

Bipolar Depression And Its Impact On Day-To-Day Life

New Insights From A National Online Survey TM

(NAPSA)—If you or a loved one is living with bipolar disorder, you understand better than anyone how this disease can affect daily life. And you're not alone. A recent survey showed that the biggest concern among people living with bipolar disorder (73%) is that their illness will impact their families, relationships or jobs. The online survey, which was commissioned by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare and AstraZeneca, asked 2,000 people living with bipolar disorder, as well as 500 physicians who treat such patients, about their impressions and concerns when it comes to managing the depressive symptoms of this complex illness.

Bipolar disorder affects approximately 8 million American adults and is characterized by very low moods, called bipolar depression, and very high moods, called bipolar mania. Most people with bipolar disorder spend more time in the depressive phase than the manic phase.

In the survey, 90 percent of patients said they have a hard time managing or finishing daily tasks due to their depressive symptoms, such as sadness, feelings of emptiness and/or an inability to concentrate. About 9 in 10 also said they have cancelled social engagements because of bipolar depression.

"It's clear from this survey that many people with bipolar disorder are struggling, and it's taking a serious toll on their day-to-day lives," said Linda Rosenberg, president and CEO of the National Council. "It's important to know that there is help out

there. With treatment, talk therapy, and support, bipolar depression can be managed and people can feel better."

One important aspect of managing bipolar depression is having a good doctor-patient relationship. Unfortunately, in the survey, 41 percent of people with bipolar disorder said they wished they could be more open with their physicians about their depressive symptoms. Seventy-two percent of physicians agreed that many of their patients don't know how to accurately describe their bipolar depression symptoms.

Rosenberg recommends the following steps for patients to strengthen communication with their doctors:

- Describe how you're feeling to the best of your ability. You do not have to know the clinical language—just use your own words.

- Jot down any questions and concerns you have before your doctor's appointment so you don't forget them.

- Don't hesitate to share anything and everything with your doctor, even if it feels personal or unimportant. Your doctor is best-equipped to help you when he or she has all the information.

- Work with your doctor to set expectations and goals for your treatment. For many patients, these may be "everyday" goals, like getting back to a regular work schedule or spending more time with family and friends.

To learn more about bipolar disorder, including additional tips for an effective patient-physician dialogue, visit www.thenationalcouncil.org or www.facingbipolar.com.