WHAT CAUSES BIPOLAR DISORDER?

• The exact cause of bipolar disorder is not known
• Researchers believe that bipolar disorder may be caused by
  – Genes; it runs in families
  – A chemical imbalance affecting certain parts of the brain
• Bipolar disorder is a medical illness that is
  – Not your fault
  – Not your parents’ fault
  – Not punishment for bad behavior

BIPOLAR DISORDER TRIGGERS

• Triggers are factors that may set off an episode of bipolar disorder
• Triggers may include
  – A stressful event, such as loss of a job, divorce, or illness; or a positive major life event, such as winning a major prize
  – Changes in daily schedule, including changes in the amount of sleep a person gets
  – Change of season

BIPOLAR DISORDER TRIGGERS (CONT’D)

– Treatment of depression with an antidepressant medication (may trigger a switch into mania)
– Lack of sleep or disrupted sleep
– Use of alcohol or other substances
• Episodes can also occur without any identifiable trigger

WHY IS LONG-TERM TREATMENT SO IMPORTANT?

• Without treatment
  – Symptoms may recur or bipolar disorder may get worse with time
  – Quality of life suffers
• With consistent, appropriate treatment
  – People with bipolar disorder can lead productive lives

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