

Staff Guidance

Disability: Bipolar Disorder

Characteristics: This disorder is characterized by extreme or unusual high (manic) or low moods. It was previously known as Manic Depression. It also includes Cyclothymia which manifests in recurrent milder forms of mania and depression. People with Bipolar can also have normal moods. The disorder can be triggered by periods of high stress or excitement. It is predominantly managed through life long medication.

Effects on self and study

When experiencing a manic episode a student may experience grandiose ideas, increased energy resulting in a lack of sleep, have racing thoughts, be easily distracted, irritable and impulsive.

Additionally severe mania can include hallucinations, delusions and a lack of insight.

When experiencing a depressive phase a student may experience low motivation, feelings of guilt, worthlessness, poor concentration, unusual eating and sleeping patterns and increased suicidal ideation and behaviours.

Medications can also have a number of side effects including a sedative like effect.

However students may also have long periods of a stable mood with good medication and therapeutic management

Potential Reasonable Adjustments

- *Higher level of support from school adviser through regular meetings or email contact
- *Students might need to attend medical appointments
- *Extensions might be needed
- *Lecture and Seminar material on Blackboard or handouts in advance.
- *Use of a digital recorder alongside written notes in lectures.
- *Extra time in exams
- *A mentor to provide regular support specific to the DSA recommendations for an individual student

Each student is an individual and as such may only require some of these adjustments or none at all. These are guidelines of things that could be considered however some courses may require more specific adjustments. It is advisable that students, academics and the MH Co-ordinator work together to achieve appropriate adjustments. Some courses involve Fitness to Practice requiring students to achieve professional competencies to qualify.