

My Mental Illness Experience

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Mental illness. Depression. Anxiety. Bipolar disorder. Four terms. Four terms that say a lot about me, but mean very little. These are just titles. Titles that give you important information about myself, but nothing in terms of detail. I struggle with bipolar disorder and an anxiety disorder, that statement doesn't really mean anything. It's just a bland title slapped on a book that reads more like a sh*t show

The real story is hard to put together. And it is impossible to ever properly chart it all. Many episodes, thoughts, and feelings get lost in the cesspool that has been a lot of my experience with mental illness. The full truth is dark, graphic, and disturbing. And some of the depths that have been explored make me afraid of the power of an ill mind. As my writing will be mostly personal, here is a website where you can learn more about my illness: <https://psychcentral.com/bipolar/>

Depression: Have you ever gone to bed night after night, just wishing that you won't wake up tomorrow? Hoping that this was the last day of this miserable existence has finally run its course? Bipolar depression is a monster. Bipolar depression is believed to be more severe than clinical depression on it's own. I go through days where I feel crushed by the weight of my world, and other days I don't feel at all. Sometimes my eyes see the world without colour, and I feel removed from my own existence. Sorrow of the things already past, and things to come weighs heavy on my heart. Often I believe that there is no place for me in this world, and there is no future for me. I have spent much time in down periods envisioning my own funeral. My depressive episodes can range from tiredness to blackout darkness, they can suck nearly every ray of light from my life.

Anxiety: I worry. I am sure that we all worry some. My worrying can be excessive, only zooming in on the worst case scenarios. Sometimes I can be consumed with fear, without knowing what I am scared of. I use the analogy of a child that is afraid of the dark. In this case the whole world is the dark, and I am simply afraid of it all, of everything. Another thing that sometimes troubles me is crowd anxiety. Often I have to take a break during a social gathering, or leave outright. When experiencing crowd anxiety I desperately want to avoid conversation, especially with somebody I do not know very well. We all have experience with anxiety, know how stressful it can be.

Hypomania/Mania: Bipolar disorder has two extremes, one being depression and the other being mania. Hypomania is like mania's little brother, similar to mania but not as extreme. Most of my experience has been with hypomania, though there has been a manic episode or two sprinkled in. When in a hypomanic episode, my energy levels increase, making me restless and often agitated. I struggle to sit in one place, instead constantly moving and pacing around. The thoughts that go through my head are sometimes too fast and jumbled to make sense of, putting me in a daze. I am much more likely to get angry when I am in one of these episodes, the anger is hard for me to deal with. I rarely get angry when I'm stable, so my anger management is poor. I keep my anger bottled up inside, which is a very unhealthy way to deal with it. Given the increased energy levels, this is usually the most dangerous time for me. I deal with a lot of negative energy when in a hypomanic/manic episode. This increases the risk of self harm and suicidal behaviour. My thoughts can become very irrational and distorted. I come up with strange ideas and may pick up strange beliefs, which get crazier with the severity of my episode.

This writing is a dive below the surface of my experience with mental illness. While there are many details I have left out for reasons of my own, it gives you a small idea of some of the things I go through.