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The Five Stages of Adult ADHD Diagnosis

There are five main “stages” that occur after you’ve received a diagnosis of ADHD. Not everyone goes through these stages in the same order. Some people may skip stages, or have a longer period of time in a particular stage than others.

1. The Lightbulb or “Aha!” Moment

This is when you realize that you have ADHD. Finally, everything makes sense. You may start medication or counseling. You may start noticing your ADHD behaviors even more.

2. The Grief Stage

You may start beating yourself up over things that you did in the past. Or you may feel a sense of loss over “how much easier things would have been” if you had received treatment earlier. You may even feel anger towards your parents or other caregivers.

3. The “Stocking up on Info” Stage

You want to find out where all these other ADHD people are, and you want to know how they deal with ADHD. You may join a support group, like CHADD. You may start reading books on ADHD, and you may more actively rally your friends and family around for support.

4. The “Making Changes” Stage

You may discontinue relationships with people who you feel “just don’t get it”. You may be less tolerant of those that feel that ADHD is not a valid diagnosis. You are more likely to advocate for yourself in school, at home, or in the workplace.

5. The “New Me” Stage

You may openly tell people that you have ADHD. You see it as a part of you, but know that it doesn’t define your entire identity. You may start helping out others with ADHD, or you may join an organization that supports ADHD rights.

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