



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 Light bulb 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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