

# Robin Summary

## Forum Design Features

Robin is a charity run forum which allows people with lived experience of bipolar disorder to share information and support each other whilst managing their condition. The forum is also open to anyone who is a relative, carer or loved one of someone affected by bipolar disorder. The forum is private and can only be accessed by signing up and creating an account using an email address.

The forum is presented as a series of categories which contain several discussions around the topic of the category. The categories include general discussion, bipolar, medication, fun and games, amongst others. There is also a contested category that users can post in if they feel their discussion topic could be controversial or potentially triggering. In each category, users can start a new discussion thread or comment on an existing thread started by another user. When making a post, users can use text, emoticons, images, and links if they wish. Users can also reply to others' posts with "reacts", including sorry, agree, thanks, well done; the virtual hug react is particularly popular. A full text search feature is available so that users can search for a specific post or topic of discussion that they may be interested in. The site also conforms to the WCAG 2.034 web accessibility standard.

On sign up, the only information that users need to share is their email address. Whilst on the platform, users are expected to remain anonymous and as such must pick a username to hide their identity. A privacy policy states what information may be collected and shared with the charity. The house rules for the forum are linked at the bottom of the page. Also included are clear links to the charity's contact information, so it is clear who has set up and is running the forum. Annual surveys, run by the charity, allow users to feedback on the forum. Comments from these surveys highlighting the usefulness of the service are displayed when signing up to the forum.

## Moderation

The forum is moderated by a team of 4 moderators. All moderators are paid, 2 solely work as moderators and 2 have other roles and responsibilities within charity. The forum is moderated live, so moderators must check posts daily to ensure that the house rules are being followed. Moderators also often post announcements directing people to offline events and support groups



that might be useful for the users. When users do not receive responses to their posts within 24 hours from other users, moderators will try to respond and actively engage with the community.

Several website features support moderation. Moderators have a category for removed posts, that have been moderated and removed by other moderators, and reported posts, that have been reported by other users. If a moderator feels a reported post has violated the rules of the forum it can be removed, and the user can be privately messaged by the moderator explaining why the post has been removed. In some cases, the post may not be removed but categorized as contested, in which case the user can again be messaged explaining why the moderator has taken this action.

When risk is identified, moderators can direct users to the crisis support page detailing offline support. When necessary, users identified as at risk may be privately messaged by the moderators and some moderators may talk to the at-risk user on the phone. If the user is willing to share their personal information, emergency services may be contacted if the escalation is deemed necessary, although this is rare. Moderators note that they read 85%+ of messages posted on the forum, making it very unlikely any potential risk could be missed, even if not flagged/reported by other users.

Training for moderators initially involves a guided tour of the forum where an existing moderator or manager will demonstrate the site and the tools available to the moderator. This will cover the basics of moderation and policy. Screen recording videos are also available to review basic processes on the forum. After this, moderators are introduced to each other so that they can ask questions and get to know the people they will be working with. The first shifts for a moderator will always coincide with a manager's and another colleague's shift so the moderator can be guided through their initial steps moderating the forum.

Moderators on the forum support each other by giving daily updates as to what has been happening on the forum in the last 24 hours. There is also clinical supervision available to the moderators as well as a 24-hour assistance line if there is a problem whilst a moderator is working that needs to be addressed.

## Language Data

Forum posts were collected from the Robin forum in 2024. All posts made to the forum back to 2019 were sent to the iPOF team from the Robin team. Users were asked to consent to the iPOF study on an individual basis, as Robin did not previously ask for consent for research. There were 59 users who consented to have their data analysed from the forum, resulting in a total of 30545 posts across 3696 threads during this period.

Figure 1 shows the average number of posts per hour on the subreddit and shows a fairly steady ~700 posts/hour during the hours of 09:00 and 21:00, with a drop off to ~200 overnight.

