**Mood Disorders**

***Mood Disorders*-**These disorders arecharacterized by emotional extremes. They include:

1. **Major Depressive Disorder-**a mood disorder in which a person, for no apparent reason, experiences two or more weeks of depressed moods, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and diminished interest or pleasure in most activities (Also, See suicide).

2. **Mania-**a mood disorder marked by a hyperactive, wildly optimistic state.

3. **Bipolar Disorder-**a mood disorder in which the person alternates between the hopelessness and lethargy of ***depression*** and the overexcited state of ***mania***; formerly called manic-depressive disorder.

**Explaining mood disorders**

*Biological Perspective (nature)*

* **Genetic link**: Twin studies reveal that if one identical twin has depression then there is a 50% chance that the other will as well. There is also a much higher risk of developing a mood disorder if you have a close biological relative with the disease.
* **Brain activity**: The "depressed" brain shows less left frontal lobe activity than a when the person is happy.
* **Biochemistry**: Studies show that norepinephrine and serotonin are at lower than normal levels in the brain of a depressed person while these neurotransmitters are at higher than normal levels in the brain of a person experiencing mania. Drugs that block the re-uptake of these neurotransmitters (Prozac for example) are used to treat depression.

*Psychological Factors (nurture)*

* **Social-cognitive perspective:**It is known that a self-defeating attitude feeds the cycle of depression. Stressful events followed by negative thinking and self-blame causes you to feel depressed and in turn, this mood affects the way you think and behave thereby increasing the chances of more negative experiences. Negativity naturally puts a different spin on otherwise normal or even positive experiences.
* **Loneliness:** Defined in the text as "the painful awareness that ones social relationships are deficient", loneliness contributes to and may be the main trigger of a persons feelings of depression. It feeds into the same cycle of depression described above.

*Suicide*

Factors that increase your risk of suicide include the following:

* Gender differences: women are more likely to attempt suicide while men are more likely to succeed.
* Age: suicide rates have doubled among teenagers aged 15-19 since 1950 and are especially high among men in late adulthood.
* Racial differences: Whites are twice as likely as blacks to commit suicide.
* Nationality: Canadians and Americans are twice as likely as people from England, Italy, or Spain to kill themselves.
* Other: There is a higher risk among people who are nonreligious, rich and single.