

Bipolar Disorder and Financial Difficulties

Dr. Thomas Richardson

**Principal Clinical Psychologist, Solent NHS Trust
Visiting Academic, University of Southampton**

**thr1g10@soton.ac.uk
Twitter: @DrTomRichardson**

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Co-Authors:

Megan Jansen

Chris Fitch

Dr. Lorraine Bell

Wendy Turton

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Manic Episode Symptoms

Abnormally elevated, expansive or irritable mood:

- Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity
- Decreased need for sleep
- Racing thoughts
- Distractibility

- Increased goal directed activity (socially, work, sexually)
- Excessive involvement in pleasurable activities with high potential for painful consequences (e.g., engaging in unrestrained buying sprees, sexual indiscretions, or foolish business investments)

Debt and Mental Health

Richardson et al. (2013) meta-analysis:

- Those with depression more than twice as likely to be in debt.

Richardson et al. (2015, 2016):

- Vicious cycle between financial difficulties and eating disorder risk, alcohol problems and anxiety in students.



Previous Research: Bipolar

- High risk for gambling
- High levels of compulsive spending
- Poor financial management associated with impulsivity
- Caregivers report financial difficulties and impulsive spending a source of stress
- Nothing on debt

Qualitative Analysis

- 44 with Bipolar Disorder answered written questions
- Six took part in focus group
- Thematic analysis

Richardson, T., Jansen, M., Turton, W. & Bell, L. The Relationship Between Bipolar Disorder and Financial Difficulties: A Qualitative Examination of Patient's Views. Clinical Psychology Forum, In Press.

