

MOODS

Serving People with Unipolar and Bi-polar Illness, Their Families and Friends, since 1981

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This Is Where You Can Find the Best Mood Disorder Tools in the World—Free

By Elizabeth Saenger, PhD

Many of the best mood disorder resources in the world are online. They include [Depression Central](#), pioneered by [Ivan K. Goldberg, MD](#), and the immense [PubMed](#), with its handy [Single Citation Matcher](#).

However, the sites below offer unique *tools* (vs publications). They will be of special value if you have a mood disorder and want to:

- improve your sleep
- become a more informed participant in your psychiatric care, receive personal information, and suggestions, about your sleep and mood.

Sleep Better

Sleep affects mood disorders, and vice versa, in many ways. For example:

- Lack of sleep can be both a symptom, and a trigger, of mania.
- Getting much more, or much less, sleep than usual often accompanies depression.

Sleeping more than eight hours when you are depressed increases depressed feelings.

Consequently, for people with mood disorders, getting the right amount of sleep regularly is a cornerstone of stability. [F.lux](#)

makes it easier to do this because this app changes the light coming from your computer or phone. Specifically, f.lux makes these devices give off less [energizing blue light](#) in the evening, when you are presumably getting ready for bed.

The result? The light from

The [Psychopharmacology Algorithm Project](#) at the Harvard Medical School covers [bipolar depression](#), and [bipolar mania](#).

According to founder and editor David N. Osser, MD, this project "is an effort to speed the adoption of best research evidence into



your device may feel softer as night approaches, and does not interfere with your body's production of melatonin, the sleep hormone.

See how this invention works, and download it, at [just-getflux.com](#).

Tracing Your Treatment Plan in Pixels

day-to-day treatment of patients." For each algorithm, or set of step-by-step instructions, experts who do not have financial ties to industry extensively review the literature.

If you click on a recommendation, or question, such as, "Tried lithium?" at a particular juncture, the algorithm summarizes the data supporting the consideration of lithium.

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um at that stage, and provides references.

Dr. Osser notes that, "Algorithms are also valuable to help avoid the cognitive lapses which are common when we solve problems which rely on uncertain data and many possible choices. For example, our recent success or failure with a particular drug is likely to influence our choices more than it should."

Although Dr. Osser and his colleagues developed the algorithms for psychiatrists, they welcome use by patients.

Self-Assessments from cet.org

More than a million people have taken the three free, confidential [self-assessments](#) at cet.org (the site for the non-profit Center for Environmental Therapeutics). Still others took a shortened version of one self-assessment during a hugely popular [debut](#) in *The New York Times* in March 2017.

The three scientifically validated [self-assessments](#) at cet.org can help you:

- find out when your inner clock thinks you should be going to sleep
- determine the extent to which you are a lark or an owl
- learn what time would be most effective for light therapy, if light therapy is indicated
- decide whether to consult a

clinician about possible depression

- track symptoms of depression.



Each self-assessment:

- takes about ten minutes to complete
- provides personal feedback
- encourages you to print out the feedback, and share it with your doctor.

Conclusion

With unique tools available online for free, you can easily:

- improve one critical aspect of your environment
- educate yourself about the wisdom of treatment choices given your specific medical history
- get personalized feedback about aspects of your sleep, and mood, which are relevant to care.

Elizabeth Saenger, PhD, was a board member of MDSG in its early days. She is Director of Education at the Center for Environmental Therapeutics.

Interesting Reading

Psychosis Symptoms: What Are Hallucinations and Delusions? [relating to bipolar illness] <https://www.healthypace.com/bipolar-disorder/psychosis/psychosis-symptoms-what-are-hallucinations-and-delusions/>

Suicide: A Very Real Threat to a Person with Bipolar Disorder <https://www.healthypace.com/bipolar-disorder/articles/suicide-very-real-threat-to-person-with-bipolar-disorder/>

New Knowledge About How Lithium Reduces Mania in Bipolar Disorder Opens Research Path to More Effective Treatments <https://outlook.live.com/owa/?path=/mail/AQMkADAwATEx-ATQ3LTRjM2YtODRhMyOwMAItMDAKAC4AAAO1zHbPwRxEQIrx5AelkND oAQDTXVtJA5SnR4Mlx92YNvLDAAA CAVsAAAA%3D>

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All information in the newsletter is intended for general knowledge only and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment for a specific medical condition.

Ask the Doctor Send your questions about depression and bi-polar illness to newsletter@mdsg.org Questions will be answered by a psychiatrist or psychologist as appropriate and as space permits.