

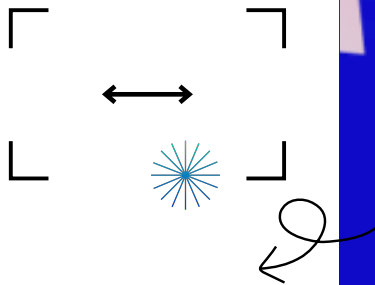
WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

ADHD affects the brain systems that regulate:

- emotional intensity
- attention
- threat detection
- self-evaluation

This means the nervous system can react quickly and strongly to social cues.

What might feel like a small moment to someone else can feel like a major emotional alarm internally.



Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria

WHAT IS REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA?

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is a common experience for people with ADHD. It refers to intense emotional pain triggered by:

- criticism
- rejection
- feeling misunderstood
- disappointment
- perceived failure

Even small interactions can feel overwhelming. Many people describe RSD as:

- emotional lightning
- a sudden drop in self-worth
- a wave of shame or sadness

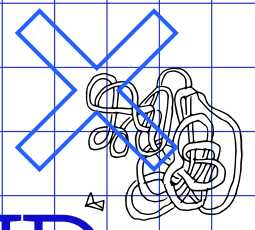
What is RSD?



ADHD & RSD

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria

WHY SMALL MOMENTS CAN FEEL SO BIG UNDERSTANDING INTENSE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO PERCEIVED REJECTION, CRITICISM, OR DISAPPOINTMENT.



What CAN HELP

Helpful Ways to Respond

RSD is real, but it can be supported.
Helpful strategies include:

- ... naming the feeling
- ... pausing before reacting
- ... self-compassion practices
- ... checking assumptions
- ... therapy focused on ADHD and emotional regulation
- ... building supportive environments

- o A simple grounding question:
"What else might be true about this situation?"

If This Sounds Familiar

You are not alone. Many people with ADHD experience RSD. With understanding and support, emotional reactions can become more manageable and less overwhelming.

Support options may include:

- ADHD-informed therapy
- emotional regulation tools
- mindfulness practices
- medication consultation when appropriate

COMMON EXPERIENCES

People with ADHD often describe RSD as:

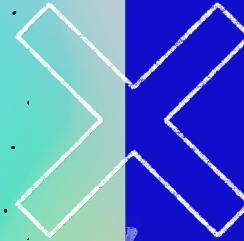
- ... replaying conversations repeatedly
- ... feeling embarrassed long after events
- ... interpreting neutral feedback as rejection
- ... avoiding situations where criticism might happen
- ... becoming people-pleasers
- ... sudden emotional withdrawal

What It Feels Like Inside

RSD can create emotional patterns like:

- ... Shame spiral
"I messed up again."
- ... Inner critic voice
"I'm not good enough."
- ... Emotional storm
The feeling hits suddenly and strongly.
- ... Withdrawal mode
Pulling away to protect yourself.

The
RSD
Spiral



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