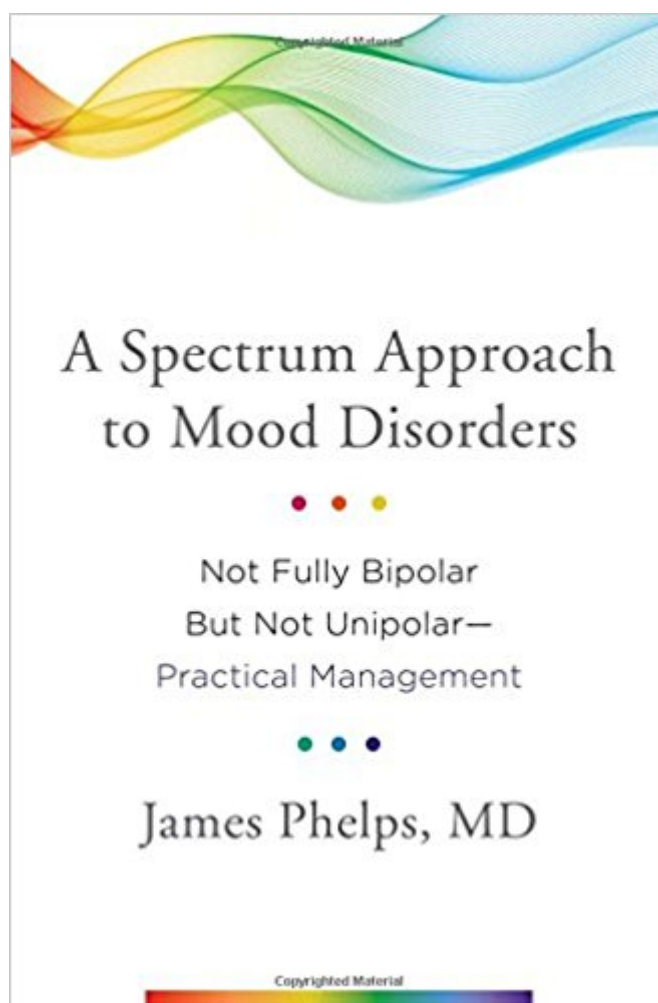


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# A Spectrum Approach To Mood Disorders: Not Fully Bipolar But Not Unipolar--Practical Management



## Synopsis

How to understand your clients' true illnesses, not just their DSM checklists. Though the DSM discusses the criteria for mood disorders in absolute terms—either present or absent—professionals are aware that while such dichotomies are useful for teaching, they are not always true in practice. Recent genetic data support clinicians' longstanding recognition that a continuum of mood disorders between unipolar and bipolar better matches reality than a yes/no, bipolar-or-not approach. If we acknowledge that continuum, how does this affect our approach to diagnosis and treatment? In *A Spectrum Approach to Mood Disorders*, nationally recognized expert James Phelps provides an in-depth exploration of the signs, symptoms, and nuanced presentations of the mood disorder spectrum, focusing on the broad gray area between Major Depression and Bipolar I. Combining theoretical understanding and real-world scenarios, Phelps offers practical treatment guidelines for clinicians to better understand the subtle ways mood disorders can show up, and how to find the most beneficial path for treatment based on the patient's individual pattern of symptoms. Is it trauma, or is it bipolar? Borderline? Both? Phelps's expertise and wealth of personal experience provides readers with unparalleled insight into a subject that is by nature challenging to define. His emphasis on non-medication approaches, as well as chapters on all the major pill-based treatments (from fish oil to lithium to the avoidance of atypical antipsychotics and antidepressants), creates a comprehensive resource for any clinician working with patients on the mood spectrum. Appendices on the relationship between bipolar diagnosis, politics, and religion; and a plain-English approach to the statistical perils of bipolar screening, offer further value. Phelps has written an invaluable guide of the critical information professionals need to treat patients on the mood disorder spectrum, as well as a useful tool for highly motivated families and patients to better understand the mood disorder that effects their lives. This book seeks to alter the black and white language surrounding these mood disorders to influence a shift in how patients are diagnosed—to insure that treatment matches their specific needs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“[A] tremendous resource to help differentiate between cases of mood disorder or bipolar disorder. Dr. Phelps is a respected and highly-experienced physician. He presents a thorough and convincing explanation of the nuances of accepting that a broad spectrum of mood disorders does exist. Professionals who acknowledge this will be able to use Dr. Phelps’s book to provide patients with the focused, in-depth treatment they require.” - PsychCentral “Dr. James Phelps bravely enters territory that academia has largely neglected—the nebulous region between full bipolar disorder and major depression. . . . [A] must-read for any health professional involved in the treatment of affective illnesses, including psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, psychologists, and therapists.” - Psychiatric Times “Engaging, wise, and superbly practical, this book addresses the complexity of the subject matter while providing an accessible guide for a range of health professionals to improve the treatment of mood disorders. The author integrates research and decades of clinical experience with a refreshing candor, inspiring you to think. The value of this book lies not only in the empowerment of the treating provider, but also in emphasizing the empowerment of the individual seeking treatment.” - Lea Burns, PsyD, Primary Care Psychologist, Samaritan Family Medicine Resident Clinic “How we think about recognizing and treating mood disturbances profoundly impacts how we treat them. And nowhere is there more confusion in clinical psychiatry than at the meeting point of mania and depression. James Phelps’s impressive new book *A Spectrum Approach to Mood Disorders* goes a long way toward ending the confusion and helping the mental health clinician take a balanced and reasoned approach to the treatment of the many patients who show a range of mood disturbances over time. It should be mandatory reading for everyone about to prescribe, or take, an antidepressant or mood stabilizer.” - Charles Raison, MD, Mary Sue and Mike Shannon Chair for Healthy Minds, Children & Families; Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Wisconsin-Madison

James Phelps, MD, is director of the Mood Disorders program at Samaritan Mental Health in Corvallis, Oregon, which serves a five-hospital system. Prior to joining Samaritan Mental Health, Dr. Phelps held a private practice in Corvallis while writing an internationally known website, PsychEducation.org, and teaching across the U.S. He is recognized as a national expert on the topic of bipolar disorder, and has published more than 15 books and journal articles pertaining to mental health.

This book is very helpful in explaining the spectrum of bipolar disorder. I would recommend it to anyone who is newly diagnosed or if you have a loved one battling this mental illness.

A great book that has changed my thinking about mood disorders and how to treat them. If you prescribe psych meds you should read this book.

After reading A SPECTRUM APPROACH I realized I had misdiagnosed a client of mine. Although it was hard for me to give up the belief that she had a severe form of OCD, she did turn around in a few weeks after 3 months of anxious depression and become an effervescent bubbly woman full of energy. Without having read A SPECTRUM APPROACH, I would not be able to help her understand that her mood changes are not reactions to specific stressors, but an underlying disorder. As Dr. Phelps explains, part of talk therapy is to educate clients about their diagnosis and to establish routines that will not counter-act necessary medications. I will say that the book seems to be addressing MDs but his website (given in the book) is reader friendly and almost folksy. I now have a good grasp of the gene and stress factors that contribute to regular depression and am fascinated by how the biological clock is a major player in bipolar disorders. I teach a neuroscience seminar for continuing education and I WILL be passing on Dr. Phelps' information and recommending A SPECTRUM APPROACH TO MOOD DISORDERS.

The Doc nailed it. I am not an MD but read it cover to cover. The book basically explains why Bipolar II is so hard to treat and at the same time explains what is going on. Not a book for the average reader, pretty complex, but well worth the read...

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