

# CAUSES OF BIPOLAR DISORDER

WORK WITH YOUR TREATMENT PROVIDER TO IDENTIFY YOUR OWN UNIQUE EPISODE TRIGGERS.



## WHAT CAUSES BIPOLAR DISORDER?

- The exact cause of bipolar disorder is not known
- Researchers believe that bipolar disorder may be caused by
  - Genes; it runs in families
  - A chemical imbalance affecting certain parts of the brain
- Bipolar disorder is a medical illness that is
  - Not your fault
  - Not your parents' fault
  - Not punishment for bad behavior

## BIPOLAR DISORDER TRIGGERS

- Triggers are factors that may set off an episode of bipolar disorder
- Triggers may include
  - A stressful event, such as loss of a job, divorce, or illness; or a positive major life event, such as winning a major prize
  - Changes in daily schedule, including changes in the amount of sleep a person gets
  - Change of season

## BIPOLAR DISORDER TRIGGERS (CONT'D)

- Treatment of depression with an antidepressant medication (may trigger a switch into mania)
- Lack of sleep or disrupted sleep
- Use of alcohol or other substances
- Episodes can also occur without any identifiable trigger

## WHY IS LONG-TERM TREATMENT SO IMPORTANT?

- Without treatment
  - Symptoms may recur or bipolar disorder may get worse with time
  - Quality of life suffers
- With consistent, appropriate treatment
  - People with bipolar disorder can lead productive lives