUITE UNAWARE THAT ANYTHING IS WRONG.



THEY FEEL ELATED, HAVE UNUSUALLY HIGH ENERGY LEVELS, AND ARE VERY ACTIVE.

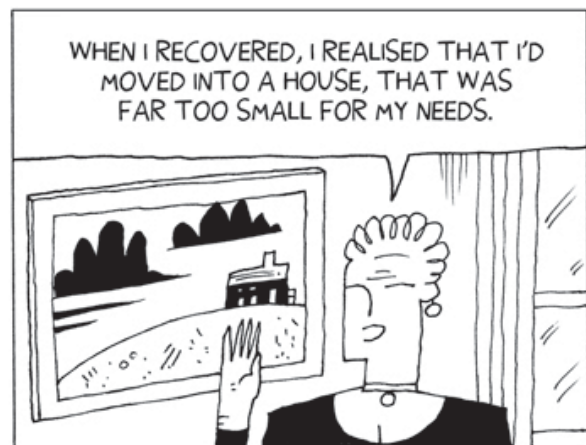
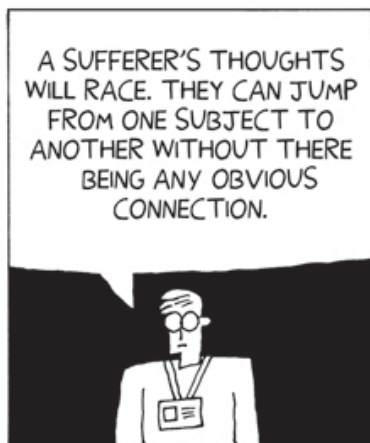


I FEEL GREAT. HAPPIER THAN I'VE EVER FELT IN MY LIFE. HOW CAN I BE UNWELL?



YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT IN TWO DAYS. YOU'VE NO ATTENTION SPAN. AND YOU CAN'T STOP TALKING.







IF A BIPOLAR SUFFERER GETS VERY HIGH  
IN THEIR MOOD, THEY CAN BEGIN TO  
LOSE TOUCH WITH REALITY.



SYMPTOMS OF PSYCHOSIS  
COULD DEVELOP.



THEY MAY EXPRESS GRANDIOSE  
BELIEFS ABOUT THEMSELVES.

I HAVE  
BEEN  
CHOSEN.



I'M ON AN IMPORTANT  
MISSION.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY CAN COME UNDER ENORMOUS STRAIN.



EVEN WITHOUT THE PSYCHOTIC FEATURES



SUFFERERS CAN BE IMPULSIVE, UNRELIABLE, LOUD, AGGRESSIVE, AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.



SOME WILL ENGAGE IN RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOUR.



SUCH AS DRUG ABUSE OR INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL LIAISONS.



ALL THESE THINGS ARE SYMPTOMS OF THE ILLNESS, RATHER THAN CHARACTER TRAITS.



THE EXTREMES OF BEHAVIOUR WILL FADE  
ONCE THE MANIA IS UNDER CONTROL.



THERE IS NO CURE FOR  
BIPOLAR DISORDER.



HOWEVER, MOOD STABILISING DRUGS EXIST  
THAT ARE VERY EFFECTIVE IN REGULATING  
THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE ILLNESS.



I'VE LEARNED THE HARD  
WAY NOT TO THINK THAT  
I CAN DO WITHOUT  
MEDICATION



IT'S VERY EASY, ONCE YOU ARE WELL,  
TO THINK THAT YOU DON'T NEED  
THE DRUGS ANY MORE.



THIS ALWAYS LEADS  
TO DISASTER.





I EXPECT TO HAVE RELAPSES OF THIS ILLNESS NOW AND AGAIN, BUT I DO HAVE STRATEGIES THAT HELP AVOID THIS.



I KEEP TO A REGULAR SLEEP PATTERN.



I DRINK ALCOHOL ONLY MODERATELY AND I ABSTAIN FROM CANNABIS AND OTHER DRUGS.



I AVOID STIMULANTS, SUCH AS CAFFEINE.



LASTLY, AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, I RELY ON MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO LET ME KNOW WHEN THEY THINK I'M BECOMING ILL.



IN THIS WAY I HOPE TO STAY WELL.

