



Bipolar II Disorder

When Crushing Depression Hides Behind Periods of Deceptive Energy

What is Bipolar II Disorder?

Bipolar II Disorder is a mood condition defined by recurring episodes of deep depression alternating with periods of elevated energy called hypomania. Because hypomania often looks like confidence or productivity, the condition is frequently missed or misdiagnosed as depression alone.

What Does it Look Like?

- **Extended Depressive Episodes**
Weeks or months of sadness that won't lift despite rest, support, or effort.
- **Deceptive "Good Days"**
Sudden energy and confidence that families mistake for improvement.
- **Impulsive Decision-Making**
Spending sprees, risky choices, or sudden life changes during elevated moods.
- **Irritability and Emotional Reactivity**
Small frustrations provoke intense reactions that create tension for the whole family.

How Does Bipolar II Contribute to Relapse?

For someone with Bipolar II, crushing depression makes substances the fastest relief, while hypomanic confidence convinces them they don't need help.

- 1) **Depression Drives Self-Medication**
Substances offer the only fast escape from depressive episodes lasting months.
- 2) **Hypomania Masks the Problem**
Elevated moods create the illusion of recovery, convincing everyone treatment worked.
- 3) **Misdiagnosis Undermines Every Attempt**
Without the correct diagnosis, treatment targets the wrong condition and relapse follows.

Prevalence:
~**1.1%** of U.S. adults¹

Co-Occurrence:
39% develop alcohol or substance use disorders²

Relapse Risk:
69% initially misdiagnosed, delaying effective treatment³

Sources: ¹ Merikangas et al., Archives of General Psychiatry (2007). ² Cerullo & Strakowski, Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy (2007). ³ Singh & Rajput, Annals of General Psychiatry (2006)

Long-Term Treatment for Bipolar II and Addiction

Bipolar II is one of the most misdiagnosed conditions we encounter. Hypomania looks like productivity or “good days,” so most short-term programs treat only the depression. Accurate diagnosis requires sustained clinical observation.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** gives the clinical team enough time to observe mood patterns, establish effective medication protocols, and verify that stability holds under pressure. Clients advance when they demonstrate consistent emotional regulation.



“Most of our clients with bipolar disorder arrive with a history of prescriptions that never quite worked. That’s because the diagnosis was wrong. Getting it right takes time, and confirming it holds takes even longer.”



 **Meghan Bohlman, LPC-S, LCDC, EMDR-Trained**
Executive Clinical Director, Burning Tree Ranch

Dual Diagnosis Treatment for Bipolar II Disorder

When Bipolar II continues without appropriate treatment, substances become the default response to both depressive lows and hypomanic impulsivity, and the risk of relapse remains.

- **Treating Both Conditions Together**
Untreated mood cycling sustains self-medication.
- **Achieving Accurate Diagnosis**
Accurate diagnosis changes the entire treatment approach.
- **Providing Enough Time for Stability**
Mood stabilization requires months of monitoring.

Dual Diagnosis:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation’s only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

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