



INTERNATIONAL
BIPOLAR
FOUNDATION

A WORLD OF HOPE, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

My Support Newsletter

Dear Reader,

As 2025 comes to a close, we want to pause and say thank you and Happy New Year, from the heart. To those with lived experience and the caregivers who turned to our resources and shared their stories to support one another, your trust continues to guide and strengthen our work. To our volunteers, partners, and donors, your generosity and steady support made it possible to show up for so many individuals and families throughout the year. Together, we are a community rooted in care, understanding, and hope.

We step into the new year deeply grateful for you and committed to expanding the resources and support that help people feel seen, supported, and never alone.

To your health and wellness,

Debbie Shaeffer
Executive Director

Welcoming 2026



We hope the new year brings you joy and peace and we are honored to move into 2026 with you!

Carlsbad Marathon 2026



We invite you to meet-up with IBPF, mental health advocates, and individuals with lived experience at the 2026 Carlsbad Marathon!

Join us at our volunteer tent as we support the participating runners, build community, make new friends, and promote mental health awareness together. Coffee and bagels will be provided to get our early morning going!

[Follow this link to register as a volunteer for IBPF!](#)

Please note that you will need to register via this site in order to be included.

Want to win a free race bib?

Email us your interest at tbarr@ibpf.org to enter our contest.

Learn more about the Carlsbad Marathon [here](#).

- **Sunday, Jan 18, 2026 7:00 am - 12:00 pm** (*arrive early to claim parking as it can be limited*)
- Volunteers check in at **Carlsbad Blvd & Tamarack**

Seasonal Affective Disorder Month

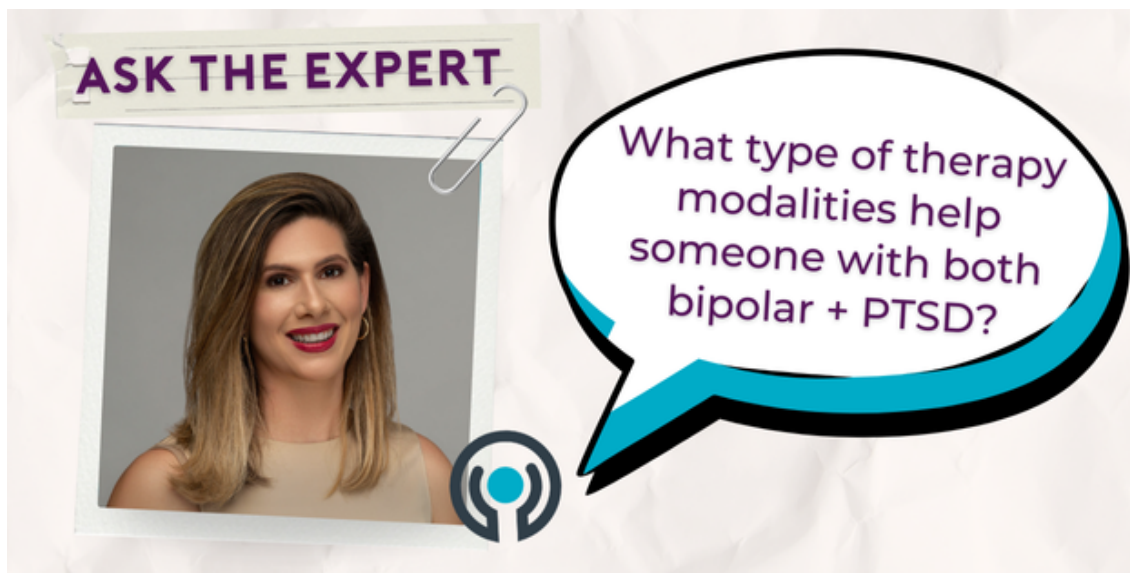


SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH DECEMBER

December is **Seasonal Affective Disorder Awareness Month**, a time to shine a light on how seasonal changes can affect mood, energy, and overall mental health. For individuals living with bipolar disorder, these shifts can be especially challenging and deserve understanding and attention.

This month invites us to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage compassion for those navigating seasonal mood changes. By fostering education, support, and open conversation, we help make stability, connection, and hope more possible for everyone impacted by SAD and bipolar disorder.

