Therapy is Just as Important as Medication for Adult ADHD

by JEFF EMMERSON

The Importance of ADHD Therapy

As a man living with adult ADHD and raising awareness with others across this world, one thing frustrates me more than anything else: people try medications for ADHD without realizing that it will only help as much as you're willing to work on your patterns, past trauma, shame and self-confidence in therapy!

Getting Started

I realize that many people simply can't afford therapy, but there are always ways to learn and grow. If you have an internet connection or library card, there's no excuse for not digging deeper into your patterns, learning to eliminate shame by neutralizing it through tools such as compassion-focused therapy, and working to recognize your patterns of potential self-sabotage. Anxiety spirals that turn into despair and depression can lead to self-medication, breaking up relationships suddenly, anger at yourself and aggressive behavior as well (it landed me in jail in my early twenties, so I know this intimately).

Just like psychiatrists need to be very careful to thoroughly diagnose adults and kids to avoid disasters like giving an adult with ADHD medication like antipsychotics (which also happened to me, and nearly ended in disaster), you and I need to STOP seeing medications as the full solution, when they aren't. In fact – meds only work for some, and even if they work amazingly for you, you lie to yourself, you sell yourself short by not doing the work to learn why you behave the way you do, how you look at the world, and other traits you have. Many know this, but I still hear about people who simply pop pills, expecting them to solve things, when they are in fact only one piece of the puzzle, if they even work in the first place. You've got to follow it up with therapy. Doing just that saved my life, actually. Meds did nothing for me.

ADHD therapy will be especially important for those who have "self-diagnosed," since you may be wrong, when other things such as anxiety disorders, cyclothymia, bipolar-2 and a lack of sleep, thyroid issue or metal poisoning could be the true underlying cause, and you won't get the right medications to help if you don't go get thoroughly screened. That said, you can make a big difference in your life by focusing on your patterns, your trauma from the past (which could cause PTSD), attachment patterns in relationships – all of it. Even learning to neutralize guilt and shame from your past can completely change your life, like it did for me.

If you're having trouble finding therapy, sit down and take some time to mastermind ideas for learning about ADHD, patterns, other co-existing disorders, therapy styles like cognitive-behavioral, compassion-focused and others. Look at how you self-sabotage through wallowing in depressed feelings, having strong mood swings, perhaps an eating disorder, getting angry and having a quick temper, struggle with ADHD and lying, spending money spontaneously when you can't really afford to, going from job to job, having lots of sexual partners, and other behaviors common to the ADHD spectrum. Distraction, hyperactivity, being very sensitive, self-medicating and driving very aggressively are other potential warning signs. We're all different, but these are some common ADHD/ADD patterns.

Conclusion

The more honest you get with yourself and your loved ones, the better you'll do in your life. It takes courage! I fully realize that. Look at it this way: The years will pass either way. Where do you want to go in life? Do you care enough deep down to take three-hundred percent responsibility for your life and invest the necessary time into yourself to become a happier, wiser, more forgiving, confident and self-compassionate person? Medication can't teach you to do that. Sure – it may help you by allowing you to function clearly, but the other half of it is in facing your demons, your patterns and your challenges. No one can do it for you.

THAT saved my life, and here I am enjoying life as a successful entrepreneur, author, blogger and advocate raising adult ADHD awareness across the globe!

You CAN change your life.