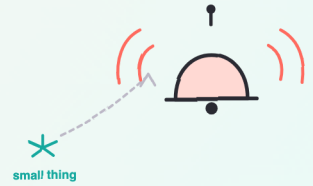


Rejection Sensitivity

A correction or feeling left out can hit like an alarm cranked to max. The hurt is real – the size, and how long it grips you, is the ADHD part.



● What it is

Rejection sensitivity (sometimes called RSD) is when criticism, a correction, or feeling left out hits instantly and hard – like physical pain, way out of proportion. It isn't a separate condition: it's the same emotional dysregulation behind any big feeling, aimed at one trigger – being rejected, judged, or left out. The hurt is real; what's off is the size, and how long it grips you.

*The tell: a friend leaves you on read and within seconds it's "they hate me, I have no friends." A small note from a teacher and you're crushed or furious – then you replay it for hours. **The trigger can be real or imagined; either way the reaction comes out bigger and longer than the thing itself.***

● Why it's harder for ADHD

The brake that would shrink the hit is the same one ADHD makes weak – your emotion-regulation system. With rejection it fails fast: the full intensity lands before any calmer read can form, and then it lingers. **The hurt can be real – it's the size, and how long it grips you, that's the ADHD part.**

● It's instant and physical

Your body reacts – face hot, stomach drop – before a single thought. There's no gap to think in.

● It runs long

The feeling outlasts the trigger by hours, because your memory keeps replaying the worst version of it and the regulation that should turn it down doesn't engage.

● What helps

● Don't analyze – disengage

At full strength, thinking about it makes it worse – even "wait, is this true?" is just more fuel. What works when a feeling is this big is to get away and into something absorbing or physical for ~20 minutes: a walk, music, a game, cold water on your face. Reasoning comes later.

● Transmit nothing

No text, no post, no reply, no decision while it's high. The version of you in the spike will regret what it sends. The wave is time-limited – usually 20-40 minutes to drop below the do-something-stupid line.

● Be kind, not corrective

The self-talk – but not arguing with the feeling, which is just more painful thinking. One kind line: "This really hurts, and it'll pass. I'm okay." Being kind to yourself shrinks the spiral faster than proving yourself wrong.

● Get the facts, don't replay

Once it's down: if you're not sure the rejection was real, ask the actual question once – "hey, did you mean ___?" Real information beats the replay. Asking over and over for reassurance just re-arms the alarm.

● If it was real, it's allowed to hurt

Sometimes the rejection is real. Then the pain is fair – feel it, and deal with it (talk it out, fix it, or let it go) once you're calm. The ADHD part is never the hurt itself; it's the size and the hours.

► Action Card – When Rejection Hits

Learn it when you're calm; keep it where you'll see it.

WHEN IT HITS • IT'S AT FULL STRENGTH

- 1 Don't try to solve it – get away from it. ~20 minutes on something absorbing or physical: walk, music, a game, cold water on your face.
- 2 Transmit nothing – no text, post, reply, or decision.
- 3 One kind line, not an argument: **"This really hurts, and it'll pass."**

WHEN IT DROPS • THEN DEAL WITH IT

- 4 Unsure it was real? Ask once – "hey, did you mean ___?" Real info, not replay.
- 5 If it was real, it's allowed to hurt – talk it out or fix it now that you're calm.
- 6 Don't loop for reassurance – one check, then let it go.

The hurt can be real. The size, and the hours it takes – that's the ADHD part, and it passes.

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