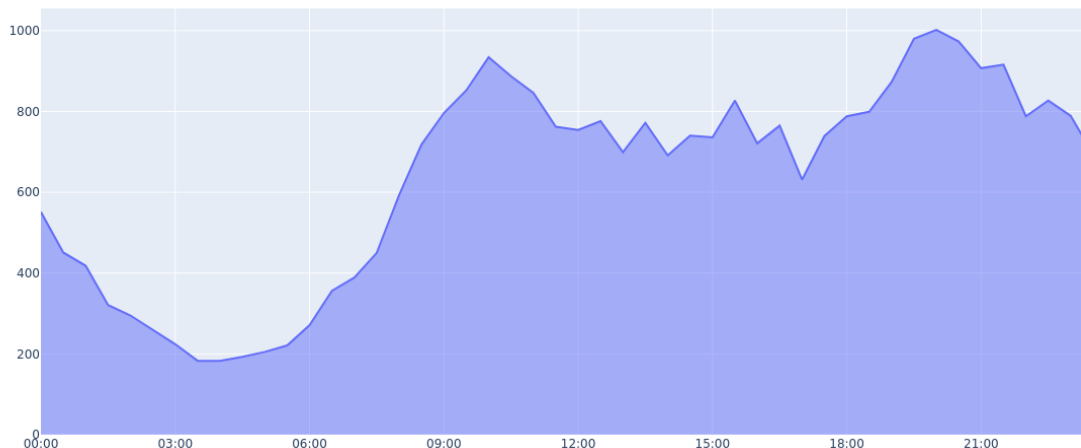


Figure 1 – Daily mean number of posts per hour

The most popular topics discussed in threads are displayed in Figure 2.

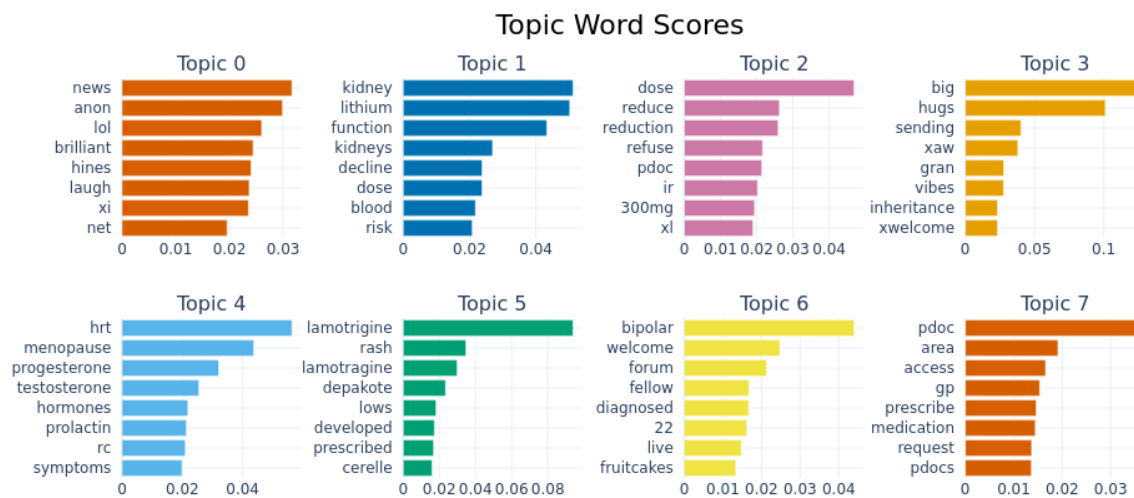


Figure 2 – Topic word scores generated by BertTopic

Major topics included news and updates (Topic 0), along with the reactions of the users to the various news articles, with replies attempting to reduce the impact of the news through humour or sarcasm. Other high-incidence topics involve the specifics of medical treatments (Topics 1, 2, 5 and 7) along with the various dangers and benefits of using these treatments. Other topics include new users joining the forum and the community embracing them as they do so (Topics 3 and 6).

Figure 3 shows the most relevant keywords when compared to the BNC (British National Corpus).

