

## Self-Help Support Group Meeting

The self-help support group meeting takes place on the last Thursday of the month throughout the year.

The next self-help support group meeting will take place on **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013** from **7pm-9pm** at the **Midsocket Church Community Centre, 35 Midsocket Road, Aberdeen, AB15 5JL.**

*The dates of the meetings for the rest of the year are:*

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November:** At this meeting our focus for discussion will be on coping around the busy Christmas season.

We will have a break over Christmas and reconvene again in January 2014.

## Volunteer with us

We are currently looking for new volunteers. If you would like to be more involved we would like you to become part of our committee team. No skills or knowledge are required. The main purpose is to provide your views on group related events/activities.

If you are interested in volunteering with us please email [info@bipolaraberdeen.org.uk](mailto:info@bipolaraberdeen.org.uk) or talk to a committee member at one of the self help support group meetings.



## Newsletter

The Newsletter will be published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter).

To help us to include more information in the newsletter, we would like to include contributions from you. You can contribute anything you think would look nice in the newsletter. From poetry, drawing, photographs, articles you find on Bipolar Disorder or even your favourite recipe.

This would be very much appreciated. You wouldn't have to constantly submit information to us. It will be as and when you please. Please email your contribution to: [info@bipolaraberdeen.org.uk](mailto:info@bipolaraberdeen.org.uk)

**Bipolar Aberdeen** has a website which you can access at:  
[www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk](http://www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk)

## A FREE six week course for carers. Connections, Choices and Changes (3C's)

VSA are now taking names of carers who would be interested in the next 3C's course which will begin on Tuesday 29th October 2013.



Each weekly session will run from 10am – 1pm.

Meet with other carers to learn new skills, explore how to stay healthy and resilient, respond to challenges and develop the confidence to take more control.  
[www.vsa.org.uk](http://www.vsa.org.uk)

For more information or to book a place, please contact:

Lesley Gray  
Tel: 01224 212021 (ask for Carers Services)  
or email [carers.info@vsa.org.uk](mailto:carers.info@vsa.org.uk)



### Bipolar Scotland

#### What do they do?

#### **Self Management Training:**

The organisation runs a Self-Management training course. The course is for people with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and aims to help people identify the triggers for episodes of illness and develop coping strategies.

#### **Information:**

Bipolar Scotland produces a quarterly newsletter "On the Level". They also provide information leaflets on bipolar disorder, as well as recommend books to read.

#### **Self-Help Groups**

##### **How do they run?**

Bipolar Scotland supports a national network of self-help groups throughout Scotland. The self-help groups are made up of people who are affected by Bipolar disorder and carers. Groups meet either once or twice a month, normally for 2 hours. Meetings are normally held in the evening. Groups are facilitated either by a member of the group, or by a Volunteer facilitator.

#### **What are the benefits of self-help groups?**

- Sharing common experiences
- Increasing self-esteem
- Finding inspiration from others
- Gaining empowerment over one's own health
- Being able to help others

#### **Contact Details for Bipolar Scotland**

Tel: 0141 560 2050

Website: [www.bipolarscotland.org.uk](http://www.bipolarscotland.org.uk)

E-mail: [info@bipolarscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@bipolarscotland.org.uk)



### Beating Bipolar - an internet based educational treatment for Bipolar

Launched in January 2011, Beating Bipolar is the first web-based education treatment for bipolar. The intervention covers key areas such as the diagnosis and causes of bipolar disorder; role of medication; relapse prevention and early intervention; psychological approaches to treatment; the role of lifestyle in treatment of bipolar disorder; advice for family and carers; and bipolar disorder and women.

The delivery of the intervention is entirely web-based in the form of eight modules consisting of video material including a number of interactive exercises in which users are invited to feedback information about their condition and use a forum, which is moderated by a member of the Bipolar Education Programme Cymru (BEPC) team.

BEPC are delighted to be able to offer free access to Beating Bipolar to everyone with the diagnosis of bipolar and to mental health professionals in the UK.

<http://www.beatingbipolar.org/>



### Acupuncture eases symptoms of severe depression



Acupuncture therapy combined with antidepressants has been found to relieve symptoms of depression more effectively than drugs alone, a British study found.

