

## Psychosocial therapies for bipolar disorders

# INTERPERSONAL AND SOCIAL RHYTHMIC THERAPY (IPSRT)

IPSRT is premised on the theory that having a stable social rhythm based on the stabilisation of the biological rhythm leads to a harmonious frame of mind. Various experiments have shown that "social timekeepers" such as meals, work times or sleeping habits influence not only the social but also the biological rhythms of a person. Consequently, stabilisation of the social rhythm can act in a preventative manner against affective episodes.

Interpersonal and Social Rhythmic Therapy (IPSRT) is based on this theory. The therapy focuses on dealing with interpersonal problem areas on the one hand, and on the other on the targeted stabilisation of the social rhythm. Clinical studies have described a preventative effect against depressive episodes. The "Social Rhythm Metric" (SRM) is used to measure the stability of a social rhythm and highlight irregularities. It provides a daily record of the time at which 17 "timekeeping" activities are performed. At the same time, the participation of other people in these activities is documented, as avoidance of interpersonal over or under stimulation also contributes to stabilisation of the person's frame of mind.

The main advantage of social rhythm training is that it can to a large extent be autonomously applied by the patient. In addition, it is possible to integrate the training into many current psychotherapeutic procedures. The patient attempts to optimise the stability of his social rhythm with the aid of the SRM based on activities that he selects. To this end, he documents on a daily basis the time at which he performed the different activities. The doctor functions primarily as an advisor, in that he provides instruction in the method, identifies disruptions to the rhythm and supports patients in interpreting these irregularities and determining their training goals. When used over a long period of time, it is essential that the data be represented graphically, as it is only in this manner that direct deviations can be identified and motivating successes that have already been achieved can be viewed. A pocket computer has been developed for this purpose.

### This can be used for example to

- call up graphic and tabular evaluations from the data at any time,
- select individual designations for "timekeeping" activities,
- specify new training goals.

**Source:** DGBS e.V.