

# Creativity and the mentally ill

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Mental illness and creativity have long been linked, yet how inspiration drives creative thinking has remained a mystery.

A new study by researchers at Yale and the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom explored how different types of [inspiration](#) relate to

one form of [mental illness](#), [bipolar disorder](#).

The researchers did this by developing a new measure identifying different types of inspiration. For instance, they determined whether the inspiration is derived from the outside environment or within the individual, and also whether the inspiration is driven by social connections versus more personal achievements.

Those at risk for bipolar disorder were more likely both to endorse inspiration that was internally generated and to cite personal achievements, and less likely to cite social concerns for what inspires them.

"This more self-focused form of inspiration can be highly motivating; yet if experienced too intensely may make it difficult to socially connect with and accomplish goals," said Yale's June Gruber, a co-author of the study. Gruber hopes researchers will use more nuanced measures of inspiration to continue to study links with creativity and psychological health. The study can be accessed [here](#).

Provided by Yale University

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