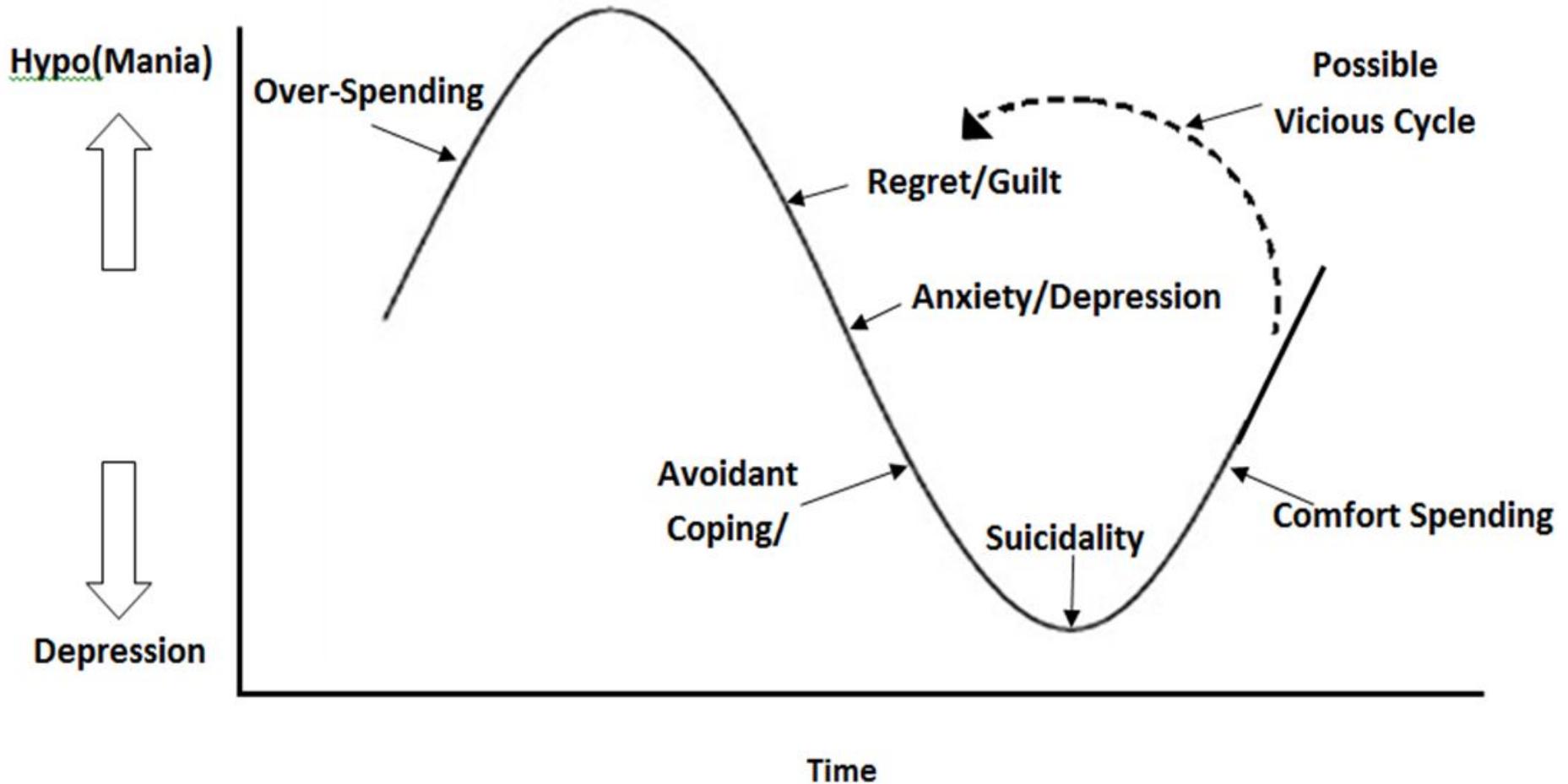
Themes

Themes	Quotes
1. Overspending a. Impulse Shopping b. Excessive Generosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Impulsive purchases... will spend all that I have when I am manic or hypo-manic.”• “I became high and gave away all my savings to charity 4 years ago.”
2. Anxiety/Depression a. Suicidality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The realisation of debt can trigger a depressive bout.”• “The very reason I tried to commit suicide 3 years ago.”
3. Regret/Guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Regret about overspending – “What made me buy these things!?”

Themes

Themes	Quotes
4. Poor Planning/Avoidant Coping	• “Prone to burying head in the sand, ignoring demands for payments.”
5. Vicious Cycle	• “It’s a vicious cycle. I realise I’m spending and putting my family in financial stress and leads to larger depression. This is then leads to comfort spending again.”
6. Poor Employment	• “Affected work and the amount I earn. Had to take an £8000 pay cut to support positive mental health.”
7. Comfort Spending	• “During down periods, I essentially comfort spend.”

Themes: Timeline with Mood Changes



Method: Participants

- 54 patients with Bipolar Disorder recruited from Community Mental Health Teams in Portsmouth
- 40 took part at a second time point 4 months later

Papers being prepared for submission

Method: Measures

Questionnaires on:

- Finances: debt, problems paying bills, perceived financial wellbeing
- Compulsive shopping
- Mood: Depression, mania, anxiety, stress
- Psychological variables e.g. mindfulness and impulsivity

