

# Being in Charge of My Life: Managing my Illness

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#### Overview

- Bipolar Diagnosis...In relation to Grief
- Cultural Myths
- The Myth of Closure
- Acceptance
- Self-Love
- Coping Skills
- Resources

## Receiving a Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder

- The diagnosis of a mental illness is a loss.
- It can feel like a loss of an understanding of who are...
- It's a loss of how we see ourselves.
- Loss of normalcy being forced to endure and cope with things that make no sense at all.

## Definition of Grief and Processing...

 Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behaviors.

 Grieving allows us to take away pain and unfinished emotional business.

#### Grief

- Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind.
- We have been socialized to believe that these feelings are abnormal and unnatural.
- If we continue to not acknowledge the pain and we stuff it down, the pot will eventually boil over.
- Not processing grief can cause the emotions to manifest themselves in other ways that we might not recognize or understand as GRIEF.

#### Self Medication

Food
Alcohol and other Drugs
Anger
Exercise
Fantasy (movies, TV, books)

Isolation

Sex

Shopping (Retail Therapy)
Workaholism

### Myths about Grief

- Don't feel bad
- Replace the Loss
- Just give it time
- Time heals all wounds
- Be strong for others
- Keep Busy
- Grieve alone (unspoken)
- "I know how you feel"

NO YOU DON'T!

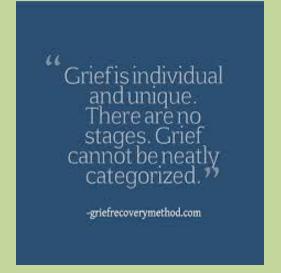
## The Myth of Closure

Emotional Completion

 When we allow ourselves to go through the grieving process, we are completing our relationship to the pain caused by the loss...

## Formerly used Stages of Grief

- Denial I'm not sick. I'm fine.
- Anger To hell with this illness and this medication.
- Bargaining If I just go to therapy, I won't be sick anymore.
- Depression I'm sick. I'll always be sick. What's the point?
- Acceptance Ok, I'm sick.
   Now what?



#### Let the healing begin...

- We make different decisions and feel/live free.
- We regain trust...Unresolved grief causes us to lose out.
- We may gain/regain faith in our spirituality/religion/higher power.
- We are meant to be a processing plant, not a storage tank.

#### Acceptance

Acceptance isn't a finite destination

It's something we choose everyday.

#### Self-Love

 Loving Yourself...is having the willingness and acquiring the ability to allow yourself the right to make your own choices for yourself without the need for the approval of others.

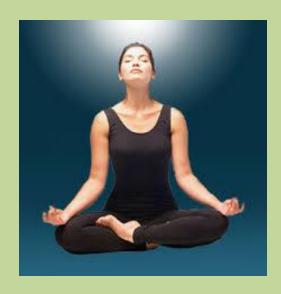
### Support for Grief Recovery

- Grief Recovery Institute Grief Recovery Method
- Individual Grief Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Completion Letter
- Ceremony
- Journal experience...
- Peers
- DBSA



## Coping Skills Toolbox

- Journaling
- Support Network
- Relaxation
- Meditation/Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness
- Yoga
- Creative Outlets
- Individual Therapy
- Goal Setting
- Empowerment with Medication
- IPSRT (Interpersonal & Social Rhythm Therapy)
- DBSA



#### In closing...

- We need to feel our feelings. Hopefully, we learn to leave the guilt and shame behind...They weren't very helpful anyway.
- Processing our Grief makes Acceptance a reality.
- Support System and Resources are vital to our recovery.
- Coping Skills are more than just a cliché.

#### Resources and Citation

#### ~ Books~

- The Grief Recovery Handbook Russell Friedman and John W. James
- Moving Beyond Loss- Russell Friedman and John W. James
  - ~ Web Resources~
- http://natashatracy.com/