

How Can I Get Help

If you or your family member needs mental health services, consult your family doctor and ask for a mental health evaluation and treatment for yourself or your family member.

You and your family member may be eligible to receive mental health services from the County Mental Health Plan. The County has a toll free number available 24 hours a day, which is staffed with mental health specialists who can assess your needs and make appropriate referrals. They will be able to talk with you in your preferred language. Their services and phone numbers are listed in the county government pages of your local phone book.



Where Can I Get More Information?

National Institute of Mental Health
(888) 826-9438
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

National Mental Health Association
(800) 969-6642
<http://www.nmha.org>

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
(800) 950-6264
<http://www.nami.org>

National Depressive & Manic Depressive
Association
(800) 826-3632
<http://www.ndmda.org>



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
Behavioral Wellness
A System of Care and Recovery

1-888-868-1649



**MOOD DISORDERS IN ADULTS:
DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER**



What Are Mood Disorders?

Many everyday challenges result in changes in feelings and behaviors. It is important to distinguish between typical behavior changes caused by everyday stress, and signs of more serious problems. Problems deserve more attention when they are severe, persistent, and impact an individual's daily activities.

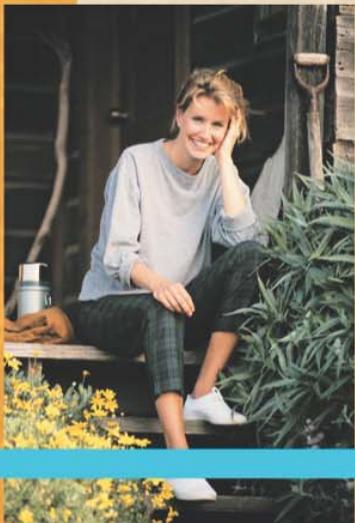
Mood disorders are exaggerated mood states over which a person has little control, and that cause distress and impair a person's ability to learn, to work, and to connect with others.

Mood disorders are highly treatable. It is important to get help, not only to reduce needless suffering, but also because if left untreated many mood disorders recur and worsen over a person's lifetime. The two most common mood disorders are Depression and Bipolar Disorder.

What Are the Signs of Depression?

People who experience depression feel sadness almost all the time and express many of the following symptoms:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex



- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

Could It Be Bipolar (Manic Depressive) Disorder?

Persons with bipolar disorder have cycles of depression alternating with mania. Manic symptoms include:

- Abnormal or excessive elation
- Unusual irritability
- Decreased need for sleep
- Grandiose notions
- Increased talking
- Racing thoughts
- Increased sexual desire
- Markedly increased energy

- Poor judgment
- Inappropriate social behavior

What Causes Mood Disorders?

The precise cause of depression and bipolar disorder are not fully understood. In general, mental disorders result from a combination of genetic factors, other biological factors, and environmental factors. The influence between biology and environment is complicated. The brain influences behavior, and experience effects the development of the brain.

How Are Mood Disorders Treated?

Effective treatment starts with getting appropriate diagnosis of the mood disorder. In addition to an evaluation by mental health professionals, most of the time a medical evaluation by a physician is necessary to rule out potential physical health causes of the symptoms.

Treatment usually consists of therapy and/or medications. The most effective treatment is often a combination of both. In therapy, studies show that cognitive-behavioral or interpersonal therapy is helpful for people with depression. These two therapies help people focus on disturbed personal relationships and negative styles of thinking that are often associated with depression.