New research, conducted by Dr Hugh MacPherson and colleagues from the University of York, found patients who had acupuncture alongside their antidepressants improved more after three months than those who simply took medication.

Their symptoms reduced on the same scale as those who had counselling alongside their normal treatment.

The researchers felt the study was of great importance as many patients would like to be offered non-pharmacological treatment options such as acupuncture or counselling.

The vast majority of patients with depression are only offered antidepressants, despite the fact they are ineffective for 60% of people

The study included 755 men and women with moderate to severe depression. The patients were divided in groups to receive up to 12 weekly sessions of acupuncture plus usual care (302 patients), up to 12 weekly sessions of counselling plus usual care (302 patients) or usual care alone (151 patients).

The findings, published in the PLoS Medicine Journal, found that the 2,000-year-old Chinese method improved symptoms for up to six months.

It is thought that it alleviates symptoms such as overwhelming sadness and hopelessness, by stimulating the release of endorphins and other "feel-good" chemicals.

Mandy Laing, a qualified member of the British Acupuncture Council comments: "For some anxiety sufferers, life is extremely tough. A lot of people don't realise that this condition can cause a considerable amount of stress and disability for the person.

"Traditional acupuncture is a safe and effective treatment choice that involves placing extremely fine, sterile needles (the size of a shaft of hair) painlessly at specific points on the body.

For people who are clinically depressed, feelings of severe sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, and worthlessness can last for months and years. And affected individuals lose interest in activities they used to enjoy and sometimes have physical symptoms such as disturbed sleep, leaving many unable to work.

This research could open up new treatment options for those who suffer from moderate or severe depression but Dr MacPherson, who is trained in acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, said further research needs to be conducted to determine whether acupuncture could help with mild depression.

***To find a practitioner in your area call the British Acupuncture Council on 020 8735 0400 or visit [acupuncture.org.uk](http://acupuncture.org.uk)***

## Living and Coping with Bipolar Disorder

Living well with bipolar disorder requires certain adjustments. It's important to make healthy choices for yourself. Making these healthy choices will help you keep your symptoms under control, minimize mood episodes, and take control of your life.

### **Bipolar disorder support tip #1: Get involved in your treatment**

Be a full and active participant in your own treatment. Learn everything you can about bipolar disorder. Become an expert on the illness. Study up on the symptoms, so you can recognize them in yourself, and research all your available treatment options. The more informed you are, the better prepared you'll be to deal with symptoms and make good choices for yourself.

[www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/about-bipolar-disorder](http://www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/about-bipolar-disorder)

### **Bipolar disorder support tip #2: Monitor your symptoms and moods**

Keep a close watch for subtle changes in your mood, sleeping patterns, energy level, and thoughts. If you catch the problem early and act swiftly, you may be able to prevent a minor mood change from turning into a full-blown episode of mania or depression. **Keep a Mood Dairy.**

Also try to identify the triggers, or outside influences, that have led to mania or depression in the past. Common triggers include:

- stress
- financial difficulties
- arguments with your loved ones
- problems at school or work
- seasonal changes
- lack of sleep

[www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/support-and-self-help/mood-diary/](http://www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/support-and-self-help/mood-diary/)

### **Bipolar disorder support tip #3: Reach out to other people**

Having a strong support system is vital to staying happy and healthy. Spend time with people who truly value you and make you feel better.

**Turn to friends and family** – Support for bipolar disorder starts at home. It's important to have people you can count on to help you through rough times. Isolation and loneliness can cause depression, so regular contact with supportive friends and family members is therapeutic in itself.

**Join a bipolar disorder support group** – Spending time with people who know what you're going through and can honestly say they've "been there" can be very therapeutic. You can also benefit from the shared experiences and advice of the group members.

[www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/support-and-self-help/](http://www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/support-and-self-help/)

**Build new relationships** – Isolation and loneliness make bipolar disorder worse. If you don't have a support network you can count on, take steps to develop new relationships. Try taking a class, joining a church or a civic group, volunteering, or attending events in your community.

### **Tips for reaching out and building relationships**

- Talk to one person about your feelings.
- Help someone else by volunteering.
- Have lunch or coffee with a friend.
- Ask a loved one to check in with you regularly.
- Accompany someone to the movies, a concert, or a small get-together.
- Call or email an old friend.
- Go for a walk with a workout buddy.
- Schedule a weekly dinner date
- Meet new people by taking a class or joining a club.

