

## BIPOLAR DISORDER SAMPLE HEALTH CARDS

Welcome to the Health Cards System. Below you will find seventeen sample Health Cards. Please print these cards and use them to determine if you have any similar symptoms. This will help you fill in your own cards. They will also give you an idea of what categories you want to use with your own cards. I suggest that you read *How to Use the Health Cards* from the first download before you go over these cards. There is a glossary in the first packet that will explain any unfamiliar terms you may find on these sample cards. Please note that it's normal for some columns to be blank. The cards are always a work in progress.

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<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>ANXIETY-OVERSTIMULATED</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>Pinched mouth and face            Feels like ADD            Even simple tasks are too much - such as washing the dishes            Overwhelmed            Sighing "whew"            Body pain            Feel that I am doing something wrong            Guilt- Worry            Teary            Feel that all appointments are too much            I can not focus enough to start tasks            Unfounded and unreasonable fear that something is wrong or that I have done something wrong            Brain feels broken and fragmented            I feel very confused            Ringing ears            Brain racing and looping            I am aware of sleeping            Restless            I say unreasonable things out of anger            Everything seems insurmountable            Trouble breathing            This is the main reason I can not work</p>	<p>Breathing exercises            Go to yoga            Sing            Take kava kava or Ativan            Walk/exercise            Remind myself that this is BP and that it is ok - things will get better they always do            No caffeine or chocolate            Eat comfort foods instead of stimulating foods such as Thai or Indian food            Eat grains - drink grain tea            This is a yin state, go for the yang            Relaxing music            No music or outside stimulation            Go to a movie            Cancel appointments without guilt - explain the situation            Smell lavender            Rescue Remedy            Limit media addiction!            Turn off any contentious radio interviews            Take on less- if you have to do something, commit to just one day. You can add other days if you feel better</p>	<p>Do not hover around me asking for attention            I do not need hugs or loving            Instead, offer a massage            Offer to do a task that I find overwhelming such as the dishes            Ask me how you can help - if I can not tell you do one of the following                Pick up the living room                Do the dishes- clean the kitchen                Spend some time with me doing what I would like                Suggest a warm bath with lavender            Suggest kava kava and Ativan            Take a nice, long walk with me            On some days I want to be left alone- if I do not respond to the above- just do something you think would help me            Understand that I can not do things when I am like this- I need help            Lessen the stimulation around me            Do not ask me to do too much- don't ask too many questions            Know that I am not just canceling to be canceling- I really can not go places</p>

<b>ANXIETY SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I feel irritated at everyone            People seem to ask really stupid questions and I think - god, they are so #*^@\$%#\$ stupid            They are so slow            I feel like I am a failure and that I could do everything differently            "I've taken on too much."            I think- I can't get all of this done            Should I do this?            Can I do this?            Can't stop working - have to finish projects (they don't actually get finished)            Wake up early and can not get back to sleep            Can't relax            I will take on even more when I am stressed            Can not slow down            Brain is like scrambled eggs            Can't do anything in moderation            Everything is seen as much larger and worse than it is            Head feels full            Body is tense- stiff shoulders and breathing trouble            Feel buzzy</p>	<p>Set a limit to ideas and acting on ideas- set the goal not to start anything new until other things are finished            Exercise more!            Realize that this is a mood swing and that I can deal with it if I treat it like bipolar instead of something wrong with me            Try not to make any decisions when I am anxious            Understand that the behavior of others is the same, I am the one who has changed            Know that anxiety/over stimulation leads to negativity. I have to really try not to take this out on other people            If I have to go somewhere such as a restaurant, I will not change restaurants or complain about the table and the food            If I have to go to a concert, event or party, I can take Ativan before I go and make sure I have Rescue Remedy in my bag            Don't make quick and harsh decisions, such as quitting a class or an obligation. Instead just take some time off and go back when you feel better. There is no need to wreck the future anymore!</p>	<p>Remind me to take Rescue Remedy if I am in a stress situation            Remind me to take Ativan before a stressful event. I will probably say I do not need it, so remind me that I said I would take it. I can at least take it with me            Shop for groceries. I get really, really anxious in supermarkets when I am not doing well            Do not hover around me. I do not like to have people behind me. Stay in front and keep out of my way - especially if I am in the kitchen            Be decisive- make decisions. Do you ask me to do anything that you can do yourself. I can't make decisions when I am well, so you have to do what you want. I will join you if I can.</p>

<b>ANXIETY SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>Do not want to be touched            Affection just seems like one more task            I have to accomplish            Can't give Ivan the attention he likes            Want to quit everything at once            I can not seem to get perspective            "I just want to work and be productive            like a normal person" except that I am            doing much more than a "normal" person            Too stressed to relax!            I read, listen to music, write and think            about a million things all at the same            time. It is like an addiction            Arthritis is worse            I crave easy to prepare junk food            Feels like I will stay this way forever            I am not usually depressed at these            times            I absolutely cannot take care of my living            space. It is simply too overwhelming            "Where did all of that laundry come            from? Why do we have so many clothes?            Why are there books everywhere?"            Can not cook            Feel teary            Feel that everyone is against me            I am mean- so this leads to an irritation            swing</p>		

<b>ANXIETY SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>Feel like nothing will work out            "Please just leave me alone!"            "Do not ask me any questions right now."            "Just let me finish this and I will help you with that."            I just wish that people would leave me alone so I can sit with a book and eat ice cream!            "Why do you need so much from me?"            Why can't people give me space?            I feel crowded in crowds as though people are too close            I feel guilty about all of these thoughts and feelings            This can really wear me out physically and emotionally- it is like a marathon of ickiness            I eventually have to just veg out and completely stop everything            I get very negative when I get over stimulated in a crowded place            Can't choose a restaurant. There is always something wrong. I will sit down and then get up. The decision is too hard and I am too overwhelmed            I do not like to have people stand too close to me or to stand behind me. This really bothers me and makes me think that something is wrong.</p>		

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>ATTENTION/FOCUS PROBLEMS</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>It is very difficult to stick with one project</p> <p>I am easily distracted by other projects, cleaning, crafts, cooking, anything!</p> <p>I stare at others trying to listen to them</p> <p>I am more interested in what others are doing as it is hard to focus on my own project</p> <p>I take on too much and then can not handle the projects</p> <p>I am not a good teacher when I have attention problems</p> <p>I am easily overwhelmed</p> <p>I start something new the minute I have the thought about it no matter what I am doing at the moment</p> <p>I can stare into space as though my brain has a little blip</p> <p>My brain feels like it is scrambled</p> <p>Thoughts are fast, but they are not very clear, They are like mini thoughts</p> <p>Breath is shallow</p> <p>Driving is difficult</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Use Brenda's idea of writing my task on a piece of paper and the minute I want change tasks I look at the paper and remember what I am supposed to do</p> <p>Remind myself that I am doing something specific and that I can not start something else until I am finished</p> <p>Be aware of the signs when they are mild and try to get the brain back on track</p> <p>Macrobiotic diet- miso soup, root vegetable soup or something like that</p> <p>Have some soy milk Julie!</p> <p>This is a terrible time to have coffee or chocolate</p> <p>Go easy on myself</p> <p>Don't give up on a task - keep pulling myself back into the task until it is finished. I may have to do this every few minutes, but at least things get done</p> <p>Break projects into small sections and plan on finishing a section instead of the project</p> <p>I make a pact with myself that I will make a decision and stick to it</p> <p>I will not drive around aimlessly; instead, I will take charge and make a decision</p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>Point out that I seem a bit unfocused and ask me how you can help</p> <p>Help me do the tasks</p> <p>Limit stimulation</p> <p>Physical contact is difficult - short hugs are better</p> <p>Head and foot massages are nice</p> <p>Help me make a list of the things I have to get done and see if you can do something on the list</p> <p>Do not make suggestions that will not help (you should not take on so much, Julie etc); instead, help me in the moment and we can talk about prevention later</p> <p>Help me get organized by helping me with cleaning and straightening things</p> <p>Understand that this is not on purpose- I am not normally unfocused and unorganized</p> <p>Cook dinner and do the dishes</p> <p>Take on some of my responsibilities if you can</p>

<p><b>Julie's Card</b></p>	<p><b>DEPRESSION</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>"I'm bored"                      "You never want to do anything with me"                      "What is the point?"                      "I have no friends"                      "This will never work. I will never succeed"                      "I wish I were dead"                      "I feel like a failure"                      "You never want to do anything. You never plan anything."                      "What is the point of life?"                      Embarrassed about my lack of performance academically and professionally - "It took me eight years to finish college. I should be a lawyer or a professor by now."                      Sympathy sob                      Is this all there is?                      Sitting in chair                      Excess baths                      Excess eating                      Can't make decisions                      Can't create anything                      Can't ask for help                      Can't call people for company</p>	<p>I can listen when you tell me that you think I am depressed and need help                      I can exercise                      Do yoga for depression                      I can really be careful with what I eat                      Limit sugar, wheat, dairy                      I can eat the green diet                      Peppermint aromatherapy                      Know what type of depression I am having - that way I can treat it correctly                      Remind myself that it is ok to get nothing done                      Spend the day taking care of myself                      I will make a decision even though it seems impossible. I will remind myself that I will not like the decision no matter what, but I am going to decide anyway                      I will not drive aimlessly                      If I am standing on a street, unable to decide where to go, I will decide to do something other than eating                      I accept that decisions are almost impossible when I am depressed, so I will act like I am not depressed and will make decisions like a well person</p>	<p>Call me and ask me to do something! If you have not heard from me in a while, I am probably depressed and can not ask for friendship                      Plan something for us to do together                      Get me outside and doing things                      Massage                      Do something together that I want to do                      "I can see that you are depressed. How can I help."                      Do not ask me if anything is wrong. I will say no. Do not ask me how I am.                      Do not try to talk me out of the depression, instead get me to do something active                      Take a walk with me                      I do not need a hug or loving unless I ask                      Do not try to talk me out of my negative thoughts (Julie. You know that you have friends!) - it will not work. Do not try to reason with me - I am not able to reason when I am depressed                      If you know I am depressed, do not have a long conversation with me about our problems - I will convolute everything you say...</p>

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.	WHAT I CAN DO contd...	HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...
<p>I focus on what you do wrong</p> <p>Weight gain</p> <p>Lack of movement</p> <p>Fatalistic thinking</p> <p>Can't try new things</p> <p>Scared to be an artist</p> <p>Can't sing</p> <p>Negative talk about myself internally and externally</p> <p>Giving away things</p> <p>Everything is difficult, esp daily tasks</p> <p>Feel very unworthy of love, praise and friendship</p> <p>Teary</p> <p>Tired</p> <p>Untalkative</p> <p>I put my head in my hands</p> <p>Sighing</p> <p>Stare into space</p> <p>Can't make a decision</p> <p>Sad all of the time</p> <p>Think about the past</p> <p>Focus on what is wrong</p> <p>See no hope for the future</p> <p>Feel that things will never get better and that things were never better in the past</p> <p>It feels as though I have been depressed forever</p>	<p>I do not have to do things well, I just have to do them</p> <p>I remind myself that it will end</p> <p>Use cognitive therapy for the negative thoughts</p> <p>Read <i>Bipolar Happens!</i> for motivation</p> <p>I can say no to over analyzing and just get on with life</p> <p>Try to be with people</p> <p>Julie! I am talking to you. Go exercise and fix the diet. If you are reading this it means you are restless and unfocused. Remember what it feels like to be motivated, relaxed and productive? You can have that again if you do the tools. You can do it. Start this minute</p> <p>Julie, keep on going. It will lift eventually. Just keep doing the things that help and it will stop</p> <p>Do not try to take care of big things if they can be put off - if they can not be put off, ask for help.</p> <p>I will not cancel appointments - I will just go and do my best</p> <p>I can exercise even though I am tired and weary - I can take it slowly ( a walk instead of a class, etc)</p> <p>I will not make decisions when I am ill</p>	<p>Do not ask me what you can do - I can not decide when I am down. It is better for you to say - we are going to.... or let's go do.....</p> <p>I appreciate it if you do things with me if you have time instead of leaving me alone</p> <p>Get out the depression health card, put it in my hand and ask me to read it. It is hard for me to take care of myself when I am down</p> <p>Do not take my negative thoughts seriously. My life is not terrible, I just feel that it is when I am down. You are not terrible either</p> <p>Remind me to take my Serzone, if you know I have not taken it, go get it and hand it to me</p> <p>Do not get stressed or down just because I am - take care of yourself</p> <p>Laugh at me sometimes - the things I think and say can be pretty ridiculous and humor helps</p> <p>Understand that when I am really ill, I can not say thank you for all that you do. But I do thank you and I will tell you that when I get better.</p>



