

Bipolar disorder overview

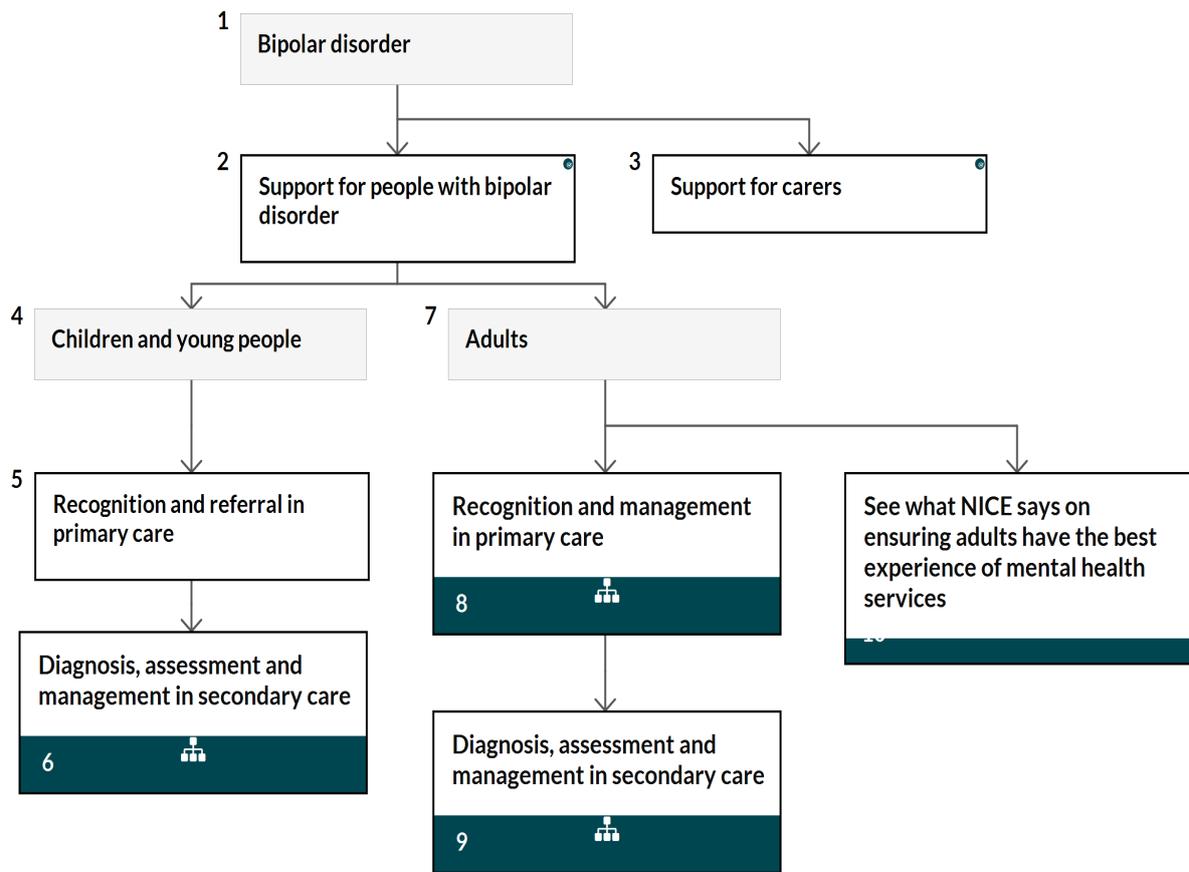
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/bipolar-disorder>

NICE Pathway last updated: 19 August 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Bipolar disorder

No additional information

2 Support for people with bipolar disorder

Use this interactive flowchart in conjunction with NICE's recommendations on [service user experience](#) to improve the experience of care for adults with bipolar disorder using mental health services, and for adults, children and young people:

- promote a positive recovery message from the point of diagnosis and throughout care
- build supportive and empathic relationships as an essential part of care.

Follow the recommendations in [general principles of care for young people with psychosis and schizophrenia](#) to improve the experience of care for children and young people with bipolar disorder.

Information and support

Consider identifying and offering assistance with education, financial and employment problems that may result from the behaviour associated with bipolar disorder, such as mania and hypomania. If the person with bipolar disorder agrees, this could include talking directly with education staff, creditors and employers about bipolar disorder and its possible effects, and how the person can be supported.

Encourage people with bipolar disorder to develop advance statements while they are stable, in collaboration with their carers if possible.

Explain and discuss making a lasting power of attorney with adults with bipolar disorder and their carers if there are financial problems resulting from mania or hypomania.

Alcohol, tobacco, prescription and non-prescription medication and illicit drugs

Discuss the use of alcohol, tobacco, prescription and non-prescription medication and illicit drugs with the person, and their carer if appropriate. Explain the possible interference of these substances with the therapeutic effects of prescribed medication and psychological interventions.

