

RSD in Women:

When Everything Feels Personal

Different
Brains
Brighter
Lives

Same
Brave You
A Brighter
Tomorrow

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD) isn't a diagnosis, but it's a very real and common experience for many women with ADHD. It's an intense emotional sensitivity to perceived rejection, criticism, or disapproval — and it can feel overwhelming, painful, and all-consuming.

You're not too sensitive. Your feelings are real.



A
Calmer You
A Kinder
Inner Voice
A Brighter
Tomorrow

1 What it can feel like

RSD can show up in many ways, including:

- deep shame or feeling "not enough"
- spiraling thoughts
- overthinking what you said or did
- intense emotional pain
- people pleasing to avoid rejection
- withdrawing or shutting down
- overexplaining or constantly seeking reassurance



Big feelings
often come from
a place of deep care.

2 What can trigger it

RSD can be activated by things that might seem small to others, such as:

- feedback (even when it's kind)
- conflict or tension
- perceived disapproval
- being left out or excluded
- making mistakes
- not getting a response (e.g., a text, email, or call)
- changes in tone, facial expression, or body language



It's often not the event
itself, but what it means
to you that hurts.

3 What your brain might say

When RSD is activated, your inner dialogue can be harsh and convincing. You might think:

"They must be
upset with me."

"I messed
everything up."

"They don't
like me anymore."

"I'm too much."

These thoughts feel real, but they are often based on fear, not fact.

4 What can help in the moment

When RSD hits, try:

- **Pause** – take a breath before reacting.
- **Check the facts** – what do you actually know vs. what you're assuming?
- **Regulate your body** – try grounding, movement, or gentle breathing.
- **Delay the text** – give yourself time before responding.
- **Get a reality check** – talk to someone safe and supportive.
- **Offer self-compassion** – speak to yourself like you would a dear friend.



A calmer nervous system
creates a kinder perspective.

5 A grounding reframe

When everything feels personal, try this gentle script:

"This is a big feeling,
but it doesn't have to be
a big story. I can pause,
breathe, and be kind to myself.
I don't have to have it all figured
out right now. I am safe,
I am enough, and this feeling
will pass."



Feelings are waves,
not permanent truths.



Progress
Not
Perfection

Greater Understanding
Brighter Tomorrows

Want to know more?

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A Brighter You Tomorrow

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