

## Speaking from Experience Living with Bipolar Disorder USA

### Transcript for Chapter 2 of 9: Impact on life

#### **Todd –**

The challenges that I've faced have always been... I guess inward would be the best way to put it. I've always been my own worst enemy. For years I tried to act like I didn't have a disorder, which led to...I presented myself other than who I was for years. I lied a lot and told people I had done this and done that when...because I felt like I wasn't worth as much as other people and that was always my biggest hurdle.

#### **Nadine –**

To minimize damage I would just put myself in a little box, give myself very little room, have very low expectations of myself so that I couldn't mess anything or anyone up.

#### **Todd –**

With the depression, at least from my personal history, there would be...there were several times I spent close to a month just doing nothing and I lost several jobs because of that.

#### **Jan –**

It has interfered with my job. Ya know, there are times when I can't get up and if I'm in front of a group of people as a trainer it's not a pretty picture to show up the way I look because my face gets distorted and so it has interfered with my job.

#### **Nadine –**

Friends want to go out and do things and I'm the kind of person that I can't do too many things too often. Ya know, maybe one night a week I can like wait to take my meds until 10:30 but in general I have to be pretty rigid about what I do and when I do it. And so people either want you to push your limit and minimize that this condition is going to be harmful if you don't take care of yourself or they also want to just dumb you..."oh you shouldn't come out at all, you shouldn't go to school, you shouldn't have a regular job." It's very extreme; it's actually quite bipolar treatment.

#### **Tom –**

There are people that are still afraid of people that have mental health disorders. And I've noticed that as a result of my disorder becoming known to my friends in the community...some of them disappeared. All of a sudden they were afraid to be around me. They heard I'd been hospitalized and that I had attempted suicide and that was a little bit too much for them to handle.

#### **Todd –**

There's a giant societal misconception as far as what bipolar is and what it encompasses with the highs and the lows and a lot of people think either you're depressed or angry or you're really happy. For me, the biggest part of my bipolar and the worst part of it was the highs, the mania, because for me...and also being OCD...the mania is the state of mind where your thoughts are constantly just going a mile a minute. The rapid cycling is... for lack of a better term...it's insane. Your brain constantly dissects every thought that comes into your head to where you start thinking how this little decision is going to affect something years down the road. So the highs aren't necessarily happy, they're just...it's different than the depression. The mania takes over and a lot of times either you're...you can organize chaos very quickly, you can do a very good job at things that need to be done quickly but if you can't, everything kind of falls apart.

#### **Alexandra & Thomas –**

When he was a minor I was always scared that somehow I might lose him because I had been in the system. So I was careful about what I said.

**Nadine –**

I was sure that when I was in a depressive mode or a manic mode when somebody was trying to give...offer me help and support that they were tricking me into doing something that I didn't want to do. And when I finally surrendered to the fact that I needed that help is when I needed it less. Fighting it and suppressing my symptoms so that nobody would notice, didn't work.

**Tom-**

One of things about depression and one of the symptoms is is that you don't enjoy some of things that you've always enjoyed like watching a movie and those types of things. So being able to get back into the community and enjoy those things is really important. It's also good for your self-esteem when you're accepted by other people in the community and they're willing to do social things with you like go out to dinner and that kind of thing... that you're not isolated and that you're not treated differently. So, social inclusion is really important.