

Adult ADHD

By Suze Hargraves

As a kid in the 1970's I had some great labels stuck to me by well-meaning teachers: unfocused, daydreamer, lazy, distracted, brilliant but unable or unwilling to apply it (that one still throws me) and the list goes on and on. Like millions of others, I was an ADHD kid in an era when the diagnosis didn't exist. There was a diagnosis of "Hyperkinetic Disorder of Childhood" but that implied a child who was off the wall, wouldn't sit down and was disruptive. That wasn't me. My mind wandered around like a disoriented butterfly but I could sit still. Like countless children before me, what I got were labels that chipped away at my self-esteem. As an adult, ADHD became a way of life for me and a destructive one at that.

Adults with undiagnosed or untreated ADHD are living with unnecessary pain and suffering. It's just how life is to them. WebMD lists a few of the chronic problems suffered by ADHD Adults: chronic lateness and forgetfulness, anxiety, low self-esteem, employment problems, difficulty controlling anger, impulsiveness, substance abuse or addiction, poor organization skills, procrastination, low frustration tolerance, chronic boredom, difficulty concentrating, mood swings, depression and relationship problems. If that sounds like a horrible way to live, you're right. It is.

It is estimated that about 8 million adults have ADHD. A good portion of them are undiagnosed simply because, like me, as a child there was no diagnosis a family pediatrician, prior to about the 1980's, was likely to make. It just did not exist as an option. Knowing that roughly 60% of children who have ADHD continue to have symptoms into adulthood you can see how widespread the problem of undiagnosed adult ADHD is. An undiagnosed or untreated child is very likely to become an undiagnosed or untreated adult. In a child's world that translates to serious problems. In an adult world that can translate into some mission critical problems with family, friends, jobs and even the law.

If any of this sounds like you, please get help. Primary care healthcare providers are well aware of the symptoms and dangers of adult ADHD. They can treat you or refer you to someone who can. It is certainly advisable to have a mental health professional evaluate your symptoms in order to identify the full scope and type of the ADHD and any other underlying mental health issues that may co-exist. Although nothing replaces the diagnosis of a health professional, WebMD offers a valuable tool at <http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/adhd-health-check/default.htm> that can help you talk to your healthcare provider about your symptoms. You will also find very helpful and informative in-depth information on ADHD at that site.

However you chose to deal with Adult ADHD, medication, therapy, combinations of a variety of methods or non-traditional methods, know that you are not alone and help is out there. You do not have to continue to live life in the spin cycle. There is hope for change but always, change and healing both starts with the patient.

With proper treatment you can drop those old labels and take on some new ones like "Brilliant and applies it every single day in every single possible way."

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