

HS & Secrecy — Why We Hide It, and How to Stop Punishing Ourselves - Reflection Worksheet

[Podcast Companion Tool](#)

Part 1 — Why you keep it private

Most of us don't hide HS because we're dramatic. We hide it because we're protecting ourselves.

Which of these feel true for you right now? (Check as many as you need)

- I don't want to be judged
- I don't want people to see me differently
- I don't know how to explain it
- I'm scared they won't believe me
- I don't want pity
- I've been dismissed or misdiagnosed before
- I've learned to just "deal with it" alone
- I don't want to be a burden
- I don't want to answer invasive questions
- I'm still figuring it out myself
- Other: _____

You are not wrong for choosing privacy.

You learned to survive

🥚 Part 2 — The egg stage

A new diagnosis is fragile. Your story feels like an egg: soft, vulnerable, easily cracked.

Which statement feels most accurate right now?

- I am in the egg stage
- I'm in between
- I'm mostly solid with safe people

If you are in the egg stage, your story needs time, gentleness, quiet, privacy.

Write your answer:

Right now my story needs

🌿 Part 3 — Who is actually safe?

Not everyone who asks is someone who earns access.

Think of 1–3 people whose actions show:

- reliability
- empathy
- discretion
- care
- no gossip

You don't have to tell them yet. Just notice where your nervous system softens.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

🔥 Part 4 — What you're afraid might happen

Silence usually protects us from a specific type of pain we've already lived through.

Finish this sentence:

"If I tell someone about HS, I'm scared they will..."

Now write the backup plan:

"If that did happen, I could lean on..."

(Example: therapy, another friend, online community, HS Connect, journaling)

📦 Part 5 — Healthy privacy vs punishing silence

Circle the sentences that sound like you:

Healthy:

- "I'm not ready to share this yet."
- "I choose who gets access to me."
- "My story deserves safety."

Punishing:

- "I deserve to deal with this alone."
- "It wouldn't matter if anyone knew."
- "I don't want to bother people."

If you circled any punishing ones, pause.

You learned those beliefs from pain, not truth.

💬 Part 6 — Write your own gentle disclosure

Pick the version below that feels closest to your voice and adjust it.

Option A — quick and easy:

"I live with a chronic skin condition that can be painful at times. I might need flexibility or rest."

Option B — more context:

"I have a chronic condition called HS. It affects skin in sensitive areas. It's not contagious, but it impacts my energy and comfort."

Rewrite it in your words:

☀️ Part 7 — One tiny step

You don't need to post online. You don't need to educate anyone. You only need to choose one gentle step.

Choose one:

- Tell one safe person one small thing
- Bring HS up in therapy
- Journal about it privately
- Join an HS space online & just listen
- Share your story with one other HS patient
- Other: -----

Write it:

My next step is:

You are allowed to protect your heart while building connection. Both things can be true.