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REJECTION SENSITIVITY & ADHD IN ADULTS WHY IT FEELS SO BIG — AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT



WHAT IS RSD?

- RSD is an intense emotional sensitivity to real or perceived rejection, criticism, or failure.
- It's especially common in people with ADHD or other forms of neurodivergence.
- Reactions are often out of proportion to the situation and can feel sudden and overwhelming.

KEY TAKEAWAY

RSD is a real, brain-based reaction — not a flaw. If you have ADHD, you may feel rejection or criticism more intensely. Understanding this pattern is the first step to changing how you respond.

DID YOU KNOW?

Up to 99% of people with ADHD experience some form of rejection sensitivity.

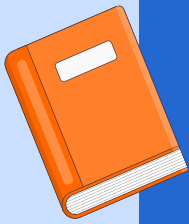
RSD can mimic mood disorders like bipolar disorder but is trigger-based, not cyclical.

HOW RSD SHOWS UP IN ADULTS



"IT'S NOT JUST
FEAR OF REJECTION
— IT'S A DEEP,
PHYSIOLOGICAL
RESPONSE THAT
FEELS LIKE
EMOTIONAL PAIN."

— DR. SHARON SALINE



COMMON SIGNS OF RSD:

- ✓ You replay conversations, convinced you said something wrong.
- ✓ You avoid putting yourself out there for fear of criticism or failure.
- ✓ You feel crushed or disproportionately upset after negative feedback.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Adults with RSD often mask their feelings with perfectionism or people-pleasing tendencies.

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FINAL THOUGHT



YOU'RE NOT TOO SENSITIVE — YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM IS RESPONDING TO PERCEIVED DANGER. WITH TOOLS AND SELF-AWARENESS, YOU CAN MANAGE THESE MOMENTS WITH MORE EASE AND CONFIDENCE.

STRATEGIES & QUICK TIPS

- Practice naming your triggers
- Use self-talk to reality-check perceived rejection
- Set boundaries around feedback (e.g. ask for constructive phrasing)
- Build in time to regulate before reacting
- Use “cool-down” statements like: “I need to think about that and get back to you.”

YOUR TAKEAWAYS:

3 TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS WEBINAR:

1 THING YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT:

WHAT IS A POTENTIAL OBSTACLE:

HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO DEAL WITH IT:

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