

## The Bipolar Spectrum Diagnostic Scale

This scale was developed by Dr Ronald Pies and is included here with his permission. On average it can take an individual experiencing manic depression 10 years to get a correct diagnosis. This screening questionnaire was initially developed for use by clinicians, but has since also been used by many individuals as a starting point in their discussions with their health care providers. The intention is that its use will lead to an accurate diagnosis earlier than might otherwise be the case. The scale is applicable to the entire spectrum of bipolar disorders.

*As with any assessment tool, it is not intended as a substitute for professional opinion and advice. If you suspect a bipolar disorder you should discuss this with your doctor.. Any family history of manic depression will be explored and your G.P or psychiatrist will undertake a thorough assessment.*

The inclusion of this assessment scale here does not reflect any particular endorsement by MDF.

### Instructions: Please read through the entire passage below before filling in any blanks.

1. Some individuals notice that their mood and/or energy levels shift drastically from time to time\_\_
2. These individuals notice that, at times, their mood and/or energy level is very low, and at other times, very high\_\_
3. During their “low” phases, these individuals often feel a lack of energy; a need to stay in bed or get extra sleep; and little or no motivation to do things they need to do\_\_
4. They often put on weight during these periods\_\_.
5. During their low phases these individuals often feel “blue”, sad all the time, or depressed\_\_.
6. Sometimes during these low phases, they feel hopeless or even suicidal\_\_.
7. Their ability to function at work or socially is impaired\_\_.
8. Typically, these low phases last for a few weeks, but sometimes they last only a few days\_\_.
9. Individuals with this type of pattern may experience a period of “normal” mood in between mood swings, during which their mood and energy levels feels “right” and their ability to function is not disturbed\_\_.
10. They may then notice a marked shift or “switch” in the way they feel\_\_.
11. Their energy increases above what is normal for them, and they often get many things done they would not ordinarily be able to do\_\_.
12. Sometimes, during these “high” periods, these individuals feel as if they have too much energy or feel “hyper”\_\_.
13. Some individuals, during these high periods, may feel irritable, “on edge”, or aggressive\_\_.

14. Some individuals, during these high periods, take on too many activities at once\_\_\_.
  15. During these high periods, some individuals may spend money in ways that cause them trouble\_\_\_.
  16. They may be more talkative, outgoing, or sexual during these periods\_\_\_.
  17. Sometimes, their behaviour during these high periods seems strange or annoying to others\_\_\_.
  18. Sometimes, these individuals get into difficulty with co-workers or the police, during these high periods\_\_\_.
  19. Sometimes they increase their alcohol or non-prescription drug use during these periods\_\_\_.
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Now that you have read this passage, please tick *one* of the following four boxes:-

This story fits me very well, or almost perfectly

This story fits me fairly well

This story fits me to some degree, but not in most respects

This story doesn't really describe me at all

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Now please go back and put a tick after each sentence (numbered 1-19 above) that *definitely* describes you.

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**Scoring:** each sentence ticked is worth one point. Then, to this score add the following (depending upon which of the above 4 boxes you ticked)

Add 6 points if you ticked "fits me very well or almost perfectly"

Add 4 points if you ticked "fits me fairly well"

Add 2 points if you ticked "fits me to some degree, but not in most respects"

Add 0 points if you ticked "doesn't really describe me at all"

Your total score \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Likelihood of bipolar disorder**

0-6 Highly unlikely

7-12 Low probability

13-19 Moderate probability

20-25 High probability

Optimum threshold for positive diagnosis: score of 13 or above