

# MEASURE™

Modeling Effective Antipsychotic Therapeutic Success by Utilizing Real Evidence

P A T I E N T E D U C A T I O N T O O L S

## Stages of Adjustment to Bipolar Disorder

Many people who have bipolar disorder would say they have never fully adjusted to the idea of having a chronic mental illness. Making peace with yourself for having bipolar disorder is an ongoing process. This worksheet refers to Kubler-Ross's five stages of adjusting to loss - denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. It is intended to help you think about your adjustment to having bipolar disorder. Put a check next to the stages you have experienced in the past and try to identify the stage you may be at right now. Next to each stage write in the thoughts you have had and actions that would have been typical of you as you have gone through each stage of adjustment. People may go backward in their stage of adjustment so these descriptions can help you recognize when you have lost progress and must work toward acceptance again.

Stage	Automatic Thoughts	My Thoughts	Actions	My Actions
Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't have it. The doctor made a mistake</li> <li>• It must be because I've been drinking too much</li> <li>• The diagnosis is wrong</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting a second opinion</li> <li>• Looking for other explanations for symptoms</li> <li>• Ignoring treatment recommendations</li> </ul>	
Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not fair that I have this illness</li> <li>• I can't deal with this right now</li> <li>• Why me? What did I do to deserve this?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refusing to listen to advice</li> <li>• Refusing to discuss illness</li> <li>• Losing temper with health care providers, pharmacies, or anyone else associated with treatment</li> </ul>	
Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll clean up my act</li> <li>• I'll stop drinking, start waking up on time, start exercising, get a better job, and it will be OK</li> <li>• I'll try natural remedies. I don't really need medicine</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjusting doses on your own</li> <li>• Changing the timing of doses</li> <li>• Trading active drugs for "natural remedies"</li> <li>• Staying up late to avoid taking sleeping medications</li> <li>• Drinking alcohol to reduce anxiety</li> </ul>	
Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll never have a normal life</li> <li>• No one will want me</li> <li>• I hate myself</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-destructive behaviors</li> <li>• Avoidance of doctors, magazine articles, or anything else that reminds you of the illness</li> <li>• Withdrawal from others</li> </ul>	
Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can work my way through this</li> <li>• It's not the end of the world</li> <li>• I don't have to give up everything just because I have to take medication</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adherence with treatment</li> <li>• Open discussion of treatment options with clinicians before discontinuing medications</li> </ul>	

Reprinted with permission from *The Bipolar Workbook* (2006;140-141). Copyright 2006, The Guilford Press.