

WORKSHEET: Is Your Child Bipolar?

TIME

CLOSE

► There is no standard test for bipolar disorder, but this checklist, adapted from *The Bipolar Child*, may help you recognize some warning signs.



Print out this worksheet and place a check next to each behavior your child currently exhibits or has exhibited in the past. If you mark more than 20 boxes, you should get your child evaluated by a professional

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 Is excessively distressed when separated from family | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 Has exaggerated ideas about self or abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Exhibits excessive anxiety or worry | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22 Exhibits inappropriate sexual behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Has difficulty arising in the a.m. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 Feels easily criticized or rejected | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Is hyperactive and excitable in the p.m. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 24 Has decreased initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Sleeps fitfully or has difficulty getting to sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 Has periods of low energy or withdraws or isolates self | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Has night terrors or frequently wakes in the middle of the night | <input type="checkbox"/> | 26 Has periods of self-doubt and poor self-esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Is unable to concentrate at school | <input type="checkbox"/> | 27 Is intolerant of delays | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Has poor handwriting | <input type="checkbox"/> | 28 Relentlessly pursues own needs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Has difficulty organizing tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> | 29 Argues with adults or bosses others | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Has difficulty making transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 Defies or refuses to comply with rules | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 Complains of being bored | <input type="checkbox"/> | 31 Blames others for his or her mistakes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 Has many ideas at once | <input type="checkbox"/> | 32 Is easily angered when people set limits | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 Is very intuitive or very creative | <input type="checkbox"/> | 33 Lies to avoid consequences of actions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 Is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli | <input type="checkbox"/> | 34 Has protracted, explosive temper tantrums or rages | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 Has periods of excessive, rapid speech | <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 Has destroyed property intentionally | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 Is willful and refuses to be subordinated | <input type="checkbox"/> | 37 Curses viciously in anger | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 Displays periods of extreme hyperactivity | <input type="checkbox"/> | 38 Makes moderate threats against others or self | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 Displays abrupt, rapid mood swings | <input type="checkbox"/> | 39 Has made clear threats of suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 Has irritable mood states | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 Is fascinated with blood and gore | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 Has elated or silly, giddy mood states | <input type="checkbox"/> | 41 Has seen or heard hallucinations | <input type="checkbox"/> |

IF SO...

Treating bipolar disorder in kids has never been easy, but these days it's at least possible. The first step is usually drugs. After that come individual therapy, family therapy and lifestyle changes

LITHIUM

The old standby, eases symptoms by regulating several neurotransmitters, but doesn't work for everyone

ANTICONVULSANT DRUGS

First used for epilepsy, such medications as Depakote and Lamictal calm manic storms

ATYPICAL ANTIPSYCHOTICS

Drugs including Zyprexa and Risperdal, designed to help schizophrenics battle delusions, can do the same for bipolars

ANTIDEPRESSANTS

Risky, since they can trigger bipolar cycling, but drugs such as Prozac may be part of the mix

LIFESTYLE

Schedules are key, with fixed bed and wake-up times. Foods with caffeine should be limited. Teens should avoid drugs and alcohol

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Kids need counseling to help them balance sleep, meals, work and play. They also must talk about problems at home and resolve crises that can trigger the disorder

FAMILY THERAPY

Parents must learn when to give in to a child, critical early in treatment, and when to stay firm. Family bickering should be kept to a minimum. Siblings can serve as trusted eyes and ears for a child whose perceptions are out of whack

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