WHAT CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS DO TO HELP?

- Learn the warning signs of suicide. Take any threats the person makes very seriously. Call SA DAG on 0800 21 22 23 if you think someone is thinking about suicide.
- If someone is showing signs of stress, take a break from work and other responsibilities; this can also help you stay connected with the person. This can be done through your family doctor or the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG).
- Encourage them to seek professional help. This includes making appointments and going with them to appointments.
- Encourage them to take medication as prescribed. This includes understanding the medication's effects as well as dietary and lifestyle restrictions.
- Encourage them to get regular exercise and eat a healthy diet. This can be done through a health professional or a self-help group.
- Encourage them to get regular check-ups and screenings. This can be done through a health professional or a self-help group.
- Encourage them to keep track of their symptoms and treatment plan. This can be done through a health professional or a self-help group.
- Encourage them to communicate openly with their doctor or therapist about their symptoms and treatment plan. This can be done through a health professional or a self-help group.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO STOP TAKING MEDICATIONS?

If you suspect that you, a family member, or a friend has bipolar disorder, you should consult a mental health professional. This can be done through your family doctor or the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG). Other options may include local community mental health centres, crisis centres, or hotlines.

WHO GETS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Bipolar disorder is one of the most common mental illnesses, affecting about 1% of the population. It is a lifetime condition and can be managed, but it cannot be cured. Anyone can get bipolar disorder, regardless of their age, gender, or ethnicity. However, the risk of developing bipolar disorder is higher among relatives with bipolar disorder or depression. Researchers have identified several different biochemical problems that contribute to bipolar disorder and the disease. Periods of fairly normal moods can be experienced if the only medication you receive is an antidepressant, there is a risk of relapse into depression. If mood symptoms become less frequent, once you are well, you might see your doctor to discuss your options. This allows you to make good decisions about all aspects of your treatment and care.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TALK WITH MY DOCTOR?

Bipolar disorder is a chronic illness, and your doctor will need to monitor it closely. It is important to have regular check-ups with your doctor to discuss your symptoms and treatment plan. Your doctor will also need to monitor your medication and other treatments to ensure they are effective and to make any necessary adjustments. It is also important to have ongoing support, even after the acute episode has resolved.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF?

- Become an expert on your illness. Bipolar disorder is a lifetime condition so it’s essential to learn about it. Read books, attend support groups, and discuss openly with employers and co-workers.
- Be your doctor’s partner. Take your medication as prescribed. This includes understanding the medication’s effects as well as dietary and lifestyle restrictions.
- Learn all you can about depression and bipolar disorder. This includes understanding the symptoms, causes, and treatments of these illnesses.
- Take responsibility for your treatment. Understand your treatment options and make an informed decision about your care. This includes discussing any side effects with your doctor.
- Take medication only as prescribed. You may need additional medication should their use be considered necessary.

TREATMENT AND REFERRAL GUIDE

- How to recognise Bipolar
- Who to approach for treatment
- Treatment Options
- Self Help

Dr. Reddy’s

This is supported unconditionally by Dr. Reddy’s and the current and past owners of SA DAG.