

# Adapting to Mental Illness from Adolescence through Transition

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# About Me

- Associates Degree as a Disability Specialist from Manchester Community College
- Currently working with UConn Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, PATH/Family Voices, and National Youth as Self Advocates
- Born three months prematurely, with a perforated intestine and hydrocephalus
- Diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a toddler
- 25 operations since birth
- Hobbies: reading, horseback riding, waterskiing, downhill skiing, blogging

# My Mental Health Story

- Anxiety symptoms started at age 10
- Bipolar Disorder symptoms started at age 13
- Struggles with advanced classes in school
- Depressive episodes related to experiences with bullying
- Untreated Bipolar Disorder Type 2 led to tensions in transition program after high school

# What is Bipolar Disorder Type 2?

- Categorized by two mood types:
  - Primary phase is depression
  - Phases of hypomania
- Medications help, but the highs and lows still happen

# What I've Learned

- My mental health conditions shaped who I am today
- It was harder to identify my symptoms because they came during my formative adolescent years
- It's important to have support and to have people who believe in you

Thank you!