

## **Five Stages of Adult ADHD Diagnosis**

Five main “stages” 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 feel like you finally have the missing puzzle piece in your life. 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 feel anger towards your parents or caregivers for not being diagnosed earlier.
3. The “Stocking up on Info” Stage — You want to find out where all the other people with ADHD are and learn how they deal with ADHD. You may join a support group, like CHADD. You may start reading books on ADHD and more actively rally your friends and family around for support. You may feel overwhelmed with the amount of information you have acquired.
4. The “Making Changes” Stage — You may discontinue relationships with people you feel “just don’t get it.” You may be less tolerant of those who think ADHD is not a valid diagnosis. You are more likely to advocate for yourself in school, at home, or in your 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 others with ADHD, or you may join an organization that supports the rights of people with ADHD.