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Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) Checklist

What is Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria?

Rejection sensitive dysphoria (RSD) is a term often used in the context of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It describes an intense emotional response to the perception of rejection or criticism. People with RSD may experience overwhelming feelings of sadness, shame, or anxiety in response to situations where they feel rejected, even if the rejection is not real or is minor. These emotional reactions can be disproportionate to the situation and RSD can significantly impact a person's relationships, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

The first part of this checklist focuses on the effect of RSD on everyday life and the second part is relevant to study.

- Do you frequently fear rejection or criticism from others, even in situations where it's unlikely or unwarranted?
- Do you find yourself avoiding social interactions or situations where you might face potential rejection?
- Do you experience intense emotional reactions, such as sadness, anger, or anxiety, when you perceive rejection, criticism, or failure?



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- Do you have difficulty handling feedback, even if it's constructive or well-intentioned?
- Do you tend to take things personally, even when they're not meant to be directed at you?
- Do you have a strong desire to be liked or accepted by others, to the point where it affects your behaviour or decisions?
- Do you often ruminate or dwell on past instances of rejection or failure?
- Do you struggle with low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness, especially after experiencing rejection?
- Do you experience mood swings or emotional instability in response to perceived rejection or criticism?
- Do your feelings of rejection or criticism interfere with your daily functioning or quality of life?



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The questions below focus specifically on the impact of rejection sensitive dysphoria within an educational context and as experienced by students.

- Do you often procrastinate on schoolwork or avoid asking questions in class due to fear of being judged or rejected by peers or teachers?
- Do you feel a sense of dread or anxiety before receiving feedback on assignments or exams, fearing criticism or disappointment?
- Do you find it challenging to participate in group projects or collaborative activities, fearing rejection or criticism from group members?
- Do you experience heightened emotional distress when receiving grades or evaluations that are lower than expected, even if they are not a reflection of your abilities?
- Do you hesitate to seek help from teachers, tutors or lecturers when you're struggling with a subject, fearing that it will make you appear incompetent or inadequate?
- Do you compare yourself unfavourably to classmates or peers, especially in terms of academic performance or achievements?



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- Do you have difficulty concentrating or focusing on schoolwork due to preoccupation with thoughts of rejection or failure?
- Do you engage in self-sabotaging behaviours, such as skipping classes or avoiding studying, as a way to cope with feelings of rejection or inadequacy?
- Do you experience changes in mood or self-esteem based on academic performance or feedback, even if it's not directly related to your worth as a person?

Keep in mind that while this checklist can help identify potential symptoms of rejection-sensitive dysphoria, it's not a diagnostic tool or screening test.

If you relate to many of these items and suspect you may have RSD, it's important to consult with an ADHD professional for advice.

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