



Understanding Your Mind

Helping People Treat Their Bipolar Disorder And Depression

(NAPSA)—Research has shown that if bipolar disorder and depression are correctly diagnosed, they can be effectively treated. Doctors caution, however, that treatments for these illnesses only work when patients stick with their treatment plans—and a recent survey found that many patients don't.

Bipolar disorder and depression are real, treatable medical illnesses marked by changes in mood, thought, energy and behavior. More than 30 million Americans live with these potentially life-threatening illnesses.

According to a survey by the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), 40 percent of people with bipolar disorder who do not adhere to their treatment plans say “forgetting” is their number one reason, followed by side effects (nine percent). In addition, 40 percent of survey respondents said their physicians did not give any suggestions to help them deal with medication side effects.

To help increase patient adherence with treatment, DBSA has developed an online tracking tool to help people with bipolar disorder and depression better manage their symptoms. The tool is available at www.DBSAlliance.org and highlights ideas for wellness plans—with a focus on such topics as diagnosis, treatment and medications.

“Adherence is a challenge for any patient—but for a person with bipolar disorder or depression, it's even more difficult. Often when a



person with one of these illnesses starts to feel better, he or she will stop taking medication,” says Lydia Lewis, DBSA's president. “It's vital that a patient and a physician work together to develop an effective wellness plan and that the patient stays with it.”

Some tips to help people stay on their treatment plan:

- Check for symptoms and how much they keep you from doing things you want to do
- Monitor your mood triggers
- Stay on a regular sleep schedule
- Eat regularly and watch for changes in your appetite
- Exercise on a routine basis
- Set aside time to relax
- Reach out to others
- Keep track of medication side effects and talk about them with your doctor
- Write down any barriers that might be standing in your way of getting well

For more information on the Online Wellness Tracking Tool or other information on bipolar disorder or depression, visit www.DBSAlliance.org or call 1-800-826-3632.