

Causes of Bipolar Disorder

- Complex interplay of genetics & environment
- Imbalance of neurotransmitters which control mood
- Family history of mental illness creating a predisposition
- Early losses, abuse, trauma & distressing life events

Mental Illness: Facts and Stats¹

Did you know...?

1 in 5 Canadians have or will have a mental illness during his or her lifetime; the other 4 are indirectly affected by the illness of a friend, family member or colleague.

Over 10 Canadians every day die by suicide each day; this 'statistic' doesn't include the many more who attempt suicide.

Stigma is cited as the #1 reason preventing people from seeking treatment and taking anti-depressants.

Yet...

Over 85% of the time chronic depression can be treated successfully. But due to stigma only 50% will seek treatment.

Despite the illness, 69% of individuals **with bipolar disorder are employed.**

Anti-depressants are not addictive or habit forming; they do not create a 'high' and are not a 'crutch'; they are most often and best used in combination with other treatment approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy and counselling.

¹ CMHA, Global Business & Economic Roundtable on Addictions & Mental Health, Health Canada, Stats Can, National Institute of Mental Health

For information about performances and workshops or to send questions and comments contact Victoria at victoria@victoriamaxwell.com or visit www.victoriamaxwell.com

Funny, You Don't Look Crazy



See Mental Illness & Work in a Whole New Way!

Written & Performed By Victoria Maxwell

Directed by Johnna Wright

A Story about Mental Illness and Returning to Work

Funny, You Don't Look is a high energy, irreverent theatrical keynote capturing the world of work before, during and after bipolar disorder, anxiety and psychosis. Follow Victoria's mad dash from Safeway cashier to wearing backless hospital greens, working with job coaches and back into employment again.

Walk away enlightened and entertained, holding an expanded vision not of what's improbable, but instead of what is possible.

Bios:

Johnna Wright (www.johnnawright.com) is an actor, director, dramaturge and co-artistic director of Solo Collective, a theater company in Vancouver, Canada, committed to commissioning and producing works by Western Canadian playwrights. She holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Alberta and is a graduate of UBC Theater.

Victoria Maxwell, BFA / BPP* (www.victoriamaxwell.com) Since being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, anxiety and psychosis, Victoria has become one of North America's top speakers and educators on the 'lived' experience of mental illness, recovery, stigma and work. *Bachelor of Fine Arts / Bi-Polar Princess

Victoria has worked for over 20 years as an actress and writer for both film and stage. Her one-person shows tour internationally to sold-out audiences and have garnered awards in both the United States and Canada. She's been presenting her keynote performances and workshops for more than 8 years at conferences in Canada and the States helping people better understand the 'insider's' experience of mental illness and recovery. You will also find her 'blogging' for Psychology Today (www.psychologytoday.com/blog/crazy-life).

Show's running time is approx. 40 minutes. There is no intermission. Please stay for the 'q & a' following the performance.

Victoria will be available for further questions after the show and her products will be available for purchase.

Author's Note:

The events and people in the play are portrayed true to my memory. Some names and details have been altered for confidentiality, clarity and a more cohesive narrative, but the truth remains intact.

A Word of Caution:

There are as many stories as there are people. This is Victoria's. The comedy in the show is not meant to diminish or dismiss other journeys through psychiatric illness. The content of this play is not intended to replace the advice, assessment and/or attention of a healthcare professional. If you are concerned you or someone you love might be experiencing some form of depression, BD or other psychiatric illness, please do not self-diagnose. See your primary healthcare provider immediately. Please do not change or stop your course of treatment without consulting your healthcare professional first.

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar affective disorder is a mental illness under the sub-category of mood disorders. It's a neurological brain disorder, characterized by alternating periods of extreme depression and mania, with normal mood intervals occurring in between.

Although natural for moods to change, severe variations in mood can indicate the presence of bipolar disorder¹. These alternating swings in mood can cause problems at home, work & relationships. Bipolar disorder can be thought of as a physical disorder that expresses itself in behavior, personality, thought and mood changes.

Connection to **psychosis** (delusions & hallucinations): In some cases of bipolar disorder & major depressive disorders, mood disturbances are so severe the individual loses touch with reality & experiences a psychotic episode. A psychosis can also occur without the presence of a mood disorder (as in the case of a drug-induced psychosis).

Big Mushy Heartfelt Thanks To:

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