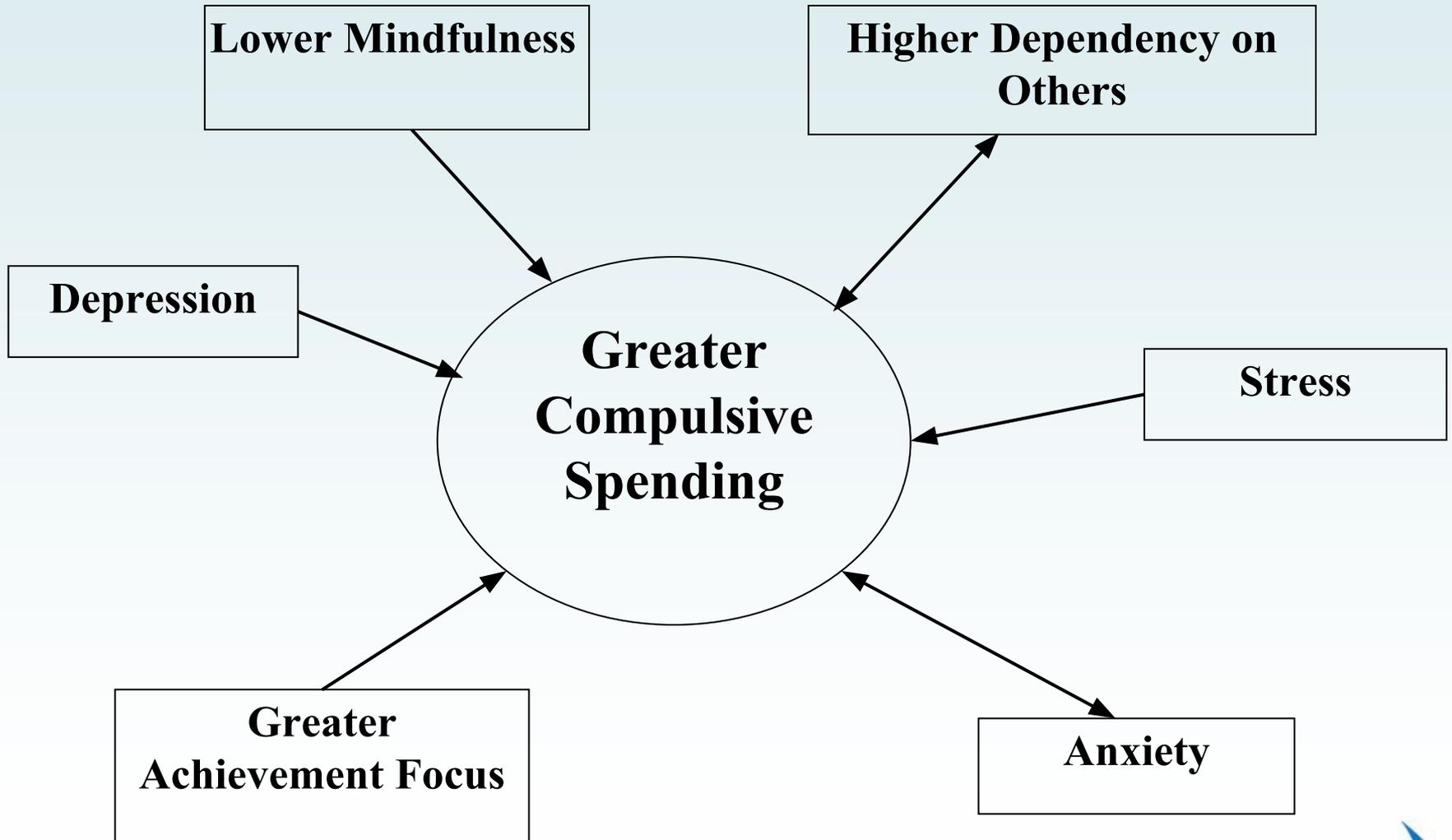
Results Over Time

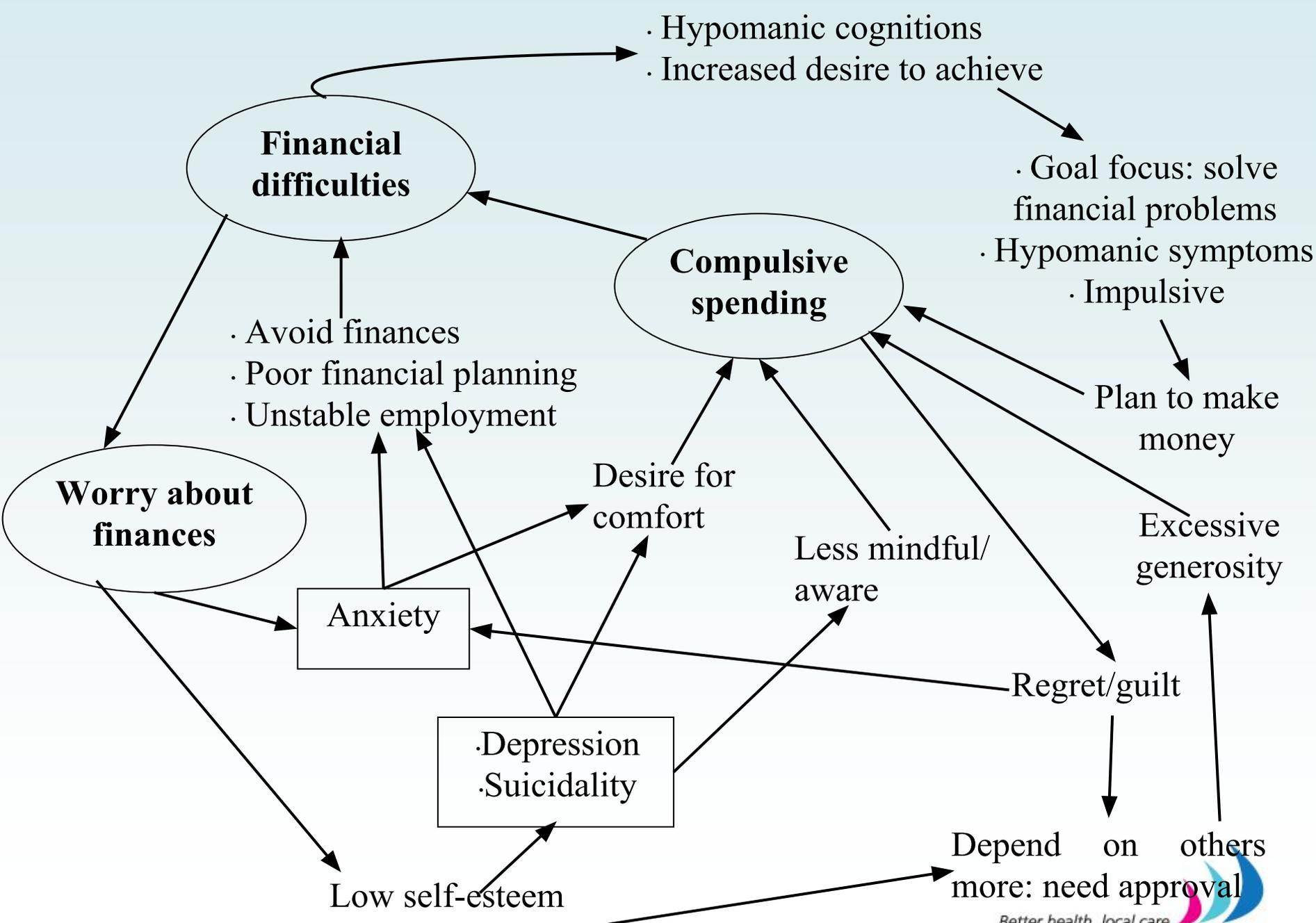
- Poorer perceived financial wellness increased anxiety and stress over time (after controlling baseline symptoms).
- How clients saw their finances more important than objective measures such as number loans

Results Over Time

- Greater financial difficulties increased later thoughts around achievement, goal focus and hypomanic cognitions.
- Greater impulsivity- greater later financial difficulties
- Poorer perceived financial wellness lowered self-esteem over time
- Note in above baseline scores not controlled for.

Results for Compulsive Spending





Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0CISSu0SKk>

Conclusions

- Finances affect mental health and vice versa in Bipolar
- Compulsive spending is key: This is NOT always random: goal-focused to try and make money
- Many psychological mechanisms
- Role for psychological therapies: CBT, Mindfulness
- Future research needed: Test model and develop interventions.