



Speaking from Experience Bipolar Disorder

Transcript for chapter 8 of 9: Support and medication

Margaret (Eva's mother): Well, I think it's absolutely crucial that if you have any illness, but particularly an illness like this, that you search until you find the doctors that can treat this particular individual. It's a very complex thing. The most important thing is obviously the rapport between the medical professional and the person who is suffering from the condition. But somebody is young, as Eva was, she was thirteen, she didn't initially want to see anybody. In fact, she refused. And so her father and I had to look for somebody who would be there for when we needed.

David and Donné (2 years since Donné's diagnosis): Don't take the first opinion that you're given either, from a professional, because there are professionals and then there are professionals. Just in any walk of life, the same in any walk of life. There are some medical doctors who are far more competent than others and there are psychiatrists and psychologists that are far more competent than others, in this field.

Carole (21 years since diagnosis): I look forward to going to see my psychiatrist. I've been very lucky with my psychiatrist that when I've actually been suicidal, and any other time basically, that he has told me to contact him any time - twenty four hours a day.

Margaret: We did interview several psychiatrists, I think we saw four or five psychiatrists before we found one whom we felt we would respect enough and get along with well enough. But it had to be someone with whom Eva had the right sort of relationship. And she probably felt initially that she didn't get along well with her psychiatrist.

Eva (6 years since diagnosis): At the moment I've got a really good GP who knows my history and has been seeing me since I was thirteen. She's just really helpful and understanding.

Margaret: And the three-way relationship has matured. I mean, I've learned... there was a stage when the GP gently pointed out to me that Eva was eighteen, and from now on it was only with Eva's permission that I would be allowed into the consulting room. I'm a bit ashamed that I needed to have that pointed out to me. I'd got so used to being 'the carer'.

Carole: Initially I fought the medication like everybody does. I just said I wasn't going to take it. And I have learnt the hard way. I think the medication is necessary. The medication doesn't cure you. It may stabilise your moods but it certainly doesn't cure you.

David & Donné: With the medication that, for me, suits me. And it's a minimal medication, and that's what everybody would hope to achieve - the minimum possible to control their condition.

Eva: I think medication is very important as part of a treatment for Bipolar. Certainly for me anyway. I take my religiously, I've never deliberately not taken it.



David & Donné: I've been to public meetings where other people diagnosed with mental illnesses complain about medication: it's unfair, and there's side-effects. I mean, I have side-effects, believe me. But you have to weigh it up. Does some hair loss for three months warrant not being on a tablet?

Bill (6 years since diagnosis): Well, sometimes I couldn't write properly - I'd get shaky in the hands. An extremely dry mouth... and memory loss. I mean, I didn't lose it altogether, but it wasn't as good as it should be.

Margaret: When Eva had the one psychotic episode that she had, we went straight to the psychiatrist, whom we had already sort of lined up, as it were. He immediately prescribed quite heavy medication, anti-psychotic medication.

David & Donné: I suppose, in some ways, my strengths of character got me through that depression. It's not just a matter of medication.