

These are the steps that my wife took as a Primary Relational Support in my life. This information is helpful for you to share with those who will be filling that role in your life.

Very Important Note: You are not your supportee's saviour! Remember that each of these steps is for your benefit not just for the benefit of the individual that you are supporting. You are in need of regulating and support as much as they are, so go into this by breathing steady, pacing yourself, and little to no expectations. If the individual whom you are supporting begins looking to you for everything you are probably getting too close and doing too much of the heavy lifting.



Shock: What just happened!? You may have found yourself stunned by just learning someone close to you is Bi-Polar. Don't worry, you're right on track.



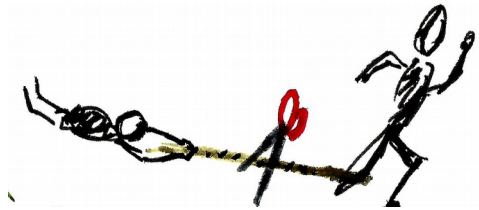
Process: After the initial shock, it is a good idea to begin journaling or mapping out your own thoughts and emotions to make sense of them before moving forward. This will be an ongoing process, trust us you will need it.



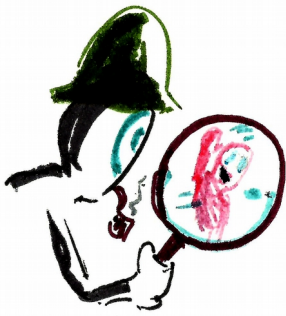
Stabilize: Before you can help anyone you first have to become stable yourself. Take some time to get grounded and on track in your own life before taking on someone else's needs. Remember the person you are supporting has made it this far without you, and their Bi-Polar is not going away.



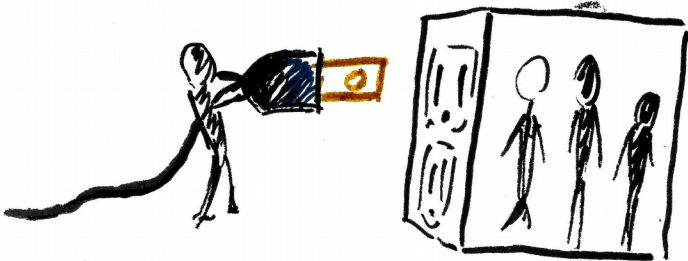
Regulate: Your supportee now needs to be regulated first and foremost before any other work can be done. Someone who is unregulated, if they're like my husband, will forget everything you tell them or work on with them if they are not first regulated and grounded.



Cut: Now it's time to cut out or at the very least limit time spent in those relationships that have been weighing you down and contributing nothing of substance to your life. Things just got real and you need all of your energy to be able to move forward effectively.



Observe: Here is where you want to begin observing the individual that you will be supporting. Make notes on the types of behaviours and cues that you notice in them which signify and are precursors to them becoming unregulated.



Supports: What is important now is for you yourself to plug into those relationships that bring support, mentorship, and a reciprocal give and take. No time for one sided relationships as mentioned earlier. This means intentional choices on who you bring close to you during this time. The supportee is not the only person who needs supporting.



Gather: The supportee will need help remembering what kind of activities and tools they can use to regulate, they may also need help going out to get them. Don't worry about getting everything immediately, you can get them in pieces. And remember, you don't have to do all the work yourself. Ask your supportee questions, it is best

to have the supportee to help make decisions so that they are more likely to gravitate and enjoy the regulating tools and activities chosen.



Setup: Gathering the supplies is the first part of one complete step, the next part is putting it all together in an easy, safe, convenient place for the individual to reach and go to when regulating is needed/required. Again make your supportee help and choose the space where it should be.



Model: Having the tools is one thing, but knowing how to use them is another. One of the best ways to teach someone to regulate is by you yourself regulating first and then modelling it to them. This is an ongoing process.



Schedule: Both you and the supportee will need to make a schedule. Nothing regulates like routine and consistency.



Wean: As you watch your supportee grow, your presence will be and should be needed less and less. This is a good sign, because our goal is that every person grows in such a way that they can be able to live whole, grounded and stable even when no one is there to support them.