<b>DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>Brain racing and looping of negative thoughts</p> <p>Overly sensitive, sometimes extremely sensitive</p> <p>I over analyze everything that happens - esp after a phone conversation: Did I talk too long? Is she mad at me? These are the first signs of paranoia and I have to really be careful and look at my paranoia card</p> <p>I often wake up feeling guilty - but there is not anything specific to feel guilty about</p> <p>I feel very inadequate and worthless</p> <p>Over sensitive - feelings get hurt really easily. It is hard to forgive people for the things they say</p> <p>On some days I feel so unmotivated. I am not exactly depressed, just shut down. These are the days I stay home all day and want to eat ice cream and read. This happens when the weather is gray and rainy</p> <p>Can't get out of bed and get things going</p> <p>Excessive sleep</p> <p>Isolation (no one cares about me)</p>	<p>I can remind myself that this is not me- it is bipolar disorder</p> <p>I can focus on the friends that I do have- I can focus on Ivan and my family and all of the wonderful things they do for me</p> <p>I can remember that things always get better. They always have in the past</p> <p>I can remember that everything that happens to me helps me to understand what others go through</p> <p>I can let go of the past by saying - this is a typical bipolar reaction - I am not usually so focused on the past</p> <p>I can focus on what I can do by saying- Julie that is just a bipolar thought - you can get things done</p> <p>Remind myself that these thoughts are not real and they will go away- they always have in the past</p> <p>Try to walk in the sun in the morning. Get yourself going on a positive, active note. Get out of the house!</p> <p>I think that B vitamins make a difference. I have had less depression since I started B5 for arthritis</p> <p>Remind myself that it will end. It always does</p>	<p>If you think I am making a harsh decision - remind me that I decided not to make decisions when I am ill and that I can wait a few days to make the decision</p> <p>Understand that this has nothing and I mean NOTHING to do with you.</p> <p>Do not take my behavior personally</p> <p>Know that I am trying to get out of this and that it just takes time</p> <p>Understand that when I am sick, I do not feel love from anyone and can not give love to anyone- it is nothing personal and is no reflection on our relationship</p> <p>Just do the things on the list. Do not look to me for help or reassurance. I can not give it to you right now. Just do what you know is best</p> <p>Don't give up on me. This will end. I will get better. I always do. Know that I am really working hard to stop this depression and your help really matters</p> <p>Remind me to read these cards! Get the cards out and hand them to me.</p> <p>If you do not hear from me in a while and wonder what is going on in my life, simply call and ask.</p>

<b>DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>Energy level is really low - as though I have the flu</p> <p>I just can not get things going</p> <p>Things that normally only bother me a little, such as problems with dental bills or car insurance, bother me immensely when I am depressed</p> <p>Dream about the past</p> <p>I dwell on the passing of time and the sadness of life</p> <p>The suicides of others become sad and fascinating</p> <p>I can not listen to old music that has old memories</p> <p>Everything is tied to something else, I can not just live</p> <p>The walls are closing in on me - I feel trapped and cooped up- there is no clear space- I need some air</p> <p>Can't work on projects that once seemed so important</p> <p>Believe that I am worthless and that every thing I do is worthless</p> <p>I do not want to live</p> <p>My thoughts about myself are true</p> <p>I feel more physical pain than normal</p> <p>I completely lose confidence in myself</p>	<p>I can repeat the mantra: TREAT BIPOLAR DISORDER FIRST</p> <p>Julie, there is nothing wrong with your life. Nothing has changed except your brain chemistry. All of the symptoms are the same- the loneliness , the worry about friends, not wanting to be alone - all of this is the same every time you are sick. So focus on getting well and don't make big changes</p> <p>The only solution is in treating the depression for what it is - a sign that I am sick. I can then deal with what caused me to get depressed again.</p> <p>People can help me use my tools but they are not a cure for depression. I have to treat depression as an illness with the help of my friends instead of expecting that being with them 24 hours a day will make me feel better. It won't</p> <p>I have to very specifically look at my business returns to see that there is no trend and that the business is the same as it has always been. There is nothing wrong except the way my sick brain sees things.</p> <p>Call someone supportive</p>	<p>It is often hard for me to make phone calls and ask for help when I'm down</p> <p>Please keep in normal contact with me even when I'm not responding. This has nothing to do with you. I still love to hear from you even if it takes a while for me to get back to you</p> <p>Know the signs that I am having friend troubles and ask me about them</p> <p>Ask me, what are your thoughts when you are depressed and what can I do to help with those thoughts?</p> <p>If you know that I'm depressed, try to remember that I get really needy and feel abandoned - so feel free to call and see how I am.</p> <p>When you see me get into deep philosophical mode remind me that I am probably depressed and that I should treat the depression first. Don't spend hours analyzing something with me.</p> <p>Learn the questions that I ask when I'm depressed.</p> <p>Just ask me how I am and if there is anything you can do.</p>

**DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.**

I believe that I am a failure and have always been a failure  
 I can not take care of things around the house  
 I do not feel that I am a good friend or partner  
 I feel that my life is hard, has always been hard and will always be hard  
 I do not have any hope for the future  
 I feel so much guilt because I am such a burden  
 I wish I would get hit by a car  
 Maybe my car will wreck and things will be better  
 I have death images ( I see myself or someone else getting killed - if it is someone else I then see myself running to the scene to help them) I know that this is psychosis and that I have to look at my psychosis card  
 I believe what others say about me even if they are off base  
 I see my body as very mortal - like a piece of cheese that can be injured  
 I am very embarrassed about my life  
 I get angry and impatient if I bump my head or do something physically stupid

**WHAT I CAN DO contd...**

Send an email to my friends and tell them I am down and need some support  
 Join a singing group  
 Stay away from non supportive and negative people  
 Look at my normal card and read my normal letter to remind myself that this is depression and not the real me and I will get better  
 Force myself to get out and go to karaoke or see my friends  
 Be aware that isolating myself never works and only feeds the thoughts that I have no friends  
 Know that when I feel abandoned it is a bipolar thing and not real. I can't act on it and say things I will regret. I have to use my own tools to stop the episode so that I can stop the feelings.  
 Remind myself that depression is NOT philosophical. It just feels that way. The conversations I have when I'm depressed about relationships and life are usually distorted.  
 I just have to remind myself that suicidal thoughts are normal when I'm sick and that they are not real. They are just a sign that I need to get better.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...**

Know that crying is a normal part of depression and is a sign that I am sick and could use your love.  
 Remind me that it always ends and that it is just an illness that I need to treat.  
 Remind me that depression is like diabetes and that it has nothing to do with who I am but everything to do with my brain.  
 I work hard not to overwhelm people with my needs which means that I rarely ask for help. Know that if I give you these health cards that I consider you a good friend and support and that I could use your help even when I can't ask for it.  
 Learn my triggers and help me avoid them.  
 Remind yourself that though the real me is normal, the bipolar disorder me is not normal at all and I need special help when I'm sick. The illness attacks the brain and it is hard to fight it sometimes. You really can make a difference just by calling and asking how I am and saying you are thinking of me.

<b>DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>My brain is a looping movie of all of the things that are wrong in my life - this takes all of my energy and makes me very weary</p> <p>I just want to eat junk food</p> <p>I do not want to cook - it is too overwhelming even to think about cooking</p> <p>Can't work on my many projects that usually bring me pleasure - I look at them and think - what were you thinking, this is crap. I might throw them away or cancel classes</p> <p>I cancel appointments</p> <p>I am much more tired than usual - the whole world feels like my burden</p> <p>I lose physical strength - exercise is a lot harder</p> <p>I feel so much self pity and I feel the self pity is justified. "My life has been so hard."</p> <p>I get clumsy. Things fall out of my hands.</p> <p>I trip and am not in focus</p> <p>I am sure that I have no friends and that I will never have friends</p> <p>I see myself as a pariah that scares people off</p> <p>I am not likable</p> <p>"I didn't used to have this problem."</p>	<p>Remind myself that when I start comparing my life to other people's lives I am sick. If I think - they get to go to movies and have drinks outside- it means I am forgetting my real life and that I do all of the things that everyone else does. It just means that my brain is off track and I need to get it on track. It doesn't mean I need to go out more.</p> <p>Remind myself that I have plenty of friends and I am usually quite satisfied.</p> <p>Joining more groups is not a solution to depression - it just means I am depressed around more people. The only solution is to treat depression first.</p> <p>I have to decide if going out and partying is worth the mood swings.</p> <p>Triggers cause depression and unless I'm willing to deal with the triggers I will continue to get sick. It's a choice</p> <p>Taking a class or starting something new when you are sick never works. You usually get better and then wonder what in the world you were thinking to take on another project.</p>	<p>I don't want to be a burden to anyone so it is often up to you to seek me out if you see I'm sick.</p> <p>If you see I have completely stopped cooking and can't even manage to make a sandwich, make some food for me and make sure I eat a bipolar friendly meal</p> <p>Ask me if I've read my normal letter lately. Read my normal letter to remind yourself of what I'm like when I'm well</p> <p>Even if it takes years, you have to keep trying to understand this illness. Help me! Help me by learning to use these cards and then remembering to get them out when you see the first sign that I'm sick. It's such a relief for me when you take initiative to help me when I'm too sick to help myself. I appreciate it so much.</p> <p>If you have caretaking issues please go see a therapist - I am sorry I'm so sick so often and I really don't want to burden you.</p> <p>Thank you for your help. It keeps me alive.</p>

<b>DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS contd.</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>What am I doing wrong- why don't I have any friends?</p> <p>The behavior of others is not enough - I talked to her, but she did not respond in the right way- she was not happy enough to see me- she does not like me (this is paranoia Julie!)</p> <p>I compare myself to others</p> <p>It feels like life has left me behind</p> <p>Feel that I am not a part of "things"</p> <p>I feel fragile</p> <p>I worry that I am going to get killed by a car or in some other accident</p> <p>Feel sorry for other people</p> <p>Worry a lot about the state of the world</p> <p>Extremely sensitive to world and local news</p> <p>Worry that someone is going to steal my stuff while I am walking</p> <p>My things are going to get stolen when I walk down the street. Someone is going to steal my computer with all of my work in it. Someone is going to hurt me.</p> <p>I lose interest in people I usually love</p> <p>David is more stressful/ Can't love David fully</p> <p>Lots of fear that something bad is going to happen to me</p>	<p>I can look at my normal card and see if I am acting normal. Almost always that card tells me that I am sick because I am not doing any of my normal behaviors. This is all depression behavior and has nothing to do with my life.</p> <p>Remind myself that nothing has changed - nothing at all has changed - except my brain chemistry and this means I need to focus on treating the depression and not making drastic changes in my life in order to feel better</p> <p>When others upset me, I have to remind myself that people are human and that things are not always perfect. I can handle criticism without getting suicidal. And if the suicidal thoughts start, I just remind myself that this is a normal bipolar disorder reaction to stress and I will be fine.</p> <p>A new boyfriend will cause stress for normal people. For me it causes mood swings. I have to accept this and learn what is real and what's not real. I can't listen to random thoughts without examining them carefully to see if they are constant or if they are part of a mood swing.</p>	<p>Regarding suicide. Learn what kind of suicidal thoughts I have. Ask me about them. If I seem really down, then ask me if I'm suicidal and don't freak out if I say yes, but know that it's a part of the illness and means I'm in a tough downswing and I need extra help and love.</p>

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>My thinking is so distorted. It tells me that all of the past was pointless and a mess and that my future is bleak and that I will never be happy again and have never been really happy in the past. When it gets really bad, I feel very disconnected. I can not feel love or affection for my nephew or for the people in my life. I feel blank.</p> <p>I obsess about one thing and feel that it is the only important thing in my life. Such as my breakup with Ivan. It takes over my feelings and loops constantly in my head.</p> <p>I cry so much more than usual          "When will this end?"          "Please help me."          "I feel so sick." Are my thoughts</p> <p>I keep having clear images of the past such as walking to school in Cannes or being on a street in Japan. I feel like these times were better and will never happen again though I know they were not really good times at all.</p> <p>If my calendar is not filled with things to do every single night (especially on the weekends) I feel that I have no friends and that my life is boring and has no purpose</p>	<p>I have to remember to read these cards when I'm sick to remind myself that this is not the real me. The neediness and unhappiness are not the real me. They are an illness. I know this because they completely go away the minute I get better. I have normal needs and worries when I'm not sick. I don't need to be with people 24 hours a day. I'm not scared of life. I'm just more normal and get on with my day.</p> <p>I have hope when I'm normal. I know that lack of hope is a sign that I need to treat depression. It's not real. The real me has hope and I want to have hope again so I'm going to use these cards to get better.</p>	

