



Self-Care Strategies When You Have Bipolar Disorder

Taking medication and seeing a psychiatrist and therapist are likely part of your overall treatment plan when you have bipolar disorder. However, there are also other ways to personally supplement your treatment plan. Here are some self-care strategies you can implement in addition to medication and therapy to help you take charge of your own mental health recovery.

Incorporate Relaxing Activities into Your Schedule

Whether it's:

- journaling
- painting
- yoga

- walking
- getting a massage
- crocheting
- taking a bubble bath
- or meditating

allowing yourself time for relaxation can help you maintain mental and emotional balance. Find activities that inspire you, make you feel calm or help you release emotional energy, and make them a priority in your life. If you can, try to engage in one relaxing activity daily. Even five minutes of deep breathing can make a difference in your ability to [manage stress](#).

Educate Yourself and Your Loved Ones

Knowledge is power. Education and understanding are the keys to breaking the stigma associated with mental health disorders, so it's important to engage in open dialogue about your bipolar disorder with others. Understanding your body and mind will improve your confidence and sense of control, too. Sharing that information with your loved ones helps them understand what you are going through and how they can better assist you. Talk to your mental health professional, join an online community and read websites and magazines from reputable sources to help you make sense of it all.

Create and Maintain a Routine

Having a routine helps create stability and purpose in your life. Try getting out of bed at the same time every morning, engaging in similar activities at consistent times each day and going to bed at the same time every night. Even if you're averse to routines, they can be surprisingly comforting, especially during times of distress. Create one, even if it's a relaxed one, and stick to it for a month to see if you find it beneficial. You may find yourself feeling more productive and encouraged.

Don't Miss Doctor or Therapy Appointments

This one goes without saying. Missing medication follow-ups and therapy appointments are not conducive to getting to a place of healing and fulfilling your potential. If you struggle to keep your appointments, consider asking a friend or family member to hold you accountable or even go with you. Try to make it to your appointments even if you don't feel like it. That session with your therapist may be just what you needed, and your [doctor should know if you're feeling crummy](#) in case your medication needs to be tweaked.

Watch Your Physical Health

Maintaining a healthy diet and getting plenty of sleep are essential for everyone, but they're especially vital for those with mood disorders. Do what you can to eat nutritious meals at regular times, get exercise and sleep well. If you don't know how much sleep is ideal for you, perform your own study. You should be getting an average of seven to nine hours per night, so try to get a certain number of hours each night for a week. If you don't feel alert during the day, try getting a half hour more each night the following week. Once you establish your target number, aim to achieve it every night. Keeping your body running at its maximum potential will help you have more energy for your emotional and mental needs.

Stay Connected

Make sure you maintain supportive relationships, even if you can only manage it sporadically. If you don't feel like you have enough support, consider joining a support group, either online or in person. Keeping yourself connected with others, especially those who are also dealing with mental health disorders, will help you feel more connected and give you a safe place where you can talk about issues with people who understand what you are going through. Connections with others have been proven to make us happier, live longer and lead more fulfilling, healthy lives.



Keep a Journal of Symptoms and Triggers

Monitoring your mood, symptoms, energy level, diet, sleep patterns and stress levels daily can help you and your mental health professional identify potential patterns and triggers. This can be as simple as buying a cheap planner, listing the areas you want to track and scoring each area between one and 10 every day. You could also write in detail about how you're feeling each day. There are also free and paid apps that can help you track these aspects of your life. If you choose to journal, this can be especially beneficial in helping you work through your feelings and understand yourself better. It may even ease the symptoms of your diagnosis.

Make Time for Fun

Get out for a nature walk, read your favorite author's latest novel, buy an adult coloring book and brand new markers, check out the latest critically acclaimed movie or bake a dessert you've never tried. Whatever it is that brings you joy, give yourself permission to schedule that into your life. Engaging in activities that boost your sense of well-being and happiness helps you manage stress more effectively, reduces anxiety and provides activities to look forward to.

Sources:

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/taking-good-care-yourself>

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3504/SMA-3504.pdf>

Written By Sarah E. Ludwig

Related Posts to Treatment

Giving Back: Why Giving Is a Great Way to Receive

Convincing a Parent that They Need Help for Substanc...

4 Reasons Discussing Your Addiction with Your Doctor...

3 Arguments in Favor of Rehab

Journaling's Effect on Wellness in Recovery

How Stress Management Can Aid Rehab

6 Steps to Returning to Your Career After Recovery

Three Determining Factors for Choosing Gender-Specif...

[See All Related >](#)

Copyright © 2016 Bipolar Disorder Centers. All Rights Reserved. | Confidential and Private
Call: 855-315-4764 | [Privacy Policy](#)