Ricki Lake Speaks Out About Her Ex-Husband's Bipolar Disorder After His Recent Suicide

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Actress and talk show host Ricki Lake recently stepped into the spotlight as an advocate for people living with bipolar disorder. The actress detailed her late ex-husband Christian Evans's battle with the mental disorder and announced that he died after committing suicide in February at age 45, UPI reports.

Bipolar disorder, also known as BPD or manic depression, is characterized by extreme shifts in mood, energy, activity levels and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Major studies show that nearly 15 percent of people struggling with bipolar disorder die from suicide, a rate nearly 30 times higher than that of the general population.

Lake wed Evans, a jewelry designer, in 2012. The couple was married for two years, until Lake filed for divorce citing irreconcilable differences. Despite the marital split, she and Evans continued living together until a bipolar episode led to Evans leaving, Lake said.

Evans was found dead in his car on February 11 from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Before the incident, his sister informed Lake that he had left a suicide note admitting that he was bipolar — a label Lake said Evans always struggled with in life. She kept these specifics about Evans's death private until she felt compelled to raise awareness about this chronic mental illness. "I have to spread the word about recognizing this disorder and getting treatment as soon as possible," she told People magazine.

Although Evans eventually agreed to go into therapy in 2014, Lake said he didn't care to be on medication and his condition remained unstable. Lake said the struggle was just too much for Evans and that "he did the best he could."

Despite this tragic end for Lake's former mate, findings show that effective medical and therapeutic treatment can significantly reduce the risk of suicide for people living with BPD. If you or a loved one is struggling with bipolar disorder, mental health experts suggest you call 800-662-HELP (4357) or visit the National Institute of Mental Health online for additional support and resources.

Those in need of help can also reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Click here to learn more about bipolar disorder, its signs and available treatments.

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