

SPEAK and Be Heard...Living With Bipolar Depression

Share Your Experience. Your Voice. Your Success.

SUCCESS.

Everyone has a personal definition of success. For those who have experienced, and are now successfully managing the depressive episodes of bipolar disorder, success may be measured in simple ways: from being able to maintain your relationships with family and friends, to finishing up your degree, to feeling well enough to get out of bed—any of these could be a definition of success.

Of course, getting to that feeling of success was probably not an easy journey. In fact, maybe for months, or even years, you may have felt isolated, trapped, and disconnected from your life and the activities you used to find enjoyable. Maybe when you sought help it took a while to get the right diagnosis, but once you received an accurate diagnosis and developed an appropriate treatment plan with your health care provider, you set goals to participate in your life and activities you used to enjoy. Maybe you even had a role model or caregiver who offered support and encouragement to help you reach your goals.

And we know that bipolar depression doesn't just affect the patient. If you are a caregiver, you were affected when you saw your family member or friend struggling with bipolar depression. But you were there offering your support and encouragement while he/she sought an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment plan to help him/her get back on track.

Others need to hear about your experience in your voice. Whether you are a patient or a caregiver, SPEAK out and tell us your story.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The ***SPEAK and Be Heard...Living With Bipolar Depression*** campaign, sponsored by AstraZeneca as part of its ongoing efforts to raise awareness of mental illness, is designed to inspire hope and show the importance of seeking an accurate diagnosis and developing an appropriate treatment plan with a health care provider in an effort to successfully manage bipolar disorder.

For Patient with Bipolar Depression:

If you are successfully managing the symptoms of bipolar depression, we invite you to be an encouraging role model for others by telling the story of your journey as part of the ***SPEAK and Be Heard...Living With Bipolar Depression*** campaign. Tell us about the struggles you have overcome from your bipolar depression so you could participate in your life again, or how you lost interest in things you previously loved to do until you received an accurate diagnosis and developed an appropriate treatment plan. Whatever your story of success is over bipolar depression, we want to hear it.

For Caregiver of Patient with Bipolar Depression:

If you are the caregiver of a bipolar depression patient who is successfully managing his/her symptoms, we invite you to be an encouraging role model for the support community by telling others about your experience as part of the ***SPEAK and Be Heard...Living With Bipolar Depression*** campaign. Tell us about the challenges you and your loved one faced before he/she was accurately diagnosed and developed an appropriate treatment plan, and how you worked through that together, or how your life was changed once he/she was diagnosed with bipolar depression, and how you helped motivate him/her to set and achieve his/her goals.

FORMAT

Submissions will be accepted from **Tuesday, April 28 – Wednesday, June 24**, in the form of a written or video essay totaling approximately 500 – 750 words, or running under three minutes. We encourage you to submit your personal story as a way to inspire other patients with bipolar depression or caregivers, and provide hope to those that need support and encouragement.

SPEAK OUT TO RAISE AWARENESS

In submitting your story as part of this campaign, you can be an example of an individual who has been able to successfully manage the symptoms of bipolar depression, so we would like to give you an opportunity to share your story.

SPEAK Out to the Community:

Among all of the submissions in both the patient with bipolar disorder category and the caregiver for someone who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder category, a group of judges from the mental health community will select three entrants from the patient category and one entrant in the caregiver category to share their stories in New York City.

The three entrants, and the caregiver selected will each receive a trip to share their stories with the mental health community and media at a roundtable discussion in New York City in September 2009. These advocates will also have their portraits taken by a professional photographer and be featured on the Web site www.speakaboutbipolardepression.com. If you live more than 150 miles away, you will be provided a round-trip coach airline ticket. If you live less than 150 miles away, other transportation arrangements will be made. In addition to reasonable lodging for one night in a hotel room in New York City, you will also be provided meals during your visit and be reimbursed for reasonable miscellaneous expenses (ie taxis).

SPEAK Out on Capitol Hill:

Among all of the submissions in the patient with bipolar depression category, our panel of judges and the voting public will choose one entrant to share his/her experience on Capitol Hill.

The patient who is invited to share his/her story on Capitol Hill will receive a trip for him/her to Washington, DC, to share his/her story at the Entertainment Industries Council's (EIC) 2009 *PRISM Awards* Capitol Hill Showcase in September 2009. If you live more than 150 miles away, a round-trip coach airline ticket will be provided to you. In addition to reasonable lodging for one night in a hotel room in Washington, DC, you will also be provided meals during your visit and be reimbursed for reasonable miscellaneous expenses (ie taxis).

The *PRISM Awards* honor the accurate depiction of mental health issues, substance abuse, treatment, and recovery in television, movies, music, and other forms of entertainment. The *PRISM Awards* are presented by the Entertainment Industries Council Inc. (EIC) in collaboration with FX Network. Previous spokespeople have included Maurice Bernard (actor, *General Hospital*) and Patty Duke (actress, *The Miracle Worker*, *The Patty Duke Show*).

EVERYONE HAS A VOICE

As a part of the *SPEAK and Be Heard...Living With Bipolar Depression* campaign, we want to help the public rethink their perceptions of successfully living with bipolar depression. We invite the public to log on to www.speakaboutbipolardepression.com to help choose who will SPEAK on Capitol Hill among the three selected patient stories. Voting will begin on Monday, August 17, and run through Friday, August 21.

NEED MORE INFO

For more information and to submit an entry online, please visit: www.speakaboutbipolardepression.com.