Introducing: Ask the Expert with Dr. Stephanie Freitag PhD



We are excited to bring back a community favorite, "Ask the Expert"! We are lucky to be joined by the amazing **Dr. Stephanie Freitag**, who will be answering any and all bipolar-related questions, from you!

This month, Stephanie has answered this question from Karima (Age 31, Bipolar 1):

What type of therapy modalities help someone with both bipolar + PTSD?

[Read her response here!](#)

Want to send in a question for Stephanie to answer? Send an email over to tbarr@ibpf.org with the subject line "Ask the Expert" and attach your question in the body for the chance to be featured!

***Dr. Stephanie Freitag PhD** is a licensed clinical psychologist based in Brooklyn, New York. She runs her own private practice where she treats patients in seven states (CA, CT, FL, GA, MA, NJ, NY). As a specialist in bipolar disorder, she uses Interpersonal and Social Rhythm Therapy (IPSRT) to support patients in individual and group therapy. She most recently trained at the Emory School of Medicine where she is currently an assistant adjunct faculty member who publishes research on bipolar disorder and intimate partner violence. Beyond her clinical work and research she is passionate about advocacy and believes strongly in fighting the stigma associated with mental illness.*

December Blogs



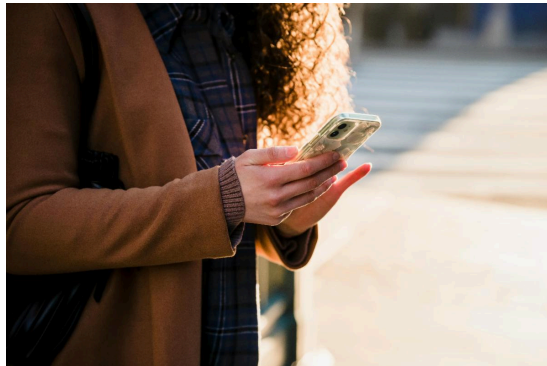
[Finding Stability Through Sobriety](#)



[Breakups, Rejection, and the Bipolar Brain](#)



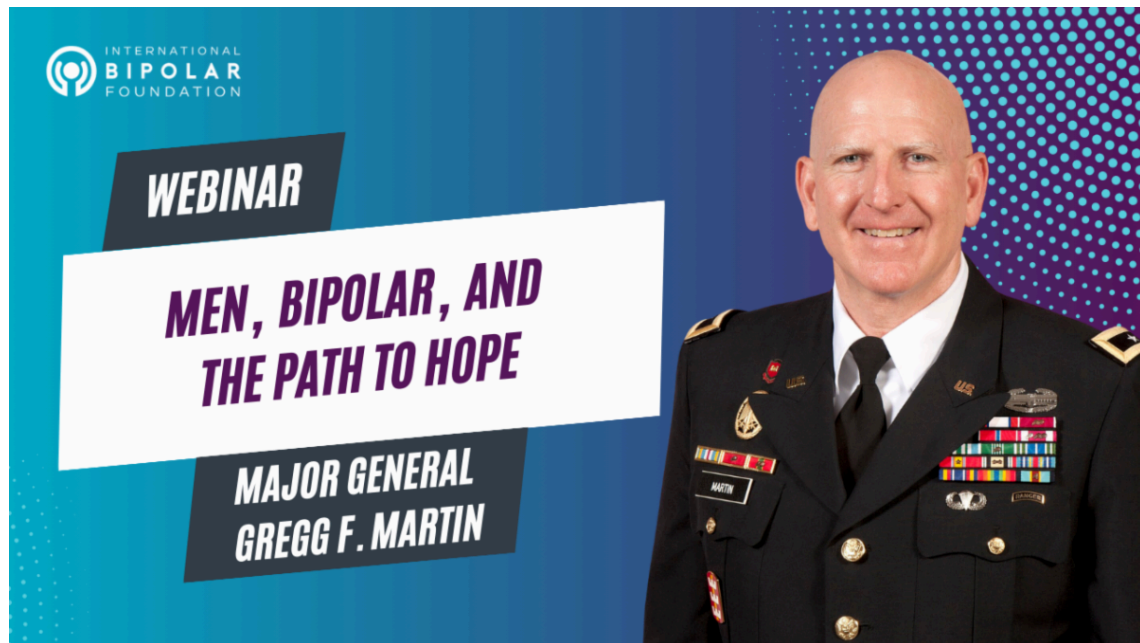
[The Holidays & Mood Disorders: Pieces of Gratitude](#)



[Diagnosed via Push Notification](#)

All Blogs

Most Recent Webinar



Men often face unique barriers when it comes to recognizing, accepting, and seeking help for bipolar disorder. In this powerful conversation, **Major General Gregg F. Martin** shares insight from his own lived experience, **offering guidance for men** who may be struggling in silence.

