

Differential Diagnosis and Bipolar Disorder

Differentiating Between: Bipolar Hypomania/Mania, Borderline Personality, PTSD, and ADHD

- Each of these conditions may present chiefly with an **irritable** mood
- Substance intoxication and withdrawal can mirror any of these states
- **More than one condition** may be present in the same person

| Symptoms/ Behaviors | Mania | Hypomania | Depressive Episode | Borderline Personality Disorder (PD) | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) | Attention- Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder ADHD |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Duration of symptoms | Days to weeks | Days to weeks | Weeks to months | Minutes to hours at a given time | Indefinite (improves with treatment, may slowly improve over time) | Indefinite (unless treated) |
| Risk of intentional harm to self | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Delusions and Hallucinations | Yes Hallmark symptom | No | Only if severe | Stressor-induced Paranoia | Flashbacks, Paranoia | No |
| Racing Thoughts | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | Common | When Triggered | No |
| Euphoria/Elevated Mood | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Grandiosity | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Hyperreligiosity | Common | Common | No | No | No | No |
| Hypersexuality | Yes | Yes | No | At times | No | No |

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|--|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Pressured Speech | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | During exacerbations | When Triggered | Chatterbox talking can be redirected |
| Decreased need for sleep | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Insomnia (but still needing sleep) | No | No | Sometimes | Sometimes | Yes | Sometimes |
| Hypersomnia | No | No | Sometimes | No | No | No |
| Impulsivity | Very Common | Common | No | Yes | When agitated | Yes Hallmark symptom |
| Hyperactivity | Yes Hallmark symptom | Yes | No | Uncommon | When agitated | Yes Hallmark symptom |
| Forgetfulness | No | No | If severe | Uncommon | Common | Yes Hallmark symptom |
| Inattentive | Yes | Yes | If severe | Uncommon | Occasional | Yes Hallmark symptom |
| Easily Distracted | Yes | Yes | If severe | Uncommon | Occasional | Yes Hallmark symptom |
| Splitting | No | No | No | Yes Hallmark symptom | No | No |
| Emotional reactivity | Yes | Yes | No | Yes Hallmark symptom | No | Sometimes |
| Exacerbations triggered by acute stressor | Yes | Uncommon | Uncommon | Yes | Yes | No |
| Dissociation | No | No | No | Stress-induced | Stress-induced | No |

Bipolar Diagnosis (Mania vs Hypomania)

It is ultimately most important to make a diagnosis of whether or not bipolar disorder is present. Diagnosing between Bipolar I disorder (full mania) vs Bipolar 2 disorder (hypomania) also has important treatment implications, particularly when treating other co-morbid mental health conditions.

The hallmarks of a hypomanic or manic episode are:

- An elevated, expansive mood or an irritable mood (nearly constant throughout the episode)
- An increase in energy or activity level (nearly constant throughout the episode)
- At least 3 of the following associated symptoms:
 - » Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity
 - » Decreased need for sleep (not just decreased sleep but decreased need for sleep)
 - » More talkative than usual
 - » Flight of ideas/subjectively racing thoughts
 - » Distractibility
 - » Increase in goal-directed activity, or psychomotor agitation
 - » Excessive involvement in activities with potential for painful consequences
- A clear change from baseline mood and functioning, which other people can observe

| | Mania (Bipolar 1) | Hypomania (Bipolar 2) | NOT Bipolar disorder |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Energy/Activity | Increased | Increased | Unchanged |
| # of associated symptoms | 3+ *4+ if mood only irritable | 3+ *4+ if mood only irritable | <3 |
| Length of persistent symptoms | 7+ days | 4+ days | <4 days or continuously for months or years |
| Psychotic symptoms | Maybe | No | |
| Change in function | Yes | Yes | |
| Functionally impairing | Yes | No | |



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