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I obsess about having something to do on the weekend- because all "happy and popular" people do things on the weekend. "I wish I would get cancer and die."</p> <p>I can not handle dark and rainy weather</p> <p>I feel so hopeless and helpless I just want to sob</p> <p>I am excessively lonely</p> <p>I really don't like being alone. I don't have fun doing what I normally do alone such as my crafts</p> <p>I am never satisfied with what I have— no matter what it is. It is never right and never enough</p> <p>I am constantly searching for something new</p> <p>I crave change and want someone or something to help me feel better</p> <p>I try to get help from others to feel better, but it usually doesn't work. Men can not solve this illness for me</p> <p>Relationships are so much more complicated. I project a lot and see things as worse than they are</p> <p>I have the thought, "My life is hard."</p> <p>I feel unloved</p>		

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I read things into what I see as trends in my business. When I am sick I am sure that I am not making any money in my business</p> <p>Animals killed on the side of the road are very upsetting</p> <p>People with disabilities or the homeless make me unnaturally sad</p> <p>I see more wrinkles when I look in the mirror</p> <p>When I look at my hands they seem old</p> <p>I worry about getting older</p> <p>I see gray hair when I look in the mirror even when I saw none the day before</p> <p>I wake up feeling like I have no purpose in life</p> <p>I have trouble spelling</p> <p>I am not as creative in terms of writing</p> <p>Want to move to a new place - either a new country or at least a new house or apartment</p> <p>Want to make huge changes in order to feel better - such as starting a new class or quitting something I was already doing</p> <p>Extremely restless - nothing feels right.</p> <p>Nothing is fun</p>		



<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>Everything just seems so pathetic- especially myself. I hear my brain mocking me - it says I am a fool to want to be successful. It tells me that all I create is junk and that people will laugh at my work</p> <p>I get obsessive about the lives of friends</p> <p>Really, really difficult time being alone</p> <p>I think, "I'm plagued by this illness."</p> <p>I think, " Only five more hours till sleep."</p> <p>Obsess over friends and what they are doing</p> <p>Get jealous</p> <p>Feel abandoned by friends (even though nothing has changed in their behavior)</p> <p>I often get depressed the day after something really fun - there is such a let down in my brain the next day</p> <p>Overanalyze my own behavior with others</p> <p>Overanalyze the behavior of the people in my life</p> <p>Read an email and look for hidden meaning</p> <p>Think that someone means something that they don't mean</p>		

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>Ask a lot of philosophical questions such as why are we here and what is the meaning of life</p> <p>I will never find the right guy again</p> <p>I want to look through the local papers to find groups I can join so I can meet more people</p> <p>I miss Ivan terribly and feel that my heart is breaking because of my stupid decision</p> <p>Absolutely can't feel any happiness over my writing success. It means nothing to me at all. I feel dead about it.</p> <p>Want to take a class in order to feel better (especially French classes)</p> <p>I just know for sure that EVERYONE is having more fun than I am and that my life is boring and no one really wants to be with me - everyone else has something to do.</p> <p>I count the hours until I can see someone or go to sleep or do something to deal with this pain.</p> <p>My sense of self comes from others</p> <p>I look to others to make me happy</p> <p>I look to others to help me have some normal feelings</p>		

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I don't have a strong sense of self - who I am and what I want</p> <p>Completely unrealistic with my needs and desires</p> <p>Have a hard time handling the "rejection" of others</p> <p>I feel rejected very easily - in other words I react to what I see as rejection and it makes me want to die</p> <p>Feel like a vegetable - just sitting there unable to do anything at all with my life- I can't even get off the couch much less get something done</p> <p>When someone says something about me that I think is unkind, I want to stand up and leave the room and never see them again. I think that all people feel this way and that I'm a failure</p> <p>My brain tells me over and over that I don't really want to be with the person I'm with. It tells me I should be with someone else or someone "better" though I know that the brain tells me this no matter whom I am with.</p> <p>I honestly feel that I will never be happy again</p> <p>Relationship problems make me suicidal and hopeless</p>		

<b>Depression SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I feel that I will never find someone to share my life with- ever</p> <p>I'm just going through the motions of life and have no desire to live anymore</p> <p>I desperately want to look to others to help me fill this emptiness</p> <p>I feel so awful, lonely and miserable I want to fill every waking moment with people so that I don't feel so terrible</p> <p>I go crazy with making appointments and joining groups so I won't feel so lonely and then when the depression ends I'm over booked and have to cancel</p> <p>I go to sleep thinking about death</p> <p>I'm scared to go to sleep</p> <p>My moods are all over the place. I can't tell what is depression and what is the real me. I make quick and often harsh decisions and then change my mind once again.</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IRRITATION/ANGER</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>I say unreasonable things such as, "We never get asked anywhere and I am sick and tired of doing all the cooking"                      He/She is such a %#\$%!                      "I hate, can't stand, despise....."                      Nit picking you to death- you can not so anything right                      No one can do anything right, the jerks                      "Seattle is an over crowded, expensive, disgusting place to live."                      "People are such sheep."                      Mean                      Gossiping                      Unkind to you or others                      Kick or punch things                      Wanting to break something                      Constant stream of negative talk - internal and external                      Focus on others and their failings                      Just shut up!                      Just shut the f#\$% up!                      Road rage                      No patience with anyone or anything                      Seattle sucks</p>	<p>Keep away from sugar and caffeine                      I am not stupid- I know 100% that this is the mood most affected by food                      Are you living on chocolate?                      Check in with my arthritis pain and do something about it                      Take kava kava or Ativan                      Do some strong self talk that this behavior is not acceptable - this is the episode where I can really control my behavior                      Know the signs - ( getting upset if I knock something over, wanting to kick a washing machine because it is so damn stupid, etc) and do something about it immediately                      Tell others I am irritated and apologize for my behavior                      My goal is to not take my irritation out on others                      Lavender                      Rescue Remedy                      Limit stimulation</p>	<p>Tell me that my irritation and anger are not acceptable and you can not be with me right now                      Be kind and say, Julie, you seem irritated. Are you aware that you are picking on me and hurting my feelings?                      Julie, are you irritated? You seem very negative today. How can I help?                      Say, Julie, you do not usually talk like this. Are you irritated?                      Help me out by telling me that I asked you to tell me when I am being unreasonable                      Do not try to reason with me- be firm and state your feelings and what you are going to do. Do not look for reasons for my behavior- there are no reasons!                      Do not get caught up in my conversations!                      Do not get in an argument with me. Do not keep feeding the anger fires by getting angry yourself. It is pointless.                      Hand me this card and watch me read it and then ask how you can help me right Now</p>

<b>ANGER SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO contd....</b>
<p>Life is stupid            People are stupid            Prices are so out of control! I must protest and make a scene            Extreme dissatisfaction            People can not do anything right            Annoyed, unhappy            People- waiters, drivers, sales people, are so annoying!            Pick, Pick. Pick            I am so, so impatient            Life is one big Murphy's Law            People can not do anything right            I feel upset with myself for being so darn mean - I feel very, very guilty for what I do            I have mean thoughts that I do not want to have            In the past I acted on these thoughts            Everything and I mean everything pisses me off            I tell you that you never help me with anything            Everything is so overwhelmingly and pointlessly stupid!            I feel so much pressure- like I am being forced inside a small box- anger and irritation are my ways of dealing with it            If this mood is combined with anxiety- it is not pretty!</p>	<p>Meditate            Ask for help!            Remove myself from the situation that is causing the irritation            Just stop talking- I can not be negative if I am silent            Try to determine the causes of the irritation and work on those instead of only on symptoms            Determine if it is mania or depression and treat the causes            Ignore the bad thoughts and remind myself that it is bipolar and not the real me            I can tell the person I am with to LOOK AT THE HEALTH CARDS            Do some yoga            The best way to deal with the guilt of having bad thoughts against the people I love is to not act on the thoughts. I have to see them as a sign that I'm sick. They don't have to be real thoughts. I don't have to feel guilty if they are a part of bipolar disorder. I just have to do something to get a lot better so that I can be kind to the people I love.</p>	<p>If I start a conversation that you can tell is argumentative and mean, it is up to you NOT to take part in the conversation by saying, "Julie. I am going to look at the Health Cards when I get home to see how I can deal with this mood. I am not going to talk to you right now. Let's discuss this after I have seen the cards.            Do more things- be more aware- stop falling into the same old traps and making my life miserable because you can not remember how to react to me- educate yourself and stop thinking that I am some terrible person you can not be around. Help me instead of getting angry and arguing with me. It is so very pointless.            Do your share of the work when we have a project so that if I get irritated you can say- well, I have done this and this and this and I will have no ammunition. Understand that this is a tough mood swing for me. I am so angry and mad I can not see straight- it is hard for me to help myself when you are adding your beans to the pot!</p>

<p><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p><b>MANIA/HYPOMANIA</b></p> <p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>"I am fine! You just want to ruin my fun!"                      " I have been depressed for so long. This is just the normal me that you do not know!"                      "I am listening to what you are saying, but I do not think I am manic."                      "I am just normal today."                      "I don't have a gambling problem"                      "Sleep is such a waste of time!"                      I ask,"Do you think I am doing too much?"                      I show you what I have been spending                      Spending more than usual                      Music makes me dance spontaneously                      Very happy                      Really rapid speech - talk over people, can't let them finish                      Sleeping less                      Talking more                      Lack of focus                      Very creative, but never finish things                      Doing too much at once                      Signing up for too many classes                      Taking trips                      Talking to strangers                      Taking on much more than I can possibly finish                      I want to gamble                      Can't sit still                      Grandiose plans                      I make really crazy travel plans                      Say yes to everything</p>	<p>Macrobiotic diet                      Listen when someone tells me I am manic                      Use meds like Ativan and kava kava                      Ask for help in limiting what I take on                      Teach others to say no thanks when I offer to do something that will be too much for me                      Do not get involved with anything new                      Do not take on any new volunteer projects                      Set a wait period that I have to follow                      Don't be a fixer                      Ignore the desire to talk to strangers                      Lavender aromatherapy                      Learn to harness the energy and use it to get things done instead of starting new things                      Create checks and balances when I am well, esp in terms of money                      Be careful of traveling                      Do not plan trips when manic                      Have a travel plan ok'd by other people                      No trips to Vegas                      Apologize if my behavior hurts or confuses someone                      I have to continue to write down everything I spend. I know it is a sign that I am manic if I simply stop writing things down because it is too much trouble</p>	<p>Simply say, "Julie, You asked me to tell you if I think you are doing too much. Right now you are doing too much. How can I help you? " or "Julie. I know that you are happy, but you may want to take some Ativan or kava kava." You can even get them for me and watch me take them.                      "Do you really want to have a coffee right now? Even if it is decaf, I would suggest mint tea! "                      Say no if I ask you to play black jack!                      Try not to get caught up in my enthusiasm                      Do not match my behavior                      Be consistent with your help. Do not let me do something because I convince you it is ok. Have an idea of what is ok and stick to it  <b>Don't ask me if I'm manic. If you think you need to ask if I'm manic that probably means I am MANIC! Just say, "Julie, I think you are manic. How can I help?"</b>                      But, it's also important that you learn my real personality so that you don't think I'm manic when I'm just being myself. This can be really hard as I am such a social person.</p>

**MANIA SYMPTOMS contd..**

Buy a lot of art/craft supplies  
 Sewing is easy- in fact everything is easy!  
 I want to eat what others are having. Can not make a choice in a restaurant because it all looks so good  
 Everything is fun so I have to do it all before I get sick again  
 I do things obsessively, such as starting a new craft, buying all the supplies, teaching myself the craft and then decide to teach the craft to others  
 Run from one project to another - but only finish a small part of each one  
 Cooking five dishes at once- food flies everywhere  
 I chop food erratically  
 I wake up really early instead of staying up  
 Or I can not sleep and have to take meds to calm down so that I can sleep  
 I really, really want to go out drinking and dancing  
 When people are honest with me and say you seem manic, I have the thought - God! They are wrecking my party!  
 Men look really, really good!  
 Life is joyous, scrumptious, delicious, juicy, colorful, fantastic and awesome!  
 Brain racing and looping like crazy  
 I read five or six books at once - while listening to the radio, talking and writing  
 I can get very irritable and impatient

**WHAT I CAN DO contd...**

I can remind myself that what goes up must come down and the down will be a lot worse if I have made a lot of stupid decisions when I am high

Julie. You do not want to spend money right now. You do not want to want to make the same old mistakes. What do you need to do not to stop this episode Julie? What are you willing to do?

Limit charitable gifts. You can't save the world.

Julie, life is so different for you now. Give yourself time to deal with the changes and don't be so hard on yourself because of the manic episode. You are learning. Each new exciting experience has the potential for mania. You have a serious illness and it's hard to treat without full time drugs.

Try the Zyprexa microdosing. Be careful with the Serzone.

