

Helpful Pointers from Maggie Galbarczyk, psychologist with expertise regarding bipolarity

High Risk Periods

- Times when the risk of developing an episode of mania or depression increases
- Can be times of the year, events, anniversaries
- Can be upsetting and difficult experiences
(Bereavements, relationship problems)
- Can be exciting, happy experiences
(Holidays, weddings)
- Can be a build up of smaller events
(Too many demands at home or work)

Protective Factors

- These are things that help protect you from becoming unwell
- May include situations, activities, people, treatments etc.
- The protective factors may be different for depression than for mania/hypomania

Early warning signs

- Early Signs are changes that occur in weeks/days before onset of severe mood change.
- Often present as subtle changes to normal functioning self and affect your thinking, feelings, behaviour and biology.
- Changes are often unusual or out of character for the individual, e.g. feeling more anxious for no apparent reason or feeling more tired, weary and overwhelmed when nothing has really changed to their normal routine, etc
- Changes can be exaggerations of normal interests and activities, e.g. (hypomania) going to the gym more frequently, attending church more frequently (generally doing more of something or becoming more involved in an interest can be an early warning sign).
- Early Signs if they are present get worse over time.
- Early Signs tend to cluster together, i.e. there is more than one change occurring.