

5 Most Common Consequences of Bipolar Depression

By LaRae LaBouff



Bipolar disorder becomes integrated into every aspect of your life. In order to remain functional, you have to consider your symptom levels affecting anything from how much effort you put into getting dressed in the morning to how you're relating with everyone you come into contact with. These effects take a toll not only on the life of the patient, but on family, friends, coworkers, etc. The impact of bipolar disorder is immense, and the consequences can be severe.

According to [new research](#) from Gordon Parker, Stacey McCraw and Dusan Hadzi-Pavlovic in the journal *Psychiatry Research*, 100% of bipolar disorder patients surveyed have experienced adverse consequences related to their disorder. Here are the five most-cited consequences people experience from their bipolar disorder.

1. Losing a partner

If you or your partner has bipolar disorder, you are twice as likely as an average couple to [divorce](#). There is a delicate give-and-take balance that has to occur to keep relationship satisfaction high, and adding mental illness makes things more difficult. Unfortunately, those with bipolar disorder require more take. We need a lot of [support](#) and understanding, but we also need to remember that it's not easy being a caregiver either.

2. Losing a job

There's a reason why most people do not disclose mental illness to their employers. It opens doors to

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more scrutiny and more stigma, but there are [problems at work](#) even when you don't disclose your illness. Our healthcare is more expensive and our productivity is lower. Only half of bipolar patients are employed at any given time and only 27% hold down a full-time job. It's difficult to be consistent on the job when your emotions and well-being are oscillating. Should you choose to disclose your illness, your employer is [legally obligated](#) to accommodate your illness to a certain extent.

3. Losing relationships with family

The consequences of having bipolar disorder are far-reaching. Mood swings in bipolar disorder are unpredictable, so everyone around you has to be able to adapt to those changes. Not everyone can cope with that and sometimes people feel that it's easier just to walk away. The keys to help [navigate through](#) the ups and downs of bipolar disorder are educating loved ones about what it is to have bipolar disorder and keeping communication open and productive.

4. Dropping out of school

There are numerous ways severe episodes of mania or depression can get in the way of school work, starting with not making it to class. Then there are the symptoms between bouts that are also challenging. Bipolar disorder affects all of the [cognitive functions](#) you need to help you get through school: memory, concentration, ability to focus, decision making. There is good news!

The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) covers students with mental illness and guarantees the right to [certain accommodations](#). For example: taking breaks during class, recording lectures or having a note taker, extra time for taking an exam or more personalized performance assessment. If you think you need help, don't hesitate to contact your school's counseling center and they'll get you set up.

5. Not being able to get to work

It is a cliché of bipolar disorder and depression to say that you are so depressed you can't get out of bed. There's a reason the phrase is so ubiquitous. Sometimes forcing yourself out of bed or out of the house really isn't something you can accomplish. Getting out of bed, getting ready and getting yourself to a full day of work all take energy and decision making. Depression can completely rob you of that energy. It also keeps you stuck in your own head telling you all the things you cannot do. There are days when the thought of going through the day is paralyzing and you just can't force your way through it. Absenteeism is a big problem when dealing with bipolar disorder and holding down a job.

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