Think of ways to create even stronger checks and balances now that you're single and don't have Ivan to monitor your spending and behavior

**HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...**

Manic behavior is unreasonable is some way. I'm always a bit over the top and a bit too happy. I talk a bit too much and go out a bit too much. It can be subtle at first, but the signs are there.

I will never tell you I am manic because I really do not feel that I am - don't forget that I often do not want to come down at first You have to say no to me when you think I am manic. You can say, "Julie. I can't do that. I think you are manic and that you will regret this." I may do it anyway, but you do not have to be a part of it

If I ask you if I am doing too much that means I am worried. Remind me to read this card. Hand me this card! You can say, "Julie, are you having any of the thoughts on this card?" That will help me see that I need help It is never, never, never acceptable for me to spend a lot of money without talking to someone about it first. If you see strange objects appearing in the house- notice them and talk to me and take action (A cabinet full of candles, tiles, Lazy Boy chair, music books, books from the internet, excessive jewelry supplies, etc) do not let things get out of hand. I really can not help myself when I get to this stage

Be firm, you have my permission to take things into your own hands and BE FIRM!



<b>MANIA SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>Very scattered            People are just not fast enough            I will talk you into anything and convince you of anything            I buy a lot of books that I feel I just have to have because I deserve them            I feel that I deserve things because my life has been hard            I have very specific thoughts:            "Sleep is such a waste of time"            " Is this the real me?"            "I'd love to be in Vegas right now."            "I want to go dancing and do the things I used to do!"            It is so easy to be creative            "I don't know what normal is"            The future is possible and fun- it looks bright            There is no fear            No embarrassment            Everything I do is fine! My work and life are great and everything is right with the world!            It really feels good to spend money. It feels good to gamble and drink. It is very hard to fight these feelings, especially after I have been depressed            I give away a lot of money- especially to people on the street and to non profit groups</p>	<p>Please don't be so hard on yourself Julie. No one is judging you. You have done nothing to be ashamed of. Being embarrassed is normal and is a part of coming out of the mania.</p> <p>This is an illness and you did your best. Be kind to yourself.</p> <p>Set up more checks and balances with the new people in your life so they can know the difference between the outgoing Julie and the wild hypomanic Julie.</p> <p>Use this to make your books and web sites stronger. You have the illness and it makes sense you will get sick sometimes.</p> <p>Know that triggers such as getting a book deal and dating are going to cause mood swings and you need to be much more prepared in the future.</p> <p>You may want to see a psychiatrist every few months just to make sure.</p> <p>Use your therapist (Robin) and business manager (Ivan F.) as to help you manage the mania.</p>	<p>Know the signs and do not be blind!            Call my doctor if things get out of hand- or call if you think things might get out of hand            Don't indulge in my joy fest!            The best way for me to prevent mania is to have you know the signs so that you can say, Julie, I think you are manic and you need to do something about it immediately.            Any behavior that is out of character - more wild than normal- drinking more than normal- having more sex than normal- lack of balance etc, is a sign of mania and I need you to call me on it and help me find stability.            Please know that these manic episodes are very embarrassing for me. I feel shame at not catching them as I am the one who writes books on them. Talk with me about it and ask how you can help. Let me know you don't judge me and that you want to know more about the illness.            Know that I always have a very severe downswing after the mania.            The mania is almost always caused by a big change or a medication. This last mania was probably caused by the antidepressant I started taking.            Know that I'm working hard to prevent this from happening again. I have not had a manic episode like this in quite some time.</p>

**Mania SYMPTOMS contd...**

Deciding to do something full force without thinking of the consequences  
 Doing something exciting without thinking of the consequences  
 Jump into a sexual relationship quickly without thinking of the consequences  
 Ignore the spending signs and think I deserve to have nice things because I work so hard  
 Drinking much more than usual  
 Making poor decisions regarding sleep and schedule  
 Thinking of men more than normal  
 Getting dates really easily  
 Tell others I'm fine and nothing is wrong and that I just need to make some changes in my life  
 Ignoring the checks and balances that are in place to prevent mania  
 Loose inhibitions  
**I appear normal to others when I talk, but my actions are not normal**  
 Make very large purchases without thinking of the real cost  
 Start rapid cycling  
 Need a lot more Ativan

**WHAT I CAN DO contd...**

Julie, when you start to troll the malls for something to buy you have to see it's a sign that you're getting manic. When you go to Nordstrom and buy makeup you don't need it's a sign you need help. When you buy \$200 shoes without thinking and then take them back, it's a sign. When you buy a \$250 cell phone without thinking, it's a sign. When you have the thought that you DESERVE things because you're feeling better finally, it's a sign. You can't ignore these signs Julie. You have to act on them and treat bipolar disorder first.

When you go out every single night and can't sleep when you get home - when you start to drink again. When sex becomes all important and you lose your inhibitions, you have to see this as a sign and do something about it.

Wanting to drink more than two drinks is always a sign that something is going on. Wanting to drink more than once a week is a sign. Thinking of dancing, Vegas, traveling, and any other exciting change is a sign as well.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...**

Know that my behavior was the real me, but it was the exaggerated real me. It helps if you can learn the difference.  
 You can be very, very open with me if you see the signs of mania. Use these cards and look for specific symptoms and then point them out to me.  
 I truly worry that this illness makes me impossible to be around. I worry that my friends can't handle these mood swings and will leave me. It's worries me and saddens me to have this illness and not be able to control all of it.  
 This mania is hard to notice when I'm rapid cycling because I will burn out and go down for a few hours and then go back up and it's hard to get a handle on what's really happening. All you can do is go by the behaviors that are listed in the symptoms column. These are the sign that I'm manic. I'm so worried about being judged for my behavior. Please let me know you do not judge me or think I'm not a worth friend because I have this illness. I'm trying so hard to monitor it, but it sometimes wins.

<b>Mania SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>Stop doing my normal routine and replace it with new and 'exciting' behaviors that made me sick in the past</p> <p>I absolutely and positively can't see that I'm manic</p> <p>Ruin romantic relationships once the mania is over and reality sets in</p> <p>I look fabulous</p> <p>Weight loss is very easy</p> <p>I can talk with anyone and meet anyone and charm anyone</p> <p>I seem like I'm just doing really well</p> <p>I can convince anyone that I'm fine and I know what I'm doing</p> <p>People want to be around me</p> <p>I sing better</p> <p>I am filled with confidence and take on new projects</p> <p>I hire people to work with me</p> <p>I spend money on business without thinking</p> <p>I buy the best because I'm worth it</p> <p>I am understanding and tolerant with my friends</p> <p>I don't worry about things</p> <p>Feel invincible</p> <p>Can create anything and do it quickly and it's really good</p> <p>Superhuman self confidence</p> <p>I never cook</p>		<p>Look at my actions instead of what I say. Learn the physical signs of mania: spending, less sleep, partying, drinking, never home, no down time, constantly thinking of new things, very creative, extremely productive, dating more men than is normal, etc.</p> <p>But once again, this is hard for you because a lot of this is my normal personality. You have to notice when I cross the line.</p>

<b>Mania SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>Can't stay home at all - go out every single night</p> <p>Feel compelled to be social and be around people all the time</p> <p>Lose the ability to listen to others when they voice their concerns about my behavior</p> <p>I listen to really and I mean really intense music such as Metallica at a very high volume.</p> <p>I think about sex a lot more.</p> <p>I think about dating and have few inhibitions when it comes to talking with men</p> <p>I don't have a lot of judgment in what I do</p> <p>Everything is about MY pleasure and I have a hard time thinking of the other person</p> <p>I'll try anything - anywhere at anytime</p> <p>Drinking actually tastes good and I drink very, very fast</p> <p>I make in the minute decisions- I have no ability to think of consequences</p>		

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>MIXED EPISODE</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>I say, "I do not feel so great"</p> <p>I have negative thoughts and lots of nervous energy</p> <p>I feel very, very uncomfortable physically and mentally</p> <p>I have a lot of ideas that I can not possible do because I feel nervous and unhappy, so I get down on myself because I am a failure</p> <p>I am extremely agitated physically and emotionally</p> <p>Things just don't feel right</p> <p>My skin is uncomfortable and feels like there are pins in it</p> <p>My head hurts from all the thinking</p> <p>This is the most uncomfortable mood swing for me</p> <p>I am often psychotic as well</p> <p>It's not fun!</p> <p>It is hard to work because I am in so much turmoil I can not focus</p> <p>I will feel better for a while and think it is over, then it comes back</p> <p>Lots of guilt and worry</p> <p>I study and read too much and feel guilty if I am not active</p> <p>It is very, very hard to relax</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Keep away from SSRI drugs such as Prozac</p> <p>Neuroleptics help, but I can't take them.</p> <p>I have to find alternatives</p> <p>Caffeine and chocolate make things worse</p> <p>Yang, yang, yang diet</p> <p>Exercise to calm the mind</p> <p>Just go on as though it is not happening and wait for it to finish</p> <p>Be aware of what is going on and be easy with myself if I can not get things done</p> <p>Do not make any rash decisions</p> <p>Take Ativan or kava kava</p> <p>Do whatever I can to relax</p> <p>Remind myself - this is bipolar and things will get better- they always do</p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>I do not need hugs or loving</p> <p>I do not need a massage</p> <p>Suggest a lavender bath</p> <p>Go for a walk with me</p> <p>Plan something we can do together that will take my mind off things</p> <p>Ask me if I am doing to much</p> <p>This is a very tough episode to notice. Do I seem up one minute and then down the next - that is rapid cycling. But, if I seem agitated, physically uncomfortable, depressed but with plenty of energy, sighing a lot, saying, "I don't feel so well."</p> <p>Crying easily and having trouble sleeping, this is a mixed episode. A mixed episode means that I am agitated (manic), psychotic (hearing voices) and depressed (hopeless). As you can imagine this is not too fun.</p> <p>Medications can cause me to have these episodes as well.</p>

<p><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p><b>NORMAL</b></p> <p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>I just get on with the day without thinking about every minute detail                      People are not overly complicated                      Relationships are easier                      The future is just the future                      The past is over, what is the point of brooding over it?                      People in my past are in my past                      I am relatively content with my life                      I do things and then move on- there are no strange connections between things- things are not full of portent                      Singing is singing - it is fun and I am good                      I do not think all day                      I can work                      The brain is pretty calm- no excessive looping and brain racing                      I sleep when I am tired and do not think about sleeping                      The weather is just weather                      I do not feel that I am a failure- in fact I do not even think about it                      Life feels right- not perfect and not terrible, just right</p>	<p>Remember what this feels like so I can know if I am manic                      Normal is the goal and to reach that goal I have to focus on eating a bipolar friendly diet                      Exercise                      Be with people who want to be with me                      Stick to a planned schedule                      Get enough sleep at roughly the same time every night                      Know the signs of all my different swings and compare them to being normal                      Reward myself for being normal- it really is an accomplishment                      Accept my limitations and learn to live with them and get around them                      Listen to others when they think I am not normal                      Do not do the things that make myself sick                      Avoid stress like the plague</p> <p>This is a work in progress!</p>	<p>Figure out what you think is my normal behavior so that you do not have to ask me - "Are you down? Are you manic?" You will know what is not normal                      Give me praise when you think I am normal- I want to reinforce normal behavior- you could say -"That was very normal of you Julie!"                      Point out normal behavior in others                      Understand what makes me sick and help me avoid those things if you can                      Understand that stress makes me ill- know the signs of stress in me by looking at the anxiety chart and try not to stress me out                      Point out the things that I do that lead to stress                      Limit stimulation                      Every time you are unsure about whether I am sick or not, get out this card first and compare my behavior to the normal me.</p>

<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS condtd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO condtd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP condtd...</b>
<p>I wake up and think about what I will do that day instead of waking up and thinking I have done something wrong            People are not unkind            The world is not a terrible and dangerous place            I look forward to the future because it is a time I can do things            Projects get done in a normal way            I feel physically normal            It is hard to make me cry            I am not overly sympathetic to anyone and everything            I do not spend money foolishly            My eating is more normal            I do not feel self pity-it just doesn't exist            I do not fear for myself or others            I do not focus on death            I am not scared            I don't obsess over my lack of friends and social life- if I want to be social I call someone or plan something            I do not worry about appointments - I just go to them            I don't ask myself questions about my mood            I do not constantly second guess myself</p>	<p>This is so scary! This illness is so very, very scary because it LIES to us every minute we are sick and if we believe it we are sucked in and our lives are a living hell. I have to remember this, It's a illness, not something personal. It's like having diabetes. I have to know my symptoms and treat the illness instead of constantly changing my life.</p> <p>I can print this card separately and have it laminated and read it daily so that I don't get caught up in a mood swing and start thinking my life is a mess.</p>	<p>Notice the difference in the way I talk and act when I'm normal as compared to when I'm sick. Do I sigh less, sleep better, stay at home more, eat at home more, seem calmer?</p>

