

## UNDERSTANDING TRI-POLAR DISORDER

### The Overlap Between Borderline and Bipolar Disorders

*Why Many Borderlines are mis-diagnosed for Bi-Polar, or Bi-Polar is not seen as Tri-Polar*

From Dr. Phelps: <http://www.psycheducation.org/depression/borderline.htm>

There is tremendous overlap in the symptom patterns of bipolar and borderline personality disorder (Borderline PD). The overlap reflects a basic problem with the concept of a "diagnosis" in the first place; for a brief essay on this topic, [click here](#). Notice in the table below that almost every symptom is found in each column:

Borderline PD (DSM list)	Bipolar (broad view)
<i>Cognitive</i> unstable self transient paranoid ideation chronic emptiness abandonment fear	<i>Cognitive</i> unstable self psychosis, esp. paranoid/grandiose
<i>Energy</i> impulsivity (sex, substances, self-harm)	<i>Energy</i> impulsivity (spending, sex, substances, risk sports)
<i>Mood</i> affective instability reactive mood episodic dysphoria irritability, intense anger anxiety	<i>Mood</i> affective instability "rejection hypersensitivity" dysphoria irritability, intense anger anxiety
<i>Behavior</i> suicide attempts (~10%) self-harm	<i>Behavior</i> suicide attempts (~10%) self-harm?