

Empowered by Precision Medicine

Written by Jade E. Mathis Esq., Attorney, Reality Show Personality,
and Mental Health Advocate

Young, beautiful, smart, and optimistic; the world was my oyster. That perfect picture description is how my life appeared during my junior year in college. The reality was that I had been struggling internally for months, and my life would soon be changed forever with three sentences: “Jade, what you have is not curable, but it is treatable. You have Clinical Depression, ADHD, and a learning disorder. You will have to take medication for the rest of your life and have ongoing medical treatment.” Before I could process anything the doctor said, she proceeded to walk towards me with a tray of medications, with the word TRIAL on the package. While staring at the tray the doctor continued to talk, I saw her lips moving, but I couldn’t hear her words as my body entered shock mode.

That was the day my life changed forever, and I knew that things would be different than I envisioned and planned. At 20 years old, wrapping my head around the fact that I would have to be medicated indefinitely was probably the hardest part to accept and comprehend. Soon after my diagnosis, I withdrew from college in the middle of the semester and relocated back to my home state to focus on my health. I was devastated that I had to leave college but relieved to know that on the other side was an opportunity for me to feel better and whole.

Following my move back home, one of my first obligations was to follow up with a psychiatrist. By that time, I had been taking medication prescribed to me for almost a month and I was having negative side effects, including hives. The new doctor prescribed a different combination of medications which caused excessive weight gain and drowsiness. That trial-and-error process continued for nearly a year until we eventually found a suitable combination for my body chemistry.

That was over a decade ago and I am still on that same regimen today. That regimen has allowed me to become a successful attorney, public speaker, and TV personality. Most importantly, it has allowed me to travel the world as a mental health advocate, working with the **All of Us Research Program** to share my journey as a testament to the importance of precision medicine and access to equal treatment in the healthcare field. Oftentimes, people opt out of treatment that they desperately need because of one bad experience with medication. I know firsthand the emotional and physical frustration that accompanies the treatment process and the need to have a mechanism to help alleviate that discouraging process. Precision medicine is that mechanism.

As an African American, I have family members who have health conditions that are genetically prevalent in Black families, but are reluctant to seek treatment because they distrust medical providers. I feel the **All of Us Research Program** goes the extra mile by doing the “boots on the ground” work to restore that trust and provide comfort. These efforts will ultimately advance treatments and cures for diseases that affect me, my community, and future generations.