

Hello, my name is Kelsey and I was recently diagnosed with ADHD. I have struggled with the disorder my entire life but was not diagnosed until age 26. Despite not having a diagnosis, I managed to complete my post-secondary education, though it took me 2 extra years due to my ADHD challenges. These are just *some* of the challenges I face on a daily basis as a direct result of my ADHD, even now, with access to the medication I did not have during school:

- disorganization
- difficulty understanding instructions
- distractibility, difficulty staying on task
- misdirected focus
- lack of punctuality, difficulty meeting deadlines
- anxiety and depression
- low self-esteem due to the above symptoms

Because of these challenges, not only did it take me extra time to complete my degree, but it resulted in chronic anxiety and depression as well as regular panic attacks. Even since my graduation, these struggles have remained with me due to the constant stresses I faced in school.

Since I was not yet diagnosed, I did not have access to the accommodations I needed. Even if I *had* been diagnosed, it had not been made known to me that such accommodations existed for students like myself.

If I did have access to these accommodations, I am sure I would have thrived in school, as I am creative and have a natural thirst for knowledge (both of which is common for those of us with ADHD).

So, this fall when I applied to college in order to get a career in my field, I immediately applied to receive accommodations as well. **Because of my college's accommodation program, I will be able to meet the expectations of my professors and perform on the same level as my counterparts in the program.**

What my college has provided me with is a safe space for my learning, where, based on my disability and on an individual basis, my special needs can be met without question. My needs as an ADHD sufferer are simple: I need occasional extensions on challenging assignments and I need the understanding of my professor when it comes to needing more clarification on material, assignments and testing. (Though it must be noted that other **people with ADHD may need more or fewer or completely different accommodations** than I do, as like all disabilities, **accommodations must be tailor-made to suit each sufferer on an individual basis.**)

While ADHD has its gifts, for many of us the challenges are a daily struggle. This disorder is considered a disability, as even for high-functioning sufferers, **its symptoms can be mentally, physically and emotionally disabling. However, this need not prevent us from succeeding in education, since the accommodations we need can and should be made available to us.**

Thank you for listening to my story and I know that there are many more ADHD sufferers with similar stories to my own who either have benefited, have been benefiting, or will (or should be allowed to) benefit from accommodations in their education based on their individual needs and disability levels. I hope that you will consider my story and any others you may receive when making your final decision about **continuing to provide ADHD students with an equal opportunity to succeed in education as our neurotypical classmates.**

With gratitude,
Kelsey