

Resources for learning about bipolar disorder

By **T. Lee Brown**
Correspondent

Over 21 million Americans have mood disorders. Bipolar disorder in particular, also known as manic-depressive illness, affects a whopping 2.8 percent of the U.S. population. With statistics like these, there's a good chance you or someone you know is dealing with this condition—and some may be misdiagnosed with depression. Learn more in local author Willa Goodfellow's "Prozac Monologues" (see related article, page 6) and from the following resources.

BP Hope: Ever hear the one about entrepreneurs? Turns out that 11 percent of them have a history of bipolar disorder, at least those participating in a significant study. Did you know some bipolar folks possess "supra-sensory abilities" during what is charitably described as "elevated mood?" It translates to sharper vision, super-vivid hearing, amplified senses of smell and taste, and an astute judgment of body language.

BP Magazine and its blogs will keep you up to date on such matters, along with personal stories, advice, and clinician perspectives. Here, numerous bloggers take on various issues relevant to people with manic-depressive illness and their loved ones. "Three Bipolar

Disorder Symptoms No One Wants to Talk About" was a recent clickbait headline. Other posts include "Help for the Highly Sensitive Person with Bipolar" and "Bipolar, COVID-19 & Protecting Against Suicide." Online at www.bpHope.com.

Willa Goodfellow: Local author and Episcopal priest Willa Goodfellow lives with Bipolar II disorder. She also lived through many years of misdiagnosis and was given antidepressant medications — which made her condition much worse. Thankfully, she can write about it with humor and grace. Willa shares her story in the new book "Prozac Monologues: A Voice from the Edge." On August 28, join the online book launch party hosted by Paulina Springs Books (register at <https://tinyurl.com/willa-good-fellow-launch>). Learn more and join her mailing list at www.willagoodfellow.com.

NAMI: The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, well known for its HelpLine. Trained staff and volunteers deliver information, resource referrals, and support to people living with a mental health conditions, family, caregivers, and mental-health providers. Call 800-950-NAMI (6264) or email info@nami.org.

The organization has also created a COVID-19

Resource and Information Guide, available on its website. Who's behind NAMI? The public can easily download its list of major donors and sponsors. Unlike other organizations, NAMI does not appear to be in the pocket of pharmaceutical companies. NAMI is primarily funded by individual contributions. Learn more at www.nami.org.

Kay Redfield Jamison: Jamison wrote the book on bipolar disorder. More accurately, the books, plural: she co-authored the massive "Manic-Depressive Illness," a standard textbook, and also offers excellent books on the subject for everyday readers.

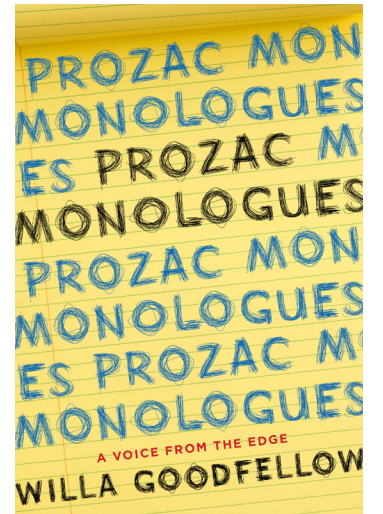
Of her own experience as a manic-depressive, Jamison wrote "An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness." Her fascinating volume, "Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament," explores bipolar disorder among artists, writers, and high achievers. For poetry nerds and cultural historians there's "Robert Lowell: Setting the River on Fire"; while marred by fangirl adoration, the book cracks open the poet's rollercoaster of a personal life, and shows with

compassion just how tough life can be for those in relationship with a bipolar person.

John McManamy: "McMan" is an award-winning mental-health journalist and author whose traditional career was upended by bipolar disorder. With a friendly writing voice and roving mind, McManamy applies the journalist's love of research to his own life and beyond. The Bible, Shakespeare, and American presidents' life histories are among subjects he examines through a bipolar lens.

Author of the books "Living Well with Depression and Bipolar Disorder, Not Just Up and Down," and "In Search of Our Identity," he has served on the NAMI San Diego board, facilitated a depression-bipolar support group in New Jersey, and created the epic online resource McMan's Depression and Bipolar Web.

In addition to articles, the site features videos of McManamy chatting with fellow bipolar Maggie Reese, author of the memoir "Runaway Mind." Their style is casual, homing in on topics like "When Your Brain Gets Overwhelmed," "Getting Family Involved,"



and "Exuberance." More at <http://www.mcmanweb.com>.

Psych Central: Clunky and retro, Psych Central has been around long enough to host countless online conversations about moods, insomnia, and medications. The forum's most popular topic appears to be, sweetly enough, a group Gratitude Journal. Kick it old-school at <https://psychcentralforums.com/bipolar>.

DBSA: The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) hosts over 600 online and offline support groups around the country. With its officious tone and many offerings, the DBSA offers serious bipolar support. However, the organization's relationships with the pharmaceutical industry have led some to question its credibility. Learn more at www.dbsalliance.org.

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