<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>When events happen they are just events. They are not connected to my personality or my reason for living or my shortcomings. They do not create a barrage of self hatred and suicidal thoughts. They just happen and I just deal with them</p> <p>When bad things happen- they are bad events- not BAD JULIE</p> <p>I think of how well things are going- it is easy and normal to be thankful. I can see the sun through the clouds and the good in people and life</p> <p>Thinking about death is not even possible- it just does not come into my brain!</p> <p>I do not think about everything- I just o things and it is wonderful</p> <p>I am so productive! I just can not believe that I can finally finish projects instead of just dreaming about them</p> <p>I am not so hard on myself. In fact I am not hard on myself at all</p> <p>I can handle relationships better</p> <p>I am more willing to do new things and learn new ways of doing things</p> <p>I am more able to use my tools</p>		



<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>Bipolar disorder is painful- feeling normal is not painful. My body is ok and my mind is ok.</p> <p>I'm not upset if I don't have things planned for the weekend. I just plan something myself and do it. It's easy to call people and ask them to do things. I don't feel like they don't want to see me if they are busy. I just understand that they are busy.</p> <p>I can entertain myself and usually enjoy free time</p> <p>I take pride in my appearance</p> <p>I do not feel guilty or odd for wanting to wear makeup</p> <p>If I'm lonely, I find someone who wants to do something</p> <p>I can accept that Ivan and I are no longer together and that it was our choice to end the relationship and become friends</p> <p>I accept the distance between Ivan and myself</p> <p>I'm optimistic about my future with men</p> <p>I know that I will travel again one day</p> <p>I feel happiness over my writing success</p> <p>I don't look to others to make myself happy</p>		

<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I have a strong sense of who I am and what I want in life</p> <p>I enjoy my time alone in my room</p> <p>I'm happy with who I am and don't questions my motivations.</p> <p>I don't obsessively look for email contact</p> <p>I can let others lead their lives</p> <p>Dating is easier. I'm accepting of what the men in my life have to offer.</p> <p>I can see that I don't need or want a full time relationship when I am writing a book</p> <p>Laugh easily</p> <p>Bounce back from disappointment quite quickly</p> <p>Can breathe regularly</p> <p>Am able to go back to sleep if I wake up at 3:30 or 4</p> <p>Think- It's so nice to be alone</p> <p>I enjoy being in my room</p> <p>I don't obsess about finding a boyfriend now that I'm single again</p> <p>I can get my work done without worrying</p> <p>I don't worry about all of my email - I just answer it</p> <p>I eat normally</p> <p>I can be with my family and have fun</p>		

<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I don't need to be with someone 24 hours a day</p> <p>I'm not obsessive about my cell phone</p> <p>I live in the present</p> <p>I'm not scared to go to sleep</p> <p>I like myself</p> <p>I'm not thinking about the past</p> <p>I do not think I have to get back with Ivan</p> <p>Life has possibilities</p> <p>I feel I'm where I need to be at this moment in time</p> <p>The book seems reasonable</p> <p>People don't have ulterior motives</p> <p>My friends and family love me</p> <p>I love myself</p> <p>I'm ok with waking up tomorrow and going to work</p> <p>The depression feels like a dream</p> <p>I'm proud of myself</p> <p>I'm not obsessing about someone</p> <p>I'm ok where I am</p> <p>I'm looking forward to the things I have to do this week such as work, meetings and going out with my friends</p> <p>I don't cry for no reason</p>		

<b>NORMAL SYMPTOMS contd....</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I can go to karaoke with out worries  I am creative in a good way. The ideas are not overwhelmingly creative, but are doable.</p> <p>I can go to all kinds of movies and don't have to worry about whether the movie will upset me.</p> <p>My creativity is different. I don't write depressed songs or think of my past work. When I'm normal I get new ideas in a regular way. They don't jumble together and get me all excited. They are just new ideas.</p> <p>I don't wake up depressed and sad and lonely.</p> <p>My body is not uncomfortable. I'm not as susceptible to physical problems. My teeth are okay. I don't think my hair is turning gray overnight.</p> <p>I enjoy being with my friends and don't have to leave parties early because I am sick.</p> <p>I'm more able to live in the present when I'm with my friends</p> <p>It's easy to make eye contact</p> <p>I can handle dark weather without getting depressed</p>		

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>PARANOIA</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>"I have no friends"                      "No one ever calls me because they really do not like me."                      "I used to have so many friends- what happened?"                      I feel that my friends are calling everyone except me                      I imagine that others are having a grand ole time and I am the only one without friends                      Everyone else goes on fun picnics with their friends but no one ever asks me                      My friends are saying things about me                      I am sure that no one really likes me and I have discovered the truth                      The people who want to be with me are weird and are not the people I want to see                      People must be crazy to want to be with me- I am a failure as a friend                      People who want to be with me are misfits                      I only attract the weird people- the fun people do not want to be with me                      I am not popular- what did I do wrong?"</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Be aware of these feelings and that they are not real                      Try not to act on the feelings                      Tell people I am having this trouble                      Try not to send any email or make the destructive phone call                      Ask for help                      Know that it will pass if I can just get through it without ruining relationships                      Remove myself from the situation                      Do not send any emails that talk about problems                      It is ok to feel embarrassed, just feel it and move on                      Feeling ashamed is ok too - feel it and move on                      Do some reality checks- ask myself if I can see any real proof that my feelings are real                      Remind myself that bipolar creates these thoughts and I can wait until they are gone  <b>DO NOT SEND EMAILS</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>If you get a paranoid letter or phone calls, know that it is not about you. Tear up the letter! If I am talking to you, say, "Julie, I think you are paranoid right now. I want you to know that I care about you and that I am willing to help. I know you do not want to hurt me. How can I help you right now?" If this is too much for you, you can say, "Julie. I do not think you want to say these things. Call me back in a few days and I will forget what you just said."</p> <p>Know the signs and see if I am rational when I talk about my lack of social life and lack of friends- there is an element of truth in all paranoia- but it does not help if you feed it</p> <p>Tough love - "You are right Julie, you have no friends- what are you going to do about it?" does not work</p>

**PARANOIA SYMPTOMS contd...**

People are looking at me funny  
 People I do not know can tell that I am a fake and a failure  
 I call people and tell them I know that they no longer like me and that I know the truth  
 I write a letter saying that I see a difference in their behavior and that I know that they really do not like me  
 I worry about little phrases and gestures - I find a lot of meaning in a comment that usually would not bother me  
 Cars seem too close - they are after me  
 I am uncomfortable around people  
 I make really, really poor decisions regarding the people in my life  
 I imagine things that simply are not there  
 The behavior of others is not enough - I talked to her, but she did not respond in the right way- she was not happy enough to see me- she does not like me  
 My focus is on what others are saying about me- I do not think about helping myself  
 Paranoia morphs into different things - when I'm paranoid I worry about friends and what they think about me.

**WHAT I CAN DO contd...**

If a car is bothering me - I can choose not to look in the mirror. I can remind myself that it is just a car and means no harm.  
 "I am going to focus on my own driving. I am going to focus on my self."  
 Do not make decisions! Absolutely no decisions at this time!  
 I will not worry about things that have never happened. I will focus on NOW  
 Try to be very aware of paranoia and really know the signs- this is a very destructive part of bipolar disorder  
 I can focus on myself and do what it takes to get better instead of focusing on what I IMAGINE that others are thinking  
 JULIE! You must catch this one early. It is so important that you do not let paranoia affect your decisions  
 Be thankful for the people who do want to be with you and stop thinking that the grass is always greener  
 Julie- just focus on yourself and get on with your life. This will pass  
 I can get out this card the minute I have the thought that I have no friends

**HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...**

This is a part of bipolar disorder that is so hard to detect- it is easy to get into a conversation with me and go on and on about my problems - do not do this. I do not normally talk about being bored and having no friends. Do not get caught in my paranoid trap  
 Help me take action when I am looping about my worries - do not react to what I am saying, instead say, "Julie. Here are Health Cards. I think you are a bit paranoid. This is bipolar disorder, not the real you. Try to do some of the things on your list."  
 If I am unkind to you and say that I never see you and you feel that I am saying you are not a good friend- please do not respond to this. Please help me instead of attacking me. This is an illness and I can't help my behavior when I am really ill. Prevention is the best cure.  
 Paranoia is **DANGEROUS!** I really can not stress this enough. This is where I make the big mistakes and ruin relationships. Please learn the signs and help me!

**PARANOIA SYMPTOMS contd...**

When I started dating the paranoia turned to the person I was dating - but the paranoia was the same.

**WHAT I CAN DO contd...**

The paranoia is not focused on one particular person. I'm not obsessed with only one person when I'm sick. It changes depending on where I am and who I'm with. I have to remember that this paranoia is completely a sign that I have done too much and am over stimulated and that my brain can't handle it. My brain responds with paranoid psychosis every time I get in certain stressful situations - it's not about the people! It's about the stress.

If I can remember this, I can remember that it's an illness and my friendships are fine. The places I go are fine. I am fine. It's my brain that needs help.

I can take a really small dose of an antipsychotic

Work on the triggers of the paranoia instead of focusing on the paranoia

Teach others the signs and make sure they don't let me ruin our friendship

Talk with a therapist about the symptoms so that I can at least examine them out loud and get some relief

Focus on myself instead of others - do something creative to take my mind off of other people.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...**

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>PSYCHOSIS</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>Can not be touched                      Very unfocused and scrambled                      Unable to make appointments and meet commitments                      I feel a connection with animals and children. As though I can read their minds                      Unrealistically fearful and scared of life                      Think that someone or something is trying to hurt me                      My body is very, very uncomfortable. I feel that I do not belong in my body                      I hear voices that tell me that I am worthless or that I should leave wherever I am because I have not right to be there                      Death images - I see myself being killed or killing myself - I look down and see that my wrists are slashed and bleeding. It feels very real. It's scary!                      Completely and totally overwhelmed                      Impossible to focus on projects or tasks                      Brain is very noisy                      Sometimes feel I am being persecuted</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Diet is everything - lay off the stimulating, yin foods and go for the yang                      Be easy with myself                      It is ok to cancel things if I am really psychotic                      Educate people about the signs and symptoms of psychosis                      I can remind myself that I am psychotic and that I am not to blame                      I remind myself that it is ok to be scared - psychosis is scary                      I have to remember that I do not look psychotic on the outside so it is important that I tell people what is happening                      Say no to the voices that say mean and untrue things                      I do not have to listen because I know that it is bipolar talking and not me                      Buddhist response                      Keep away from the supernatural including the Tarot</p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>Don't try to hug me                      Understand                      Ask me what I am thinking so that you can understand why I can not function very well                      Learn the signs and ask me, "Are you having psychotic symptoms?" Know that this is the HARDEST time for me to ask for help                      Psychosis is so misunderstood- read this and learn about it- then ask me specific questions                      I will not be able to tell you that I am psychotic- I am usually too ill to communicate- I isolate myself when I am this sick                      Know that when I am trying to stop a psychotic episode it takes all of my energy and I will have the bipolar hangover the next day                      It is ok to just ask, "Are you hallucinating? Are you thinking of killing yourself?" This will help me ask for help</p>



<b>PSYCHOSIS SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>I hear my name being called as though I am in a large arena</p> <p>Smells are stronger and I feel that I smell funny</p> <p>Sounds are magnified</p> <p>Equilibrium is upset - it feels like I am looking over a cliff</p> <p>When it is really serious, I feel that I have left my body and that I am a separate person/dissociation</p> <p>I feel tortured as though I were being roasted alive or surrounded by bats</p> <p>Loud noises make me cry</p> <p>I feel very, very lonely and isolated</p> <p>I hear a voice that says, "I would rather be dead"</p> <p>It feel like something is going to fall on my head</p> <p>Brain feels like a broken mirror - very fragmented</p> <p>I see animals and shapes scurry around chairs - esp rats</p> <p>I see shapes out of the sides of my eyes</p> <p>Read too much into a pause or something that a person says or does</p> <p>It feels like I am driving the wrong way on a one way street</p> <p>Psychosis has a lot of physical pain- it is very uncomfortable- like you do not feel right in your own skin</p>	<p>I can create a very structured schedule for the day if that helps. If it is too much, I can limit what I do</p> <p>I can really use positive self talk with myself, It is ok Julie. You are doing a good job. It is going to be ok.</p> <p>Create a structure " I will not over analyze"</p> <p>I will not analyze the movements or conversations of others</p> <p>Trust my inner ability to make decisions - instead of making a psychotic decision</p> <p>I'm learning that psychosis is always a result of my doing too much. My brain gets overstimulated and can't process the information. This happens if I take on too much work or go out too much. It also happens if I travel. I really have to limit what I do if I want to prevent psychosis.</p>	