## Bipolar disorder support tip #4: Develop a daily routine

Your lifestyle choices, including your sleeping, eating, and exercise patterns, have a significant impact on your moods. There are many things you can do in your daily life to get your symptoms under control and to keep depression and mania at bay.

**Build structure into your life.** Developing and sticking to a daily schedule can help stabilize the mood swings of bipolar disorder. Include set times for sleeping, eating, socializing, exercising, working, and relaxing. Try to maintain a regular pattern of activity, even through emotional ups and downs.

**Exercise regularly.** Exercise has a beneficial impact on mood and may reduce the number of bipolar episodes you experience. Aerobic exercise is especially effective at treating depression. Try to incorporate at least 30 minutes of activity five times a week into your routine. Walking is a good choice for people of all fitness levels.



**Keep a strict sleep schedule.** Getting too little sleep can trigger mania, so it's important to get plenty of rest. For some people, losing even a few hours can cause problems. However, too much sleep can also worsen your mood. The best advice



is to maintain a normal sleep schedule, going to bed and waking up at around the same time each day.

## Bipolar disorder support tip #5: Keep stress to a minimum

Stress can trigger episodes of mania and depression in people with bipolar disorder, so keeping it under control is extremely important. Know your limits, both at home and at work or school. Don't take on more

than you can handle and take time to yourself if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Learn how to relax. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, and guided imagery can be very effective at reducing stress and keeping you on an even keel. Studies show that a daily relaxation practice of 30 minutes or more can improve your mood and keep depression at bay.



Make leisure time a priority. Go to a funny movie, take a walk on the beach, listen to music, read a good book, or talk to a friend.

## Bipolar disorder support tip #6: Watch what you put in your body

From the food you eat to the vitamins and drugs you take, the substances you put in your body have an impact on the symptoms of bipolar disorder – both for better or worse.

Eat a healthy diet. There is an undeniable link between food and mood. For optimal mood, eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and limit your fat and sugar intake.

Space your meals out through the day, so your blood sugar never dips too low. High-carbohydrate diets can cause mood crashes, so they should also be avoided.

Other mood-damaging foods include, caffeine, and processed foods.

### Get your omega-3s.

Omega-3 fatty acids may decrease mood swings in bipolar disorder. Omega-3 is available as a nutritional supplement. You can also increase your intake of omega-3 by eating cold-water fish such as salmon, halibut, and sardines, soybeans, flaxseeds, canola oil, pumpkin seeds, and walnuts.



## Autumnal Recipe Suggestion

For a healthy autumnal supper that is easy and quick to make, try this recipe. The recipe includes healthy salmon, broccoli and pasta.

### Creamy Salmon Pasta



This recipe serves 4 people and takes approximately 20 minutes to prepare.

#### Ingredients required:

- 300g of Penne or Rigatoni Pasta (whole wheat varieties available)
- 350g of Broccoli, cut into small florets
- 300g of boneless, skinless salmon fillets (about 2 fillets)
- 150g pack of soft cheese with garlic and herbs (Philadelphia Light option to reduce calories)
- 142ml carton of single cream
- 2 tablespoons of sun-dried tomato paste/puree

#### Method

- Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions.
- Add the Broccoli to the water for the last 3 minutes of cooking.
- Put the salmon fillets in a frying pan, season and just cover with water.
- Bring to the boil, then simmer for 6 minutes until the flesh flakes easily with a fork. Using a slotted spoon transfer to a warm plate.
- Mix the soft cheese with the cream and the tomato paste to make a smooth sauce, season to taste.
- Drain the pasta and broccoli, then tip back into the pan.
- Pour in the sauce and stir well.
- Flake the salmon into large chunks and gently mix into the pasta.
- Transfer to a warm serving bowl and season with black pepper before serving.

#### Nutritional Information:

Per serving 586 calories, protein 33g, carbohydrate 61g, fat 25g, saturated fat 6g, fibre 5g, added sugar none, salt 0.53g

For a simple dessert how about stewing a Bramley apple, adding some seasonal blackberries and topping with custard for a weekend treat.

Enjoy