

# AGITATION ACTION PLAN

## A guide for managing agitation related to bipolar I or II disorder

Take a couple of minutes to answer the following questions about your past experiences with agitation episodes. It can help you better understand what to look out for and how to manage it with your doctor. Discussing this with a family member or close friend can help you prepare for potential future episodes.

### 1. Notice the signs of agitation coming on

Here is a list of some common symptoms that may indicate an agitation episode. Which symptoms have you experienced in the past? Check all that apply.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness           | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability           | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressiveness/hostility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uneasiness             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgeting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling uncooperative    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nervousness            | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling wound up       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of control          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling tense          | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling overexcited    | <input type="checkbox"/> Violence                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to sit still | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling short-tempered | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____             |



**TIP:** Different symptoms can happen at different times. Being able to quickly identify these symptoms is an important step in keeping them from worsening.

### 2. Familiarize yourself with possible triggers

Some specific actions and events could spark symptoms. Can you recall specific reasons or situations that may have triggered an agitation episode? Check all that apply.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Missed medication or specific doses | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor sleep          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dispute with a family member        | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An upsetting incident at work       | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____        |



**TIP:** Recognizing triggers may help you to better manage those actions or events, when possible.

### 3. Try shifting the focus elsewhere

What activities have helped reduce agitation in the past? Check all that apply.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing in a journal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting, sculpting, or another creative activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditating                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing. I wait for it to pass                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking to friends or family |  |



**TIP:** Be sure to talk with your doctor about symptoms of agitation that do not improve.

#### 4. Allow family and friends to help

What actions from others seem to be most helpful during an episode? Check all that apply.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being listened to                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking to the doctor on your behalf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being left alone or given space to cool off | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being taken to seek medical attention       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |



**TIP:** This tip is for the family and friends who are often present during an episode. Watching a loved one experience agitation can leave you feeling a range of emotions, including worry, frustration, and even helplessness. While actions or behavior during an episode may be negative (such as yelling or cursing), responding in the same manner will only make the situation worse, and may increase your loved one's agitation.

#### 5. As much as possible, try to stay safe

As agitation symptoms worsen, it's important to avoid a situation that could be potentially dangerous to yourself or others.

What safety measures could a family member or friend take to help? Check all that apply.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being given space to cool off       | <input type="checkbox"/> Being taken to seek medical attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Putting away sharp objects          | <input type="checkbox"/> Calling 9-1-1                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding keys to prevent from leaving |  |



**IMPORTANT:** If you have suicidal thoughts, **call the suicide prevention hotline 9-8-8, or dial 9-1-1, or go to the emergency room immediately.**

### To learn more about agitation related to bipolar disorder, speak with a healthcare provider

This content is for educational purposes only. It is intended as a guide to help support discussions you have with your healthcare provider. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of a healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding agitation associated with bipolar disorder.