

Speaking from Experience Living with Bipolar Disorder USA

Transcript for Chapter 5 of 9: Management: Medication & doctors

Jan –

One thing that's helped me is to remember that, from a medical standpoint, depression is just the under-activity of neurotransmitters, mania is the over-activity of neurotransmitters and medication helps bring that back to the middle, to a normal...semi-normal place, ya know, so learning that has really helped.

Tom –

I think being compliant with your medication is really important and letting your psychiatrist or doctor know what's going on and not to just continue medications without talking with somebody.

Jan –

I see a lot of people who've taken meds, and they feel better and so they get off. I've been lucky enough that, I don't know why, but I haven't messed with my meds. They say take them and I take them, I take them twice a day. And for me it's just like insulin, if I don't take it, my body is not gonna work. So that's one thing...and it has been a journey, I'll tell ya, finding the right mix. And it's just a matter of hanging on, it really is a matter of just hanging on and realizing it's something I can't do by myself, ya know? I have a psychiatrist, I have a psychotherapist.

Alexandra & Thomas –

Seeing her continue to see this doctor and that doctor and seek referrals for specific issues and being able to... She has her own power now and there's less opportunity for her to be anxious around it. Like she still gets anxious and she'll still call me and tell me she's anxious here and there but just the sense of responsibility puts a little more trust in the situation because she trusts herself.

Avonelle –

It's sort of like a balance and so any medication that has a side effect...weight-gain...I refuse to take it because I know that will increase my likeliness of being depressed. But there are medications that doesn't have that, that side effect.

Jan –

I think it's important, especially when we're dealing with our brain, to be educated about it...about what's going on. I mean psychiatrists...they're good, the good ones, they know their stuff but it's also important to either understand what it is that they're doing and also to get second opinions if necessary.

Tom –

I would say that if you're not happy with the psychiatrist or therapist you have, then there's a good reason you're not happy and that you should be shopping around looking for somebody else. And it might take 2 or 3 chances to find somebody that you can relate to. It's a well-known fact that the success of a therapeutic relationship does depend a lot upon having a teambuilding-type effort where you feel comfortable and your therapist feels comfortable with you and that you work on these mutual problems together and that there's respect between both parties.

Avonelle –

And it really made me want to take a medication because I felt my input was being heard. And because I felt heard, I actually listened to her.

Tom –

To me, one of the biggest components of my care was that I felt that the person actually cared about me and that really makes a difference, even to the extent that it made me try harder. When I saw that my doctor was trying so hard to keep me healthy, it encouraged me to try harder too and to not give up. So that relationship you have with your doctor or your therapist is extremely important.

Nadine –

I'm still working with the same people who gave me diagnosis and they're incredible human beings. They get me.