

You Were Just Diagnosed — Start Here

Podcast Companion Tool

Y 1. Where you are right now

Diagnosis can feel like being thrown into the deep end.

Prompt:

What were the first words that hit you when you heard “hidradenitis suppurativa”? “I felt...”

Now write a second sentence that begins with:

“And now I’m here...”

C 2. Three emotions at once

You can feel:

- relief (finally, an answer)
- anger (why me?)
- confusion (now what?)

You don’t have to pick one.

Prompt: Circle any that apply today (it can change tomorrow):

<input type="checkbox"/> overwhelmed	<input type="checkbox"/> hopeful
<input type="checkbox"/> relieved	<input type="checkbox"/> numb
<input type="checkbox"/> confused	<input type="checkbox"/> scared
<input type="checkbox"/> frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/> curious
<input type="checkbox"/> calm	<input type="checkbox"/> other: -----

 **3. The story you thought you were in**

Every diagnosis disrupts your plans.

Prompt:

What were you expecting your life/health/body to look like this year?

Now complete this sentence:

"HS changed the plan... but it didn't erase the plan."

 **4. Your first "next step" — gentle, not urgent**

Instead of trying to fix everything, start small.

Prompt: What one step feels doable?

Examples:

- ask for a dermatology referral
- tell one trusted person
- follow an HS education page
- download a symptom tracker
- join a support space

"My first step will be..."

⌚ 5. What you don't need to do yet

You don't need to:

- become an expert in HS overnight
- understand every medication
- explain the disease perfectly
- validate yourself to strangers
- make a 5-year plan

Prompt:

Write down one thing you're giving yourself permission to not solve this week.

♡ 6. Who is safe to tell?

Not everyone deserves your vulnerability. Pick people who:

- listen
- don't minimize pain
- don't problem-solve aggressively
- don't make it about themselves

Prompt:

Three people you could share this with — even lightly:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

You don't owe anyone more than you're ready to share.

 **7. Name one thing that still matters**

HS affects your body. It does not erase your identity.

Prompt:

Finish this sentence: "Even with HS, I am still..."

 **8. What you want from care**

Not treatment lists — boundaries.

Prompt:

What do you want from a provider?

Check what matters:

<input type="checkbox"/> I want to be believed	<input type="checkbox"/> I want honesty
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/> I want treatment that matches my lifestyle
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/> I want clarity about next steps
<input type="checkbox"/> I want options, not commands	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

 **9. Your anchor sentence**

A simple thing you can return to when everything feels loud.

Examples:

"I have lived through worse pain than this."

"I don't need every answer today."

"I will handle this one step at a time."

Your sentence:
