

Befriending Bipolar Disorder: BipolarLab eBuddy Program!

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[Bipolar disorder](#) is a serious mental disorder that disrupts the emotional and social lives of people who suffer from it.

Patients with bipolar disorder experience intense periods of [mania](#), where they tend to feel over optimistic or even grandiose, and often become overly social or even inappropriate in their contact with other people. This is something they usually regret and feel ashamed of later, but they have little control over their behavior when they are manic. They also tend to experience periods of [depression](#), where they become withdrawn and isolate themselves. When they do not experience a mood

episode, they tend to be fairly well and very likable and cherish the friendship of others, but the effects of their previous episodes persist. The mood episodes disrupt their social lives, and as a result they are often isolated. The lack of a supportive network of friends makes their lives even more difficult to bear, increases their risk to become unwell again, and delays their recovery.

Our BipolarLab eBuddy program aims to develop a network of BipolarLab eBuddies who will volunteer their time to befriend at least one bipolar patient who will be undergoing supervised [treatment](#) by a BipolarLab professional.

BipolarLab eBuddies will receive free training and supervision, and will be required to have 1 joint e-activity per week with a bipolar patient for a minimum period of 3 months. The activities may include befriending the patient via social networks (facebook, google+), playing electronic games, talking on the phone, becoming pen pals or any other joint e-activity that will be agreed with the therapist and the bipolar patient. eBuddies may live anywhere in the world, and are required to have an internet connection and speak English or Greek.

BipolarLab eBuddies do not need to have any particular training in mental health. All training, supervision, and ongoing support will be provided at no cost by the supervising therapist.

The program is an excellent opportunity for undergraduate psychology students who may wish to gain some experience with the field of clinical psychology and Bipolar disorder. A certificate of participation and a letter of recommendation will be provided to all volunteers at the end of their participation in the program.

The BipolarLab eBuddy Program is supported by [Dr Yanni Malliaris](#) , BSc., PhD who is the leading therapist and principal supervisor of the project.

In order to participate in the program, email BipolarLab (