



Phase	Emotional Feelings	Physical Condition	State of Knowledge	Common Behaviors
<b>Diagnosis</b> <b>1</b> <b>Over-react</b>	Shock – Paranoia – Despair – Isolation	may be having a nasty “first outbreak”	little accurate information; lots of misinformation	- close off from the world - halt sexual activity
<b>2</b> <b>Under-react</b>	Denial	OBs less frequent and less severe, learning how to manage with medications or other therapies*	little accurate information	<p>--- Dangerous Period ---</p> <p>As one realizes living in social/sexual isolation is not realistic, some people – unsure how to approach things - will be tempted to not disclose their status with partners and to remain in a state of ignorance regarding the contagious nature of the condition whether you are on medications or not.</p> <p>During this period, they may either ignore having HSV or rationalize non-disclosure, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not my fault I have this, and not my fault if someone gets it from me</li> <li>• it's not that big a deal anyway</li> <li>• I'm not having an OB and I'm taking a preventative medication, so I don't need to tell my partner</li> </ul> <p>However, no amount of reducing risk to others can eliminate all risk and it does not justify taking away your partner's choice to decide what level of risk (even small) is right for them.</p> <p>Moreover, succumbing to these feelings may cause you to feel severe guilt later and will complicate your ability to live openly when you are ready to do so.</p> <p>Although many good people have been in this phase for a period of time, you don't have to be here or stay here.</p> <p><b>You have options. This phase is unhelpful to you, is hurtful to others, is not sustainable and is unnecessary. Skip this phase or get help moving to phase 3 as quickly as possible.</b></p>
<b>3</b> <b>Personal Acceptance</b>	Acceptance - Living	OBs less frequent and less severe, know how to manage with medications or other therapies*	acquiring accurate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- meet other people in the HSV community who provide non-judgmental support, friendship, and social pursuits</li> <li>- become comfortable with the truth that it is not your fault that this happened, but accept that it places an obligation on you to act responsibly</li> <li>- learn how to have frank, fair, and friendly conversations with potential partners regarding your status</li> </ul> <p>- accept your whole self; no longer live H/non-H bifurcated existence</p>
<b>4</b> <b>Help Others</b>	Enlightenment - Outreach	OBs rare; know how to manage with medications or other therapies*	command of accurate information and ready to share	<p>At some point, people living with HSV reach a stage when they are not only comfortable with their condition, but additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feel that it has made them stronger, more empathetic and desirable human beings</li> <li>• choose to share the fact of their condition with family and friends</li> <li>• want to assist others, not only by being an example of someone who lives well and openly with HSV, but through outreach to the newly diagnosed or socially isolated, to help them navigate these phases.</li> </ul>

**\* IMPORTANT**

Not everyone has the same physical experience with HSV. Although for most people following the initial OB, having HSV is benign with rare OBs easily managed with medications, in some instances people have severe OBs frequently. Some people have pre-existing medical conditions that make having HSV a serious health risk.

No one can predict who will be the rare case who has a very harsh experience with HSV, which is one of the reasons why – even if your HSV has been relatively benign – that it is imperative to disclose your condition to partners. You should always give your partner the information and the choice to make their own decision, even if you were not given that same choice.

\*\* Not only is everyone's physical experience slightly different, but every person is different in their emotional and behavior patterns, as well. These phases are generalizations derived from the collective stories and experiences of many people who have lived with and through HSV.