

What Are My Reproductive Options As A Woman



Women who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder are hard pressed to find answers about their reproductive options. It is not easy to find reliable information on what their options are as far as having a child biologically or adopting. This site is meant to offer a few answers.

To begin this journey I sent out the following email to several different adoption agencies:

Hello,

My name is Abigail and I am currently working on a project that requires help. I am trying to put together resources for parents who have bipolar disorder and would like to adopt. Do you have any suggestions?

*Thank you for your time,
Abigail E. Fliege, BSW*

One of the clearest and most positive responses I gained back stated:

Dear Abigail,

What an interesting project. The officials in countries where we work in international adoption are very unlikely to approve for adoption a parent with documented bipolar

disorder. Although the condition may be well controlled with medication and other therapies, the stigma, fear and misunderstanding of mental illness remain strong in these countries.

If, in your research, you run across any materials that might help us help family members with bipolar disorder fulfill their dream of adoption, please pass it on. I believe that couples in this situation could make wonderful adoptive parents with the proper support and contingency plans. Best wishes with your project.

*Charlotte Allen, MSW
Executive Director/Placement Supervisor
Adopt a Miracle*

I believe this is an honest message stating the concern for the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Ms. Allen also mentions proper support and contingency plans. Perhaps this can be a stipulation made in the future if other countries agreed to work with parents who have bipolar disorder? I was pleased to see that Ms. Allen supported the idea and my project. The question then becomes: Shouldn't ALL prospective adoptive parents have support and contingency plans?

[Internet Mental Health](#)

[NAMI](#)

[Healthyplace.com](#)

[Mentalhelp.net](#)

[The Imperfect Parent](#)

[Adoption.com](#)

[CAMH](#)

[About.com](#)

[Expert Law](#)

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LINKS I POSTED:

Internet Mental Health is a comprehensive website about bipolar disorder. The sections are divided into: synopsis, symptoms and treatment, menu, and articles or journal abstracts. This website is particularly helpful because it offers many other links for further education.

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Health. This particular website talks about managing pregnancy and bipolar disorder. Specifically it talks about the risks of pregnancy with certain medications.

Healthyplace.com is a professional website that offers references to the information given at the bottom of the page. The website goes over: psychotropic risk to offspring,

balancing risks, mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, benzodiazepines, antidepressants, and recommendations. On the left hand side there are also links to further information.

Mentalhelp.net explains the difference between domestic and international adoptions.

The Imperfect Parent is a very description of one mother's experience of adopting as a woman with bipolar disorder. She talks about the difference between domestic and international adoption. She was able to adopt from Guatemala in the end.

Adoption.com seems to have the most extensive information concerning adoptions. The URL posted talks about the fact that it's the **law** to allow disabled people to adopt.

CAMH is the Center for Addiction and Mental Health. This particular website offers information to give children once they are old enough to understand what bipolar is and how it affects mom or dad.

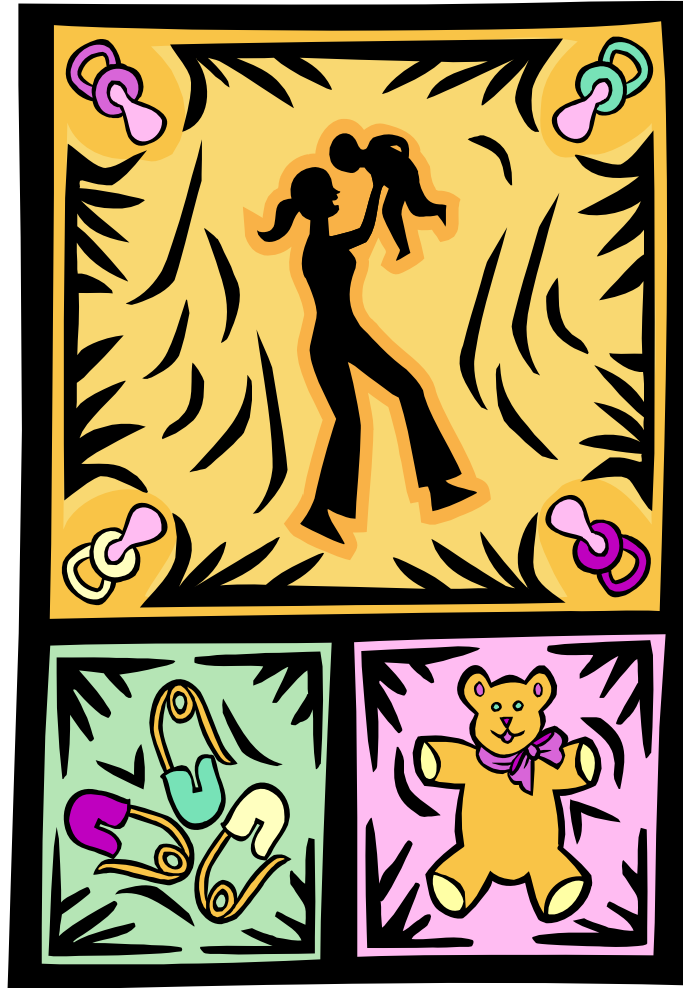
About.com has a story about a woman with bipolar disorder that adopted. The link goes straight to part three. I thought part three was the most important because it shows how serious of an illness bipolar can be, but it also shows recovery. It also touches on the subject of discretion during a home study.

The Expert Law Forum is very brief. I don't agree with the questioning woman referring to herself as "psycho mom" and "Mr. Knowitall" doesn't present his credentials but the reason I included this link has to do with the response regarding Korea. Honestly, the response surprised me! Schizophrenia is often times more difficult to treat than bipolar, so perhaps there is hope in this country?

This project proved to be more difficult than I expected. I received numerous emails from the various agencies that adoption with a mental illness simply wasn't possible. Others gave me conflicting information regarding international and domestic adoptions. Having a biological child is an option, but there is a risk of passing the disorder onto the child as well as having to deal with the complications of dealing with the disorder without medication for an extended period of time. I do believe there is hope. Perhaps someday there will be fewer stigmas surrounding this disorder.

I urge any woman with bipolar disorder who is considering having a child to maintain a close, but professional, relationship with her psychiatrist and/or medical doctor.

Send E-Mail to: abigail.emily@gmail.com



Follow Your
Heart:



Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!
Live the life you've imagined. As you simplify
your life, the laws of the universe will be
simpler.

Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)