

The Shadow of Mental Illness



Other Types of Mental Illness

ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
11% of children ages 4-17 have ADHD
One of the most common mental disorders in children
Symptoms: difficulty staying on task, hyperactivity, difficulty controlling behavior

PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
7.8% of Americans will experience some form of PTSD in a given year
Can be genetic, or through triggered through brain waves.
Common in war veterans and victims of domestic abuse
Symptoms: Horrifying flashbacks that trigger fear, bad dreams, frightening thoughts.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia Personality Disorder
Chronic mental disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves
Affects 2.5 million of the adult population or 1.1%
Symptoms: hallucinations, delusions, reduced feeling of pleasure



Bipolar disorder, depression loom large

By Ryan Hayes
Focus Editor

Mental illness is a serious trend that has affected teenagers over the last two decades, more so in recent years with the increased social standards teens must meet with today's very opinionated society. Two major kinds of mental illness that affect today's teens are bipolar disorder and depression.

Depression is a hot topic among teenagers today because a lot of people claim they are depressed, but don't actually show symptoms of chronic depression. Most people often get episodes of sadness confused with depression. Depression is essentially these episodes of sadness taken to an extreme level. For people to be diagnosed with depression, they must exhibit a prolonged episode of sadness, thoughts and attempts of suicide, feeling hopeless, pessimistic, helpless, loss of interest in previously enjoyed hobbies, decreased energy, and even result to substance abuse to try and cope with their issues.

A Chicago woman who goes under the alias Kansas Sunflower has ran a blog from February 2005 to September 2014, detailing her everyday struggle with depression and bipolar disorder.

"When I am depressed, no one usually knows. People who are very depressed and even suicidal are masters at hiding it." The woman goes on to say "Maybe this all comes with age, no clue. All of a sudden I just don't have much pride and openly admit my flaws that I would never had shared with anyone in the past. Why should anyone see a façade, not the real me?" Kansas Sunflower's outlook on depression shows that it is a serious mental disorder that can drastically affect how you go about your everyday life.

Kansas Sunflower isn't the only person in her age group that suffers from depression as 14.8 million Americans ages 14-35, or 6.5 percent of the United States population are depressed. While depression can develop at any age, the median onset age is about 33 years old and is more prevalent in women than in men.

Now, depression is a mental disorder people are generally familiar with, but something that people aren't very informed about is bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder is a neurobiological disorder that causes victims to drastically change their mood from very happy to very sad or angry. This disorder affects approximately 5.5 million Americans age 18 or older, or 2.6 percent of the adult population. An estimated 51 percent of the individuals with this condition are untreated in any given year. Other symptoms of bipolar disorder include dramatic and unpredictable mood swings, excessive happiness, excitement, irritability, restlessness, increased en-

'Bipolar disorder can be a daunting, intimidating illness. It is especially scary for people who are newly diagnosed or do not know much about their mental illness' - Dennis

ergy, less need to sleep, racing thoughts, high sex drive, and a tendency to make erroneous, unattainable plans without much thought.

A man who goes by the alias Dennis writes a blog called "Bipolar Manifesto" beginning recently in August of 2015 going on to this day about his life and how he lives with bipolar disorder. Dennis tells a very intriguing story detailing his search for a job while having the disorder. "I'm offered a job. I go through my self-management practices that I learned in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Being bipolar, I know from previous experiences that I would often escalate when offered a new job. I would rocket up, be super excited, happy to get going, and then either get myself

fired for saying inappropriate things thanks to hypomania removing the filter between my mouth and brain or crash into a mind numbing depression and be unable to function for a few days."

Dennis goes on to reveal how he copes with the disorder and how people with the disorder. "Bipolar disorder can be a daunting, intimidating illness. It is especially scary for people who are newly diagnosed or do not know much about their mental illness. The more you learn, the smaller the teeth on the monster become. It will always have some teeth. There is a possibility that I could have triggered and had an unwell cycle because of this no matter what I did. No one should be complacent in the management of the disorder and making sure they keep it controlled. I identified that I was entering a turbulent time and responded with my contingency plans for dealing with my brain during them."

Both depression and bipolar disorder give one an increased risk of suicide due to their irrational behavior and mood swings causing them to develop suicidal thoughts.

If you believe someone you know exhibits the symptoms and behaviors of one with these mental disorders, please contact a loved one or an adult to get them the help they need to save their life.