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>WEIRD/ODD BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>It feels like someone is pacing inside my body so I have to pace as well            Pick, scratch or rub certain parts of the body- like the side of my nose or head            I feel that I absolutely can not do something that is normal for most people- such as working or parking the car and sitting through a concert            I crave change and get easily bored- but if I change my routine I get sick            I have a heightened sense of smell            I think that what I am eating is monkey brains or something equally gross!            I do things I know will make me sick and then I regret them the minute I do them            I don't always connect with people the way I used to. Sometimes I feel odd around people like I have nothing to say or contribute. This is so unlike me!            I do not call people like I used to and then I get upset when people do not call me.            I imagine the death of my family members and that when they walk out the door I might never see them again</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Accept how I am and not get on my own case if I do these things            Be aware that stress causes these behaviors- remove the stressor and they often stop            Remind myself that these things are normal in terms of bipolar disorder and I do not have to be ashamed            My worries about cars and having to find parking spaces and not being able to get out when an even it over is something I can work on ahead of time            I can keep Rescue Remedy with me at all times</p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>Be aware that these are symptoms of bipolar disorder and it is hard for me to control them when I am overstimulated or ill            You can say to me, "That is a bit weird Julie. Are you aware of that? "            Don't be ashamed of me. It is just an illness and all illnesses have symptoms            Try to see if something you have done has caused my behavior. If so, maybe you can change your behavior. We can talk about it            I need help to be normal            If I ask you to change your behavior it is not because I am trying to change you- it is because I am so much more sensitive to behaviors than most people. I have to ask you to make some changes in order for me to stay well. Look over this weird list and ask me what causes certain symptoms. Learn how you can help me.</p>

<b>WEIRD SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>I feel fine one minute and then something such as hearing a sad story makes me feel like dying</p> <p>When I am under stress- such as after a fight with my brother- I hear a voice that says: "I want to die!"</p> <p>Anxiety keeps me from working and I hate this</p> <p>When I am overwhelmed I see projects as huge, never ending steps with no goal in sight. This is why I can not start some projects</p> <p>One minute I believe in myself and the next minute I am embarrassed at everything I have ever created and I want to throw it out</p> <p>I get rid of things all at once when I feel crowded</p> <p>I feel pressured and crowded when there are too many things or people around me. I do not like having the windows closed and the blinds drawn. It makes me feel trapped and depressed</p> <p>Some days I can do anything and everything- on other days the negative thoughts and feelings keep me from doing anything</p> <p>I often over analyze my behavior after talking to people- then I will write or call and tell them I am sorry for acting oddly</p>		

<p>(Ivan's card)</p> <p><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p><b>DEPRESSION</b></p> <p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>I feel like I don't have any time to myself</p> <p>I had only a half hour on the computer today and I wanted to send out a new version of my program!</p> <p>"Linux is broken"</p> <p>"No one is emailing me"</p> <p>I fell like you have scheduled too much</p> <p>Friends don't want to do anything</p> <p>Pinched face</p> <p>Lying on couch</p> <p>Excessive computer use</p> <p>There is nothing good happening</p> <p>Can't make decisions</p> <p><b>"I don't want to go out - I just want to relax"</b></p> <p>"No one is using my Palm Program"</p> <p>"We never have any time together"</p> <p>"I need TLC"</p> <p>(What did you do at work today?)</p> <p>"Nothing"</p> <p>"Work is boring"</p>	<p>Realize that this is BP and not me</p> <p>It is not real</p> <p>It's always an option to cancel</p> <p>Remind yourself of the free time you do have</p> <p>Don't knock on doors that don' open - find a new door</p> <p>It's normal for computers to break. Linux is not 100% stable - Though I want to believe it is.</p> <p>It up to me to create an enjoyable - stimulating and productive work experience.</p> <p>There is plenty of work to be done</p> <p>Projects finish - I have to start new ones</p> <p>Exercise: climb, walk, gym</p> <p>Take care of appearance</p> <p>Do not take it out on Julie. She does not know if I am in a down swing- remind her that I am not selfish, I am just in a down swing</p>	<p>Give me TLC</p> <p>Don't get caught up in my moods</p> <p>Help me see that I am not overscheduled</p> <p>Remind me to look at the health cards</p> <p>Help me get to the gym</p> <p>Do not react to what I say when I am down. I can not help it. Instead do something that you know will get me out of the depression. Then I will stop saying these things.</p> <p>Do not tell me how great I am and think that is enough. I really can not hear you when you praise me- the down swing will not allow it. Instead, show me what I have done well. Write it down. Ask me to say it. Help me see that it will just take time to get out of this.</p> <p>Make sure I see a doctor if I have been down for more than a month</p>

<b>IVAN'S SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>"I don't want to work"            Food is not nourishing - I feel unhappy about food            "I will better if I can just eat something."            I have not had any food. I am just hungry."            No joy in life            No smiles or laughing            Don't do much work            Play video games instead of working            Projects finish and I get depressed            I act selfishly  <b>I want to break up with Julie</b>            When I am staying with others I feel that I am on their schedule and that I can not do my computer work. I feel that I am not in control of my time.            Worried about future.            Disappointed with how built up the French Riviera is.            Worried about money - even though I have money            I say I can't walk because my back is hurting too much</p>	<p>Remind Julie that when I say I need to do my own thing it is because I am overwhelmed and need some time to myself. It is not about her            Remind myself that I have the ability to say NO when I feel like I am over scheduled            I can also look at my schedule rationally and see if I am really overscheduled- or if I am just not feeling well                Make sure I have scheduled sleep            Try not make things worse by brooding on them            No ruminating            I can realize that I always want to break up when I am depressed, so I can see those thoughts as a sign that I need help            When I am visiting others and I am on their time I can accept that things can not be as I want them to be all of the time. I have to be ready to be on someone else's schedule</p>	<p>Do not get impatient with me- I know that I get slower and can not concentrate well when I am down.            Help me get better and I will be able to concentrate            Give me active things to do and do them with me            Remember that I need different help than you- don't do what you want, do what I need            Do not react if I say something mean. You know I am not a mean person. It means I am sick            Try not to start a fight. It only makes things worse            Daylight is good for depression. Take me out for a walk. I will probably say no, so you need to be forceful.</p>

<b>IVAN'S SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO.....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd....</b>
<p>I get very irritated  I have to do things immediately because they are driving me crazy, such as moving furniture or clearing off a table  I think that others are getting on my case so I snap at them when they ask a question  I am very irritated - I yell at Julie and tell her to shut up- I have a very short temper  I complain that my programs are going nowhere and that I need someone to pay me to do them  I know that I need to take action in order to get what I want and need, but I feel helpless  I say that I have no time even when I do not have a job to do  I feel that I do not have enough sex  I do not think about things in a rational manner- usually things involving work and money don't bother me- but suddenly they seem</p>	<p>I can remind myself that I can leave most situations if I need to  Remember that Julie is not the solution to my depression- in fact, she does not like to be around me when I am depressed  Remind myself that I tend to get passive when I am ill, that means that depression can be stronger than I am  I have to fight it even though I feel weak  I have to learn to talk back to the thoughts that tell me I do not have any time. The minute I hear these thoughts I have to realize that they are the first thoughts I have when I am down and that I do not have to answer the thoughts- I just have to realize it is a down swing.  I know what things help me stay healthy and I have to make sure I do these things no matter where I am - - rock climbing makes me healthy, so I have to do anything I can to go rock climbing. If there is no rock climbing,</p>	

<b>IVAN'S SYMPTOMS contd...</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO contd...</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP contd...</b>
<p>overwhelming and I get very stressed and worried</p> <p>"I am not depressed! Can't you see I am just stressed and it is normal?"</p> <p>"I am having a little breakdown today"</p> <p>Lack of energy</p> <p>Trouble concentrating</p> <p>Can not do more than one thing at a time</p> <p>Hearing gets worse</p> <p>Want to stay in bed</p> <p>I have the thought that things would be better if I were dead</p> <p>I think that it would be better because I would not have to feel so much pain</p> <p>I turn on the TV- which I never do</p> <p>I say mean things that I regret</p>	<p>then I have to find another form of exercise that I enjoy.</p> <p>I can not let myself complain about not having rock climbing- I simply have to do something about it.</p> <p>If I have been depressed off and on for more than a month, it is time for me to see a doctor</p> <p>Remind myself that if I am in a crisis it is normal for me to have bipolar behavior. I have to treat the bipolar first and then deal with the crisis</p> <p>Hot bath</p> <p>I can start the day with meditation, yoga and positive thinking so that things do not get out of hand</p> <p>Take a hot bath</p>	

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>Obsessive Behavior</b> <b>WHAT I CAN DO</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>Compulsively checking email - more than once a minute</p> <p>Obsessively checking for phone calls</p> <p>Thinking about another person constantly</p> <p>Wanting to be with someone obsessively</p> <p>Wondering what others are doing</p> <p>Unable to focus and have fun with the normal things</p> <p>I'm starting to date again and the obsession is much, much worse because I am meeting so many new people</p> <p>Craving intense stimulation and excitement</p> <p>Weird thoughts about guys</p> <p>Worrying over everything</p> <p>Restless</p> <p>Odd thoughts</p> <p>Looping and brain racing</p> <p>Unable to sit still and focus</p> <p>Go over one thought over and over again</p> <p>Can't focus</p> <p>Have one thought I can't get out of my head no matter how hard I try.</p> <p>My brain is like a broken record</p>	<p>Make rules about how often I can be on the computer</p> <p>Do something active to break the obsessive pattern</p> <p>Get firm with myself and tell myself to stop</p> <p>Determine what caused the obsession - am I going out too much? Eating stimulating foods? On a new medication?</p> <p><b>DO NOT ACT ON THE OBSESSION!</b></p> <p>Don't let myself send too many emails or call people too often</p> <p>Use Buddhist techniques to live in the moment</p> <p>Remind myself that this is bipolar disorder and I don't have to act on the thoughts. I can remove myself from the places that cause me trouble</p> <p>There is nothing wrong with me! This is bipolar disorder and I have to treat bipolar disorder first</p> <p>Exercise to change the brain</p> <p>Do something creative such as sewing or jewelry</p>	<p>I am not sure that people can help much with this one. I think it's best that I stop this myself before it goes too far. I will try to think of something others can do. There has to be something!</p> <p>If you do notice that I am acting obsessively, remind me to look at this health card and remind me that it means I am overstimulated</p> <p>Call John and ask for help (John is the coauthor of my new book.)</p> <p>Remind me that going out every night makes me sick</p> <p>Observe my behavior- am I looking at the phone a lot or sending too many email?</p> <p>Remind me to do calming things that will ease the mind</p> <p>Spend time with me</p> <p>Talk to me about my moods on a regular basis. Ask me what mood swing I am having. If I say obsession, you will know it means I am doing too much and need to calm down. It also means that I need help with anxiety and depression.</p>



<b>Obsessive Behavior Contd...</b>	<b>What I Can Do contd...</b>	<b>How You Can Help contd....</b>
<p>I obsess about something happening (this can be a good event happening) and yet when it happens and everything is fine I start to obsess again about something new</p> <p>Act compulsively without thinking and then wonder what I just did</p> <p>I'm not comfortable with myself</p> <p>I get obsessed and think that others will help solve my problems</p> <p>Lots of trouble sleeping</p> <p>Worried that I am a freak because of these thoughts and behaviors</p> <p>Have a hard time working because I'm thinking about other people</p> <p>New romantic relationships are really stressful - I will obsess on one person 24 hours a day - even while sleeping</p> <p>Sleep is filled with obsessive thoughts</p> <p>Wait for the phone to ring</p> <p>Looking at myself in the mirror for changes in my skin</p> <p>Obsessed with my hair and skincare</p> <p>Obsessed with finding a boyfriend even though I wanted time to myself after my relationship with Ivan ended</p> <p>Obsess about being alone in the future</p> <p>Worry that I will never get better</p>	<p>Try to stay home more and relax even when I don't want to</p> <p>Remember that obsessing is a part of anxiety - so you have to treat the anxiety - use Ativan if you need it</p> <p>"Problems" are usually bipolar disorder and are not real. Treat the bipolar first and the problems disappear. You know this is true Julie- it happens all the time. Don't give into these obsessions - work on treating the illness instead,</p> <p>Replace an obsessive activity with one that is more healthy</p> <p>I think drinking in a stimulating situation with a man makes this worse Julie. There has to be a choice in the matter on your part. You really are the one who controls your mood swings.</p> <p>Go easy on yourself. John suggested that this is simply a way of dealing with stress and doesn't mean you're crazy or weird</p> <p>This is just a mood swing like all of the other mood swings - it will get better.</p> <p>Obsession has nothing to do with another person. It is part of being sick. Forget the other person and take care of yourself.</p>	

