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The "Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on ADHD”

https:// www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf

I was officially diagnosed with ADHD when I was 9 and was terrified of what it meant. I worried endlessly about my classmates' teasing and losing the few friends I had. In truth, it was much worse.

To me, being diagnosed meant that I was forced to take big pills that I could barely fit down my young throat, and get scowled at even more by my teacher when I continued to forget my homework, a pencil, or even my whole bag, to class. I never got school accommodations. As far as my school and my teachers understood, the adderall I was taking should be a miracle drug and improve every aspect in my life. Contrarily, the adderall forced me into a downward spiral of depression and suicidal thoughts. Since I was only 9, nobody understood how deeply depressed I was, and I almost lost my life on several suicide attempts.

Simultaneously, my brother had also been diagnosed. The year after he started taking adderall, which admittedly did help him much more than myself, he was forced to drop out of his bilingual program. The teacher who taught him was ignorant on ADHD, and as much as my mother provided her with resources on the topic, she didn't want to learn. She failed him out of his program in his grade 6 year. This impacted him greatly in the future years, as the program he was in taught things in a different order, so he had very few English lessons at that point, meaning his grammar was atrocious. In addition, leaving the language program meant he was separated from his friends, who had all been in this program since kindergarten, having grown up together, the year before he was supposed to go to highschool. This led to a severe isolation, and to this day, he still has trouble getting close to new people, so as to avoid getting them pulled away from him again.

I fully believe that had we both been properly evaluated, had our schools understood how to help us, as is outlined in the "Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on ADHD", and had they understood that pills are not a full treatment, and that they don't work for everybody, I wouldn't have the scars I still carry today on my wrists, from the time I slit them in an attempt to copy a suicide from a TV show when I was 11. My brother would have gotten into the University he was always aiming for, as opposed to the community college he attended.

While the "Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on ADHD" does not contain any regulation, it does provide a very clear explanation on what already exists in a simple, concise manner that educators and parents can easily understand. This is important. My brother and I were both seen as failures in the schools, as opposed to just needing extra help or different ways to be tested, due to misunderstandings on how to help us. Kids should never have to go what we went through. Removing the guide will take away clear instruction on how to help kids with ADHD in schools and in turn, could lead to more stories like mine, as opposed to the stories we want on successful kids with ADHD.