

# WORKING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER

## What is Bipolar Disorder?

**Bipolar disorder** is a mental health condition that affects mood, energy levels, and behavior. People with bipolar disorder typically experience distinct periods of extremely exhilarated, irritable, or energized behavior (known as mania); some people also experience episodes of unusually low, blue, or sad mood (depression). 2.8%<sup>1</sup> of people in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder. With the right treatment and support, many people manage it well and live full, healthy lives.

There are different types of bipolar disorder. The two most common are:

- Bipolar I involves more intense “up” or manic episodes that last seven days or longer, or require hospitalization.
- Bipolar II also has “up” or manic episodes, but they are milder, less disruptive, and shorter in duration.

## How Bipolar Disorder Can Impact An Employee’s Workday<sup>2</sup>

Many people who live with bipolar disorder can thrive at work and are productive team members. As a person learns how to manage bipolar disorder, they may develop important skills, such as:

- Emotion regulation
- Resilience under stress
- Empathy for others
- Adaptability to change
- Enhanced creativity and problem-solving abilities

Bipolar disorder in the workplace can also sometimes be challenging and impact work in these ways:

- Energy level shifts
- Focus and concentration
- Interpersonal relationships
- Mood fluctuations over days, weeks, or months

A team member may have good days and tougher ones, but with the right support and understanding, employees with bipolar disorder can thrive and bring real and unique value to their roles.

Need to know more about supporting an employee who lives with bipolar disorder in the workplace? Visit [stigmafree.nami.org/guides/managerbipolar](https://stigmafree.nami.org/guides/managerbipolar) and learn more on how to manage bipolar disorder at work and steps you can take to seek help.

Call (800-950-NAMI) or text (62640) the free NAMI HelpLine for more resources for working with bipolar disorder.

NAMI HelpLine

