

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

Treatment Adherence Fact Sheet

WHAT IS ADHERENCE?

Adherence refers to how closely you follow a prescribed treatment regimen. It includes your willingness to start treatment and your ability to take medications exactly as directed.

Many people adhere to their treatment regimen early on, but find adherence becomes more difficult over time. Talk with your health care provider about adherence during every visit. Your commitment to a treatment plan is critical; studies show that patients who take their medications correctly achieve the best results.

HOW CAN I MAINTAIN ADHERENCE AFTER I START TREATMENT?

- Take your medication at the same time each day
- Put a week's worth of medication in a pill box at the beginning of each week
- Use timers, alarm clocks, or pagers to remind you when to take your medication
- Keep your medication in a place where you will remember to take it. You may want to keep backup supplies of your medication at your workplace or in your briefcase or purse
- Keep a medication diary. Write the names of your drugs in your daily planner, then check off each dose as you take it
- Plan ahead for weekends, holidays, and changes in routine
- Monitor your medication supply. Contact your doctor or clinic if your supply will not last until your next visit

BASIC FACTS ABOUT MEDICATION TREATMENT

If you've been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, more than likely you have been prescribed medication to control your symptoms. Taking medications for this illness is not like taking medications for a cold or infection or to control pain. These are some basic facts about the medication treatment of bipolar disorder.

Fact 1: Medication is required to fully control the symptoms of this disorder and to prevent symptoms from returning once they have remitted.

How strongly do you believe Fact 1?

- I do not believe this at all I'm not sure yet I know this to be true

If you don't strongly believe it, what would it take to convince you?

How could you get the information you needed to explore this idea?



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Fact 2: Most people who have bipolar disorder do not like taking medication. And most patients go through periods of time when they take it less consistently, alter the regimen on their own to try to make it more tolerable, or stop it completely.

Put a check (✓) next to the category that describes your current pattern of taking medication

- I take all my medications every day and at the same times each day
- I take some of my medications every day
- I take all of my medication on most days
- I intend to take my medication every day, but often forget
- I have stopped taking some of my medications on my own
- I'm not taking any medication for bipolar disorder at this time

I am satisfied with the way I take my medication at this time. Yes No

If no, what about it is not satisfactory at this time?

I would like to make some improvements in how I take my medication. Yes No

If yes, what improvements would you like to make?

Fact 3: Most medications prescribed for the symptoms of bipolar disorder do not work unless they are taken consistently and at a dose high enough to have a positive effect.

How strongly do you believe Fact 3?

- I do not believe this at all I'm not sure yet I know this to be true

If you don't strongly believe it, what do you think would be a more accurate statement about taking medication?

What would it take to change your mind?

Fact 4: Taking medication daily for bipolar disorder is not just about the pills; it is about accepting a fate the patient may not be ready to take on.



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Fact 5: Most people are not open-minded about mental illnesses or accepting of those who have one.

When you see people with mental illnesses in your doctor's office or other places, what do you think about them?

Does that view apply to you too?

Fact 6: Most medications do not work for everyone. It is not always possible to know ahead of time whether or not a medication will work for you, and few people find the right combination of medications on the first try.

Fact 7: If you discontinue taking medications for bipolar disorder, you're at a high risk of relapsing and suffering through the consequences of becoming depressed or manic.

Fact 8: Even if you have come to terms with having bipolar disorder and agree to take medication regularly, a number of things can keep you from following the treatment regimen as prescribed by your doctor.

HOW TO STICK WITH TREATMENT

If you are someone who has been through numerous medications before finding one that worked, how did you keep yourself going through that frustrating process?

If you get into that situation again, what would you like to be able to remind yourself about the value of sticking with treatment even if medicines have to be changed or added?

If you are currently in the process of trying to find the right medication, what are your reasons for hanging in there? What advice might you give to others?

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