Major General Gregg F. Martin, PhD, US Army (Retired), is a 36-year combat veteran, author, and bipolar survivor, thriver, and advocate. A West Point graduate with advanced degrees from MIT and the Army and Naval war colleges, he served as commanding general of Fort Leonard Wood, commandant of the Army War College, and president of the National Defense University.

General Martin has lived on the bipolar spectrum his entire life. After his symptoms skyrocketed and then crashed, nearly destroying him, he rebuilt his life with a renewed mission: to stop stigma, promote recovery, and save lives by sharing his story. He credits IBPF as “a phenomenal resource... a treasure trove of knowledge, shared experience, and inspiration” that supported both his own recovery and that of his two sons who also live with bipolar disorder. He encourages all families and caregivers to use IBPF’s free resources, connect with community, and “spread the word and get involved.”

[Watch](#)

One of Our Popular Webinars



GUT MICROBIOME IN SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES

Dr. Tanya T. Nguyen is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California San Diego (UCSD). She is a clinical neuropsychologist with expertise in the assessment and treatment of older adults with neuropsychiatric disorders. Dr. Nguyen is research faculty within the Stein Institute for Research on Aging at UCSD, where she is actively involved in clinical research. She has been the Principal Investigator on several National Institutes of Health as well as national and local foundation grants. Broadly, her research aims to identify mechanisms cognitive and biological aging in mental illnesses. Her current work is focused on the gut-brain axis and understanding the **relationship between the gut microbiome and brain/behavior**, particularly as it pertains to mental illness and aging. Dr. Nguyen is the principal investigator of National Institute of Mental Health Career Development Award to investigate the role of the gut microbiome in accelerated aging in schizophrenia and how imbalance of the gut ecosystem can alter immune responses, leading to alterations to brain and behavioral function.

Watch

Recent News and Press



[Early Signs of Bipolar Disorder in Teens](#)

[An Update on the Role of Valproate in Bipolar Disorder](#)

[Metformin is the new standard of managing weight gain on bipolar meds](#)

Latest Face of Hope and Recovery



RUTH
Bipolar 1

Your anxiety is lying to you.

I love the affirmation "your anxiety is lying to you". I was feeling flat and useless, uncreative and unproductive and overall unsuccessful but by looking at the black and white words in front of me, I was forced to look at the truth rather than let my emotions dictate the narrative.

I have had several periods of mental illness over the years but what has always helped me, is the reminder that I have been here before and I have always recovered.

[Read more](#)

All Faces of Hope and Recovery

Your Story Is Valuable

DO YOU HAVE LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Your story can change lives.

IBPF is looking for volunteers to be our next Faces of Hope and Recovery.

Your contribution can help strengthen our community by sharing real personal experiences and words of encouragement.

If you're passionate about lifting others up and contributing to a meaningful project, we'd love to hear from you. **Your voice can make a real difference.**

Email us at tbarr@ibpf.org now to apply!

We want to hear from you!

Your questions, challenges, and feedback will help shape the content of our blog and education articles, so please reach out to info@ibpf.org to **request a featured topic**.



eBay for Charity has partnered with the [PayPal Giving Fund](#) to make it easy for sellers to donate 10% to 100% (or as low as 1% for eBay Motors vehicles) of your item's final sale price to a certified charity. Choose [IBPF as your charity](#) and make an impact!



Shop with [CouponBirds.com](#) to save, earn cash and support [International Bipolar Foundation](#) on [The Seedling Project](#). You can find coupon codes from thousands of popular retailers like Walmart, Vans, BestBuy and Amazon.



IBPF is proud to be part of [Ralphs Community Rewards](#) program. We encourage you to participate by linking your rewards card to IBPF. Community Rewards is an easy way to make an impact on the mental illness community! The more you shop with us, the more money IBPF will earn!

Support us with [PayPal Giving Fund](#); there are no fees and we receive 100% of your donation!

Support us with a [debit or credit card](#) and choose between a monthly or one time donation!

YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

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