<b>Obsessive Behavior Contd...</b>	<b>What I Can Do contd...</b>	<b>How You Can Help contd...</b>
<p>Obsessive use of the computer to find something to make me feel better When I get sick like this it's as though something takes over my body and mind and all I can think of is the obsession. It's horrible and makes me feel out of control and crazy I will obsess about one thing in my life such as finding a new partner. This obsession will be on my mind 24 hours a day and won't let me rest. It's very stressful and uncomfortable because I'm not normally like this and usually often enjoy my life This is very hard to fight as I even obsess while dreaming and there is no space left in my brain for living when the obsessions are this bad</p> <p>I look outside myself for help. I get the idea that another person will be my savior and help me feel better.</p>	<p>Do not act on your obsession in any way or you may do something you regret Read the Four Agreements for help Remind myself I really am not like this at all when I'm well. It's always shocking when this mood swing ends as I can't imagine why I was so obsessed with something that wasn't real. I know that the real me is fine with being single for a while. I was in a relationship for ten years and it's not a bad thing to see my friends and do my work without the distraction of dating. When I'm sick I can't see this at all. Julie, this is the normal you talking right now. The normal you does not check her email every few minutes. The normal you does not pick up the phone just to see if someone has called. The normal you can handle being single. The normal you lets people be who they are on their own schedules. The normal you doesn't stop eating. The normal you is NORMAL and if you are having obsession symptoms, you need help and you need medication. There is nothing wrong with you Julie except bipolar disorder and you have to treat bipolar disorder first.</p>	

<p><b>SYMPTOMS</b></p>	<p><b>Enough</b></p> <p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p>
<p>No matter what I do in life, it just never feels like enough. There is always something better</p> <p>When I'm with certain people I wish I were with other people</p> <p>No matter what I accomplish, it's not enough. I need to do more to get the good feeling.</p> <p>I have a hard time feeling any sense of pleasure or accomplishment</p> <p>I depend on other people to give me my feelings</p> <p>When I'm into someone and I want them to call or write - when they do it's never enough. They should call or write more or say something better or do something different.</p> <p>No matter how many friends I have or how often they tell me they love me and want to be with me, my brain says it's not enough and I need more people in my life.</p>	<p>This is totally a sign that I'm depressed. I have to treat depression first so that the feelings can go away.</p> <p><b>TAKE A WALK.</b></p> <p>I want to learn what enough feels like. I want to be content where I am. This means I have to remind myself constantly that what I have is enough.</p> <p><b>Never take these feelings out on others. This is an issue I work out for myself</b></p> <p>Do what I love to get the accomplishment feelings</p> <p>Always praise myself and celebrate my accomplishments.</p> <p>Talk with a therapist about ways to feel more whole</p> <p>Remind myself that this feeling is normal for people with bipolar disorder - especially those of us with constant low grade depression.</p>	<p>Call and email me when you have a chance- just to say hi.</p> <p>Ask me about this part of the illness.</p> <p>Learn that this makes me search constantly to fill the void I feel. If you see me taking on too much or trying to do too much in order to feel better, instead of getting on my case, ask me if I'm depressed.</p> <p>It's all about asking questions. Ask me how I am and really listen. Then use my depression card to help me stop the depression so that the feelings that there is never enough can go away.</p>

<b>Enough Symptoms contd...</b>	<b>What I Can Do Contd....</b>	<b>How You Can Help Contd...</b>
<p>No matter how much attention a person gives me, my brain says it is not enough and picks through their behavior for what they could do differently.</p> <p>When there is a new person in my life, I judge them harshly. What they do is never enough. I think they should do more to show me how much they really care. If they REALLY wanted to be with me they would.....</p> <p>I just have this empty bottomless pit feeling of need. It just can't fill it no matter how many appointments I have or how many people I see</p> <p>I am so very lonely even though I have so many friends and do so many things</p> <p>I try to fill my days with meetings, classes and people. I just can't be alone</p>	<p>Julie, you have more friends than you need. You have enough friends. You know this and need to remind yourself that these thoughts are bipolar disorder and are not real.</p> <p>Understand that these feelings can be brought on by new relationships- especially romantic relationships and they have to be ignored. It is a BP thing and has NOTHING to do with how much someone likes you or wants to see you Julie. Take care of the BP and let other people be themselves.</p> <p>When I examine what a person SHOULD do I realize there is nothing more they COULD do- what do I want? For them to sacrifice themselves in front of me? I have to really think of the reality of the situation and remind myself that there is NO way the people can do what I think they should do. I will still feel it's not enough.</p>	

Enough Symptoms contd...	What I Can Do Contd...	How You Can Help contd...
	<p>If I allow myself to act on these feelings, I will ruin relationships, so I won't let myself act on these feelings. I will just treat BP first so that the feelings will go away. I have to remember that this means that depression is taking over my life and I have to have other options to trying to feel this neediness with other people</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. exercise</li> <li>2. do what I love</li> <li>3. work</li> <li>4. ignore the thoughts</li> <li>5. talk with a therapist about how to manage this mood swing</li> <li>6. ask for help from people who understand</li> </ol> <p>Julie, this is the well Julie talking to you. This is the real you. You do have enough when you're well. You don't think and obsess all day about adding more people, more groups, more meetings and more things to do to your day. You get on with your life and enjoy what you have.</p>	

**Enough Symptoms contd...****What I Can Do Contd...****How You Can Help Contd...**

This is the well Julie. Please listen to me. It's an illness. You know you're ill when you feel you don't have enough.

Don't listen to the sick Julie. Listen to me. Use the Health Cards. Ask for help and use your plan, but don't let yourself believe you don't have enough. You have plenty and you will feel happy again soon.

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>OVERWHELMED</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>I feel a lot more tired than usual            Weary            Want to get in bed and read in order to block it all out            I have very little patience- feeling overwhelmed often leads to irritation and anger            Feel that there is so much to do I can not do anything            I get like this before a deadline or a trip            Things just shut down and I can not focus on anything            I go to a lot of movies to "relax"            I feel squeezed by things            "Just leave me alone!"            "I can not answer one more question. Don't ask."            Heart really races and pounds. It scares me.            Can not do karaoke or any fun stuff as it makes me sicker            "I have too much to do."            "I have so much work."</p>	<p><b>OVERWHELMED</b></p> <p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>Plan ahead- plan way ahead            It is ok to take little breaks to relax            Do bite size projects            Look at other health cards            Try not to use chocolate as a pick me up- it really is not a solution            Eat better            It is ok not to be super woman. If I have taken on too much and I feel overwhelmed, then I have to stop doing a few things            Caffeine - especially mochas only make things worse in the long run            Work on prevention. I tend to take on too much when I'm depressed in order to feel better and then feel overwhelmed when I come out of the depression.            Limit my stimulation.            Ask others to monitor my schedule and tell me if they think I am doing too much.            Over scheduling is one of my main problems and is always a sign that I am either rapid cycling or depressed.</p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p><b>Help me do things</b></p> <p>Do not bombard me with information as soon as you see me. If you can tell that I am overwhelmed, it is best that you leave me alone for a while and then tell me what you need to tell me.            Do not get mad when I tell you I can not hear any more information. This is not about you. Let go of your indignation and pride. This is about bipolar disorder            Understand that I have a very small threshold for stress and when I get stressed, I get overwhelmed.            Help me prevent this mood swing- if you see me taking on too much say this to me: "Julie you asked me to tell you if I think you are doing too much. Right now I think you are doing too much. Are you feeling ok?" I will not want to hear this and I may not reply the way you would like me to, but I will listen and make the changes.</p>	

<b>Overwhelmed Symptoms contd...</b>	<b>What I Can Do contd...</b>	<b>How You Can Help contd...</b>
<p>I feel like my obligations are impossible, though they are the same obligations I handled just a few days ago.</p> <p>I want to do so much and feel cheated when I get sick because I do something new</p> <p>"I'm worn out."</p> <p>Tired in the afternoon no matter how much sleep I had the night before</p> <p>I eat junk food because I am too overwhelmed to cook</p> <p>I feel like crying from the pressure I feel - even when things have not changed - it feels like they have changed and I can not function</p> <p>Sometimes I get so overwhelmed I can't relax and I take on even more - this makes no sense but I do it.</p>	<p>I overwhelm myself because I am trying to feel something instead of being depressed all of the time.</p> <p>This is so hard for me because my personality is the type that wants to do a lot all of the time. Sometimes I can handle it - but at other times it makes me sick. It's so hard for me to find a balance.</p> <p>Work on finding a balance so that I can monitor my appointments</p>	



## Seasonal Affective Disorder

### SYMPTOMS

I start to go down as soon as the sun starts to dim  
 I just can't stand the hours between four and seven when I'm sick- they feel like dead hours  
 I miss the sun so much  
 I feel like the walls are closing in on me  
 Everything seems so dark inside and out  
 It's as though the darkness outside creates a darkness in me  
 I don't think the darkness makes me sick, but it makes things worse  
 It's unfriendly and unhappy when it's dark so early  
 I want to go to bed at eight at night and just have so little energy  
 I feel like the life is sucked out of me  
 I feel more lonely and unhappy than usual - though if I examine this it's not really true - it just feels this way  
 Even if I have plans, it feels like the night will go on forever and I'm alone  
 I have unreasonable thoughts about my life  
 I feel abandoned by life  
 I have to get out of the house

### WHAT I CAN DO

I really have to take a walk in the morning in the light to set my clock  
 The light in the morning stops the production of melatonin and gets my serotonin going  
 Caffeine is not a treatment for the lower energy in the afternoon  
 Maybe I can work later in the afternoon and spend time outdoors in the morning?  
 What can I schedule during the tough times (4-7PM)  
 I can go to the gym during the late afternoon and be in the bright light and get some exercise to counteract the effects of the darkness. This is a good idea Julie. I think you need to do it.  
 I can actually get out and walk with a friend when it's dark  
 I can join a group or take a class that meets during the tough times  
 I can meet with friends for a chat  
 Maybe I can travel somewhere sunny for a weekend

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Take a walk with me in the late afternoon  
 Ask me to do things when it's a dark day  
 Understand that it's my brain doing this to me. I really do have problems when it's dark. This is for real. I am not making it up!  
 Just because you don't feel this way, it doesn't mean it's not real for me  
 Call me and we can chat when it's a dark day  
 Ask me how I'm feeling. It always helps me get perspective  
 Offer to make me some brown rice sushi for a pick me up in the afternoon. I won't make it myself, but I'll eat it if you make it  
 Remind me that it's normal to have trouble when it's dark and that I can just ignore the symptoms and get on with my day instead of constantly complaining about how dark it is and how I hate this weather

**SAD SYMPTOMS CONTD.....**

I worry more about things when it's dark  
 It's as though the light is safer  
 I want to eat junk food for energy  
 I don't feel like having dinner at a normal time- I seem to get hungry around 4PM  
 My energy seems so much lower - but how is this possible?  
 I let the depression take over a bit more when it's dark - it's not as easy to fight  
 I think I have to leave my city because it's so dark here for so many months  
 I don't have the incentive to meet people - I just want to roll in a ball and get into bed  
 I can just tell that others don't have this problem and that I'm weird  
 My thoughts get distorted and I start to believe I'm not sick when it's sunny  
 I write in the mornings when it's light and then work on the web pages in the afternoon and then it's dark and I feel unhappy and lonely (unreasonable!)  
 I have a hard time when it's dark and rainy all day

**WHAT I CAN DO CONTD...**

I can practice singing when it's dark  
 I can do something artistic that gets the endorphins going  
 I can email my friends and ask for their advice on what to do  
 I can accept that this is just my brain reacting to the dark and stop worrying about it so much  
 I can start the salsa class again  
 There is so much you can do Julie. You just have to do it  
 Go to a cheerful café and work from 4-7 every day! That's a good idea.  
 I can practice the guitar.