Treatment and support for specific populations

People from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups

Follow the recommendations in [race, culture and ethnicity](#) in psychosis and schizophrenia when working with people with bipolar disorder from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Women of childbearing potential

See what NICE says on [antenatal and postnatal mental health](#) for guidance on the management of bipolar disorder during pregnancy and the postnatal period and in women and girls of childbearing potential.

People with a learning disability

Ensure that people with bipolar disorder and a coexisting learning disability are offered the same range of treatments and services as other people with bipolar disorder.

Older people

Ensure that older people with bipolar disorder are offered the same range of treatment and services as younger people with bipolar disorder.

People with coexisting mental health disorders

Offer people with bipolar disorder and coexisting disorders such as personality disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders or substance misuse treatment in line with the relevant NICE recommendations, in addition to their treatment for bipolar disorder, be alert to the potential for drug interactions and use clinical judgement. See what NICE says on:

- [personality disorders](#)
- [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#)
- [generalised anxiety disorder](#)
- [coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: assessment and management in healthcare settings](#)
- [drug misuse prevention](#).

People with rapid cycling bipolar disorder

Offer people with rapid cycling bipolar disorder the same interventions as people with other

types of bipolar disorder because there is currently no strong evidence to suggest that people with rapid cycling bipolar disorder should be treated differently.

Quality standards

The following quality statement is relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

Bipolar disorder, psychosis and schizophrenia in children and young people

8. Education and employment-related training

3 Support for carers

Assessment

Offer carers of people with bipolar disorder an assessment (provided by mental health services) of their own needs and discuss with them their strengths and views. Develop a care plan to address any identified needs, give a copy to the carer and their GP and ensure it is reviewed annually.

Advise carers about their statutory right to a formal carer's assessment provided by social care services and explain how to access this. See [the NICE Pathway on supporting adult carers](#).

Providing and sharing information

Give carers written and verbal information in an accessible format about:

- diagnosis and management of bipolar disorder
- positive outcomes and recovery
- types of support for carers
- role of teams and services
- getting help in a crisis.

When providing information, offer the carer support if necessary.

As early as possible negotiate with the person with bipolar disorder and their carers about how information about the person will be shared. When discussing rights to confidentiality, emphasise the importance of sharing information about risks and the need for carers to understand the person's perspective. Foster a collaborative approach that supports both people

with bipolar disorder and their carers, and respects their individual needs and interdependence.

Review regularly how information is shared, especially if there are communication and collaboration difficulties between the person and their carer.

Decision-making

Include carers in decision-making if the person agrees.

Education and support

Offer a carer-focused education and support programme, which may be part of a family intervention for bipolar disorder, as early as possible to all carers. The intervention should:

- be available as needed
- have a positive message about recovery.

Safeguarding

Identify children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect who are dependent on, living with or caring for a person with bipolar disorder and:

- review the need for an assessment according to local safeguarding procedures for children or adults as appropriate
- offer psychological and social support as needed.

Quality standards

The following quality statements are relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

Bipolar disorder, psychosis and schizophrenia in children and young people

4. Support for carers

Bipolar disorder in adults

3. Involving carers in care planning

4 Children and young people

No additional information

5 Recognition and referral in primary care

Do not use questionnaires in primary care to identify bipolar disorder in children or young people.

If bipolar disorder is suspected in primary care in children or young people aged under 14 years, refer them to child and adolescent mental health services.

If bipolar disorder is suspected in primary care in young people aged 14 years or over, refer them to a specialist early intervention in psychosis service or child and adolescent mental health services team with expertise in the assessment and management of bipolar disorder in line with the recommendations in this interactive flowchart. The service should be multidisciplinary and have:

- engagement or assertive outreach approaches
- family involvement and family intervention
- access to structured psychological interventions and psychologically informed care
- vocational and educational interventions
- access to pharmacological interventions
- professionals who are trained and competent in working with young people with bipolar disorder.

6 Diagnosis, assessment and management in secondary care

[See Bipolar disorder / Diagnosing, assessing and managing bipolar disorder in young people in secondary care](#)

7 Adults

No additional information

8 Recognition and management in primary care

[See Bipolar disorder / Recognising and managing bipolar disorder in adults in primary care](#)

9 **Diagnosis, assessment and management in secondary care**

See [Bipolar disorder / Diagnosing, assessing and managing bipolar disorder in adults in secondary care](#)

10 **See what NICE says on ensuring adults have the best experience of mental health services**

See [Service user experience in adult mental health services](#)

Glossary

Carer

(a person who provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled)

Sources

[Bipolar disorder: assessment and management](#) (2014 updated 2017) NICE guideline CG185

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should [assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations](#) wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.