

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD) 101

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD) is a term used to describe an intense emotional response to the perceived possibility or experience of rejection or criticism. Here are ten important things to know about RSD:

- 1. Definition:** RSD is not a formally recognized diagnosis in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), but it is commonly associated with ADHD. It refers to the heightened sensitivity and extreme emotional reaction to perceived rejection or criticism.
- 2. Emotional Intensity:** RSD can lead to intense emotional responses, including feelings of sadness, anger, shame, or worthlessness. These emotions can be overwhelming and may impact daily functioning.
- 3. Triggers:** RSD can be triggered by various situations, such as social interactions, criticism, disapproval, or even the anticipation of rejection. It is often accompanied by a fear of abandonment or rejection.
- 4. Relationship Impact:** RSD can significantly impact relationships, as individuals may have difficulty handling perceived criticism or rejection from loved ones. This can lead to emotional turmoil and strained interpersonal dynamics.
- 5. Self-Esteem:** RSD can negatively affect self-esteem and self-worth. Individuals may internalize perceived rejection, leading to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy.
- 6. Overcompensation:** Some individuals with RSD may try to avoid rejection by overcompensating or people-pleasing. They may go to great lengths to seek approval and avoid negative feedback.
- 7. Misinterpretation:** Individuals with RSD may misinterpret neutral or ambiguous situations as rejection, leading to intense emotional reactions that may not match the actual intent of others.
- 8. Treatment Approaches:** Treatment for RSD often involves a combination of therapy, medication (if an underlying condition like ADHD is present), and self-help strategies. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) can be helpful in managing emotional reactions and developing coping skills.
- 9. Coping Strategies:** Learning and practicing coping strategies is crucial for managing RSD. This may include techniques like grounding exercises, mindfulness, reframing negative thoughts, assertive communication, and self-care practices.
- 10. Professional Support:** If RSD significantly impacts daily functioning or causes distress, seeking support from a mental health professional, such as a therapist or psychiatrist, can be beneficial. They can provide guidance, support, and tailored interventions to help manage RSD symptoms.