

DEAR AUNT DELORA

An honest discussion starter for
Children with Parents or Loved Ones
who suffer from Bipolar Disorder

BY DEBRA PETERSON

Dear Aunt Delora,

I am feeling really sad today. Mom has been sleeping A LOT and she seems to be so sad all the time. I can't understand why. She finally got a job she likes and I have been getting pretty good grades in school. We even got a new apartment and she seemed really excited about that at the time, so I'm confused. I asked grandma if she had noticed and she told me that mom is sick with something called Bipolar Disorder, but I don't know what that is. Grandma seemed uncomfortable telling me, so I didn't ask any more questions. Did I do something wrong to cause it?

Sincerely,
Confused

Dear Confused,

I understand why you may feel confused! You are brave for admitting that and asking for help. Bipolar Disorder is confusing, even for adults.

Neither you nor your mom did anything wrong to cause this illness. It is a physical illness like diabetes, heart problems and cancer are illnesses. Bipolar Disorder is an illness that causes the chemicals in someone's brain to get out of balance. It makes them feel and think things that are out of their control. Sometimes they are sad and tired, but other times, they may have a lot of energy and can't sleep at all. Bipolar Disorder can affect different people in different ways. These are just a couple of examples. You are doing the right thing by reaching out and asking questions to learn about your mom's illness. Understanding her illness and what she is going through will help you both get through this difficult time. Continue being kind, caring and patient with your mom. It might not seem like you are having an impact on her illness, but you are making an impact on her life.

Remember your mom loves you the best way she knows how!

With much love ~ Aunt Delora