I need to make a list of the things I can do and put it up in my room.  
 Lisa suggested I go see a matinee during the dark times. This is a great suggestion as I want to see more movies  
 I can call someone and talk and walk

**HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD.....**

When you hear me complain about the darkness, remind me to look at this Health Card. Don't get into a conversation with me about how the dark is fine and I just need to be more accepting and all that. It will just make things worse for me.  
 Remind me to treat depression first so that I can be more healthy and able to deal with the weather change  
 Learn what I write in the what I can do column and make suggestions from the column  
 Exercise with me!  
 Call me and ask me to do things with me at this time if you're free  
 Go to a movie with me  
 Remind me it's an illness

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>SUICIDE</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b>
<p>I would rather be dead than feel this psychic pain</p> <p>I feel very self destructive. As though my death will take care of things</p> <p>I want to punish people for not loving me enough. Suicide is a way to do this</p> <p>I cry constantly - rivers of tears</p> <p>My thoughts are continually on death - it's as though I can't think of anything else. It's an obsession</p> <p>I feel that others have no idea how sick I am and that I am in danger of harming myself</p> <p>I can't see that these feelings are from an illness. I have to work hard not to believe these thoughts</p> <p>I wish someone would kill me</p> <p>I wish I could get cancer and die</p> <p>I wish I could get hit by a bus and end it all</p> <p>I think of how life would be easier if I were gone. Then I wouldn't bother people so much</p>	<p><b>WHAT I CAN DO</b></p> <p>I have to remind myself that suicide is not an option</p> <p>Keep trying small doses of medications to see if I can tolerate anything</p> <p>Get these Health Cards to people even though it seems impossible to get help right now. Other people will know what to do.</p> <p>Do things with friends and family</p> <p>Do something active</p> <p>Go to a funny movie</p> <p>Get out in the sun and take a walk</p> <p>Remind yourself over and over that this is an illness. Suicidal thoughts are a normal part of this illness.</p> <p><i>Julie, you just finished a supremely stressful book project. A big mistake was made and you had to take care of it. You have never been able to handle this kind of stress. Nothing is different now just because you are the one writing the book.</i></p>	<p><b>HOW YOU CAN HELP</b></p> <p>Don't get upset if you get a lot of email from me during the tough time. You don't have to fix me. Just read it and say thanks and let it go. I am not expecting you to take care of me. I just need to know people are out there when I feel so isolated</p> <p>Don't assume that I am better just because I act better. You have to ask me. I need to be asked pretty constantly how I am until you are sure I am no longer suicidal</p> <p>I appear like I'm better but I'm often not. I have rapid cycling which is why I can go up and down so quickly. One minute you can talk with me and I seem optimistic, the next minute I am way too sick to even function, but you often don't see that.</p> <p>Ask me if I've taken my medicine.</p> <p>Call my friends for me and tell them I need support.</p>

**SUICIDE SYMPTOMS CONTD..**

I am SO needy and it embarrasses me greatly  
 There is no filling this hole of despair. It is endless and hopeless  
 I feel I will be like this the rest of my life  
 I am cosmically and totally alone. Alone for the rest of my life and I can't live like this much longer  
 I worry about other people in the same position and feel that bipolar disorder is too hard to treat alone  
 I have a hard time doing things. The voices and thoughts are so strong that I can only listen to them. They take all of my time and energy  
 I feel a self loathing that is very deep. As though I am a pariah on other people's lives and they don't really care enough about me to know how serious this is  
 I feel I ask for way too much help and that people will leave me because I am so needy  
 I can't function normally. Everything is a struggle to survive

**WHAT I CAN DO CONTD....**

*Things always get better. You have had this illness for over 20 years and you always get better. You just have to ask for help.*  
 Read the Normal card to remind yourself what your life is normally like.  
 You don't have to take care of anyone except yourself right now. Work can wait. Do something for yourself.  
 Read this card regularly to remind yourself what happens when you take on too much. The book caused this Julie.  
 You have been sick for two years because of the books. You have to remember this and not take on so much in the future.  
 People who really care for you will not leave you. They can handle this illness.  
 If you are too sick to take care of yourself, you have to ask others for help.  
 Remind myself that diet, exercise and supplements can really make a difference when I'm this depressed. They don't get rid of the down swing completely or very quickly, but they really help over time and can help me from getting this sick again.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..**

Make sure I take the anti psychotic and know that it will give me some pretty severe side effects. You can remind me that the side effects are better than being suicidal  
 Know that I get very, very embarrassed when I get this sick. I am sure that people are tired of me being so ill and that they won't help me. I only focus on the people who don't want to help me. I can't see the people that do want to help me.  
 Don't think that this will last forever. Remember that I have ultra, ultra rapid cycling which means this goes in a serious cycle for me. I will be crying one minute and much better the next. This is not a good sign. It means that the mood swings are coming more frequently than normal.  
 Read *Bipolar Happens* and this card so you know how to help me.  
 This illness has a death rate. The death rate comes from suicide. This is a serious symptom of this serious illness. Getting on my case right now will not help.

**SUICIDE SYMPTOMS CONTD..**

I have no hope for the future, so why not die?  
 What is the point of living if life is hell?  
 Other people don't have to go through this. Their lives are so much easier than mine and I am punished and shunned for having this illness  
 Life is easier when you're dead  
 I have no humor. No joy. No hope  
 There is an emptiness in me so deep that I can only see death as a way out  
 I can't feel pleasure over my career  
 I lose ALL insight into my life  
 My relationships suffer because I think there is something wrong with them and then I really do wreck them  
 I feel guilty for being so sick and fell I have done something terribly wrong  
 Suicide seems to be a solution to all of these paranoid thoughts  
 I have a lot of obsessive behavior in order to feel like life is worth living  
 No one can help me - ever  
 I will be like this the rest of my life and I'm too young to be like this. I would rather die than live like this  
 I get catatonic and just sit and stare into space

**WHAT I CAN DO CONTD....**

I lose track of this and go back to my old ways and the result is this terrible downswing.  
 Listen to what your friends say to you. Read their loving emails. Remember the phone calls. You are loved and people would really miss you if you were gone. This may not feel like enough, but it is enough. Their love is enough to keep you alive. Remember it.  
 This is an illness Julie. No matter what you are thinking or feeling about killing yourself, remember at all times that the well you NEVER thinks this way. Not even for a moment. In fact the well you finds the idea of suicide impossible to imagine. This is bipolar disorder talking.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..**

I know what I have done to cause these symptoms, but when I am this sick I can't talk about what caused things. I just have to focus on getting better. I have to treat bipolar disorder first.  
 It never helps to get on my case for doing too much. It helps if you point out what I can do to stay well.  
 Remind me constantly that this is an illness. You have seen me sick like this before. You know it is part of bipolar disorder. You do not have to get really scared. I am not going to kill myself. I have passive suicidal thoughts. I will get help.  
 Call and ask how I am. Even when you think I don't need it. It's when you think I'm better (or should be better) that I often need the most help  
 Ask me directly if I am suicidal, "Julie. I know you have been going through a tough time. How is your mood today? Are you suicidal? How can I help?"  
 Understand that this is a terribly stressful and scary mood swing. I am basically fighting for my life when I am this sick.

<b>SUICIDE SYMPTOMS CONTD..</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO CONTD....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..</b>
<p>I have to be around people in order to stay alive. This is overwhelming for people</p> <p>I just don't have a normal perspective on my life and this leads me to make decisions based on bipolar disorder instead of the real me. This is dangerous</p> <p>I just want some relief please. Please!</p> <p>I overanalyze email to see if people are actually sending me messages that I am overwhelming them. No matter what the letters say, I am SURE that I am ruining the relationship</p> <p>I feel that my family does not understand how serious these suicidal feelings are</p> <p>I feel SO weak when I get sick like this. I feel I should be able to handle life just like other people do. I am embarrassed and sad to be so sick. I need so much and have so little hope that things will work out. Who wants to be around that?</p> <p>I really wonder why I am afflicted with this. Why me? Why can't I have a normal life? Other people don't think of suicide all of the time. Why can't I be normal?</p> <p>Cry so much it feels like it will never stop. I cry buckets of tears and feel like</p>		<p>Eventually I reach a point where I can't take any more medications because of the side effects. This is very stressful for me as the medications help. Ask me about the meds. Find out if I can take them and if not what I am doing to help the suicidal thoughts.</p> <p>It helps me a lot when you show an interest in how I am doing. I am so high functioning that many people think I am fine when I am actually very sick.</p> <p>Spend time with me. Even if I am not very responsive. It truly helps.</p>

<b>SUICIDE SYMPTOMS CONTD..</b>	<b>WHAT I CAN DO CONTD....</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..</b>
<p>I am dying already  I can't see a way out of this  I just want this to end  I can't live like this much longer  Feel that suicide will prove to everyone how serious this illness is and that they just didn't take it seriously enough - people like my father  I am positive that this is too much for anyone in my life to handle and that they will leave me because I get so sick all of the time  It's very hard for me to feel or believe in the love of my friends when I'm this down. They can call me or tell me how much they care, but I am so despondent I can't really hear what they say.  I put my head in my hands. I rub my eyes a lot. I feel the weight of my worthless life bearing down on my head.  I say, "I'm so tired," and, "I'm so worn out."  I don't have the energy to do anything</p>		

**ROMANTIC REALATIONSHIPS****SYMPTOMS**

Wait for the phone to ring  
 Check email compulsively  
 Read email for extra meaning  
 Life revolves around the other person  
 I lose myself a bit  
 My work suffers  
 My brain is overworked and worried  
 I am insecure for little reason  
 I obsess and can't stop  
 I need constant reassurance about the other person's feelings  
 Want to be with the person all of the time  
 Can't understand the person's need for space  
 Probe the other person's feelings  
 Need to talk about the other person all of the time  
 Trouble being alone  
 Ask, "How do you feel about me? Do you like me? Are you going to leave me?"  
 I feel like I need someone else to complete my life  
 Count the hours we are together

**WHAT I CAN DO**

Remember that being overstimulated often causes these problems in your relationships Julie. This is actually quite normal and can be fixed  
 Decide that time with him is time with him and time with yourself is time with yourself. You have always been independent and you can get it back. This is just a temporary thing that you CAN take care of  
 New relationships bring up a lot of feelings for everyone. When you add bipolar disorder to the mix it's natural that things would be difficult  
 Exercise daily  
 What are you eating?  
 Meditation  
 Work on your problems with attachment  
 Do LESS and have more time to take care of yourself - more self care mean more mental ease. It really does make a difference  
 Massage

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Ask me if I'm feeling insecure. This will focus on my issues and not our relationship  
 Be patient with me and let me work through this. It's all new to me. I have never had a relationship as a well person an I have a lot of skills to learn  
 Understand that my personality is group oriented. I like being with people all of the time. I am not a loner and I rarely need space  
 Don't get frustrated with my needs - talk to me about them and understand that it's more about my past and my issues than it is about you  
 If it's clear that I am sick it helps if you ask me what you can do to help me end the mood swing. Read my Health Cards and know that my feelings can be very intense and hard to deal with when I'm sick, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the feelings are real



RELATIONSHIPS CONTD....	WHAT I CAN DO Contd....	HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..
<p>Wait until I can see the person again Life gets put on hold for the other person</p> <p>Want to break up because I'm sure the other person wants to break up with me NO patience</p> <p>Want constant confirmation that I am safe in the relationship</p> <p>Difficult to let the other person have space</p> <p>When the other person needs time and space I see it as a reflection of their feelings for me</p> <p>Don't have fun like I used to I HATE THIS!</p> <p>If I am overworked or overwhelmed, my feelings will shut off and I feel like I don't really like the person I'm with My feelings come and go depending on how stressed I am</p> <p>I worry that I have made a mistake and don't really love the person I think I love</p> <p>I lose sexual feelings when stressed</p> <p>When I get over stimulated, especially from working too much, I literally can't feel affection</p> <p>I start to question why I am with the person I'm with and I want to break up</p>	<p>Turn to others instead of focusing everything on one person</p> <p>I KNOW this is not the real me. It's an aberration caused by a new situation and I can use my tools to become more calm in the situation</p> <p>I need to spend time alone</p> <p>This is about me and not about the other person. He is being true to himself and honest with me. This is about me and something I need to work on alone</p> <p>Accept that seeing him will cause some brain issues and just live with them</p> <p>Stop looking to him for reassurance about how he feels. You know how he feels. Work on yourself</p> <p>Create relationship free space. In other words, when you are not with him your time is about you and your life and not about what he is doing or thinking</p> <p>Give yourself a break Julie and let things calm down. You chose the person you chose and you have to live with the choice instead of trying to change things</p> <p>Use cognitive therapy techniques: Say no to the thoughts and move on "I will focus on myself today." "Today is about me and my life."</p>	

**RELATIONSHIPS CONTD....**

I have a lack of feelings that make me thing I have made a mistake and am with the wrong person

I can be in love one week and literally care less if I see the person the next week

I'm often too over stimulated to appreciate the company of the person I'm with. Then when I get home I want to be with them. Ridiculous.

**WHAT I CAN DO contd**

"I am an individual with my own life."

"I focus on what I am doing in the moment"

"I live in the present"

Julie you have done this with all of your other mood swings, you can do it with these feelings as well. Give yourself some time. This is all so new. You can become more whole, accepting, loving and trusting if you work on it.

I can remind myself that I always loose my feelings when I am stressed (except the feelings of being stressed and irritated) I can calm down and wait for the loving feelings to come back

There is NO reason to make any decisions when I am lacking in feelings. The feelings will come back. They always do.

When there are a lack of feelings this is a sign that you are overworked and over stressed Julie. It's not necessarily a sign that you don't care about the person.

Give it time for the feelings to come back.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTD..**