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Rejection Sensitivity and RSD

Rejection Sensitivity

Rejection sensitivity is a trait in which people are more emotionally sensitive and tend to perceive and overreact to rejection, criticism, or any form of disapproval.

Rejection sensitivity seems to exist in all kinds of conditions: depression, trauma, autism, borderline personality disorder, and bipolar disorder.

There is a lot of research on it.

Rejection Sensitivity Dsyphoria

Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD) is mainly seen in ADHDers

It is different in that it is extreme and intense and can be felt as physical pain. Some people respond to medication. It's been suggested in the research that it may be distinctly related to people with ADHD.

Research on RSD is minimal. This may be because it's related to emotional regulation, which still isn't in the core criteria of ADHD.

Critical Aspects of RSD

> RSD episodes often start with the triggers—a sense of being rejected or criticized or failing that quickly escalates into a state of severe emotional distress, often shame or worthlessness.

> D**ysphoria** is intense emotional pain or discomfort triggered by the perception or experience of rejection, criticism, or failure.

People with RSD often scan for clues of rejection and interpret even small or unclear social cues as signs of rejection.

The intense emotional pain, often described as unbearable, is a crucial feature of RSD and sets it apart from rejection sensitivity.

RSD Symptoms

RSD might feel like waves of overwhelming emotions. These waves are dysregulating. They can result in:

- Emotional outbursts
- Social withdrawal
- Negative self-talk
- Thoughts of self-harm
- Avoidance of social situations
- Low self-esteem
- Challenges in forming relationships
- Other behaviors in response to those emotions

Causes and Contributing Factors

Although the precise causes of RSD are not yet fully understood, research indicates several potential contributing factors:

Early Life Experiences

Experiences of **rejection**, **criticism,** or **emotional invalidation** from caregivers or significant others during childhood can contribute to the development of RSD.

Personality Traits

People with rejection sensitivity dysphoria often worry about rejection, focus on and notice potential signs of rejection quickly, and have strong emotional reactions when they think they might be being rejected or criticized.

These traits can increase their chances of experiencing the intense emotional responses associated with RSD.

Emotional Dysregulation

Difficulty managing and regulating emotions, **a common feature of ADHD**, can amplify sensitivity to rejection and contribute to the manifestation of RSD. It may be the key feature of RSD.

RSD Episodes

Triggers, Experience, and Aftermath of an RSD Episode

Triggers for an RSD Episode

Common triggers might include feeling left out, being criticized, making a mistake, or even being hard on yourself. Sometimes, thinking about these things can cause an episode, but they don't have to happen in reality.

What an RSD Episode Looks Like

During an RSD episode, the emotional pain you feel can be unbearable and seem impossible to manage. A person experiencing this might withdraw from the world, which causes them to feel further cut off. They also may lash out because they think they need to defend themselves. This can also cause them to be alienated. They also may become paralyzed and shut down completely, being unable to think and function.

The pain from an RSD episode is often described as "horrible" or "devastating." This emotional distress can even manifest physically, like a sharp pain in your chest. You might feel as though you're losing control over your emotions, feeling helpless as the episode "runs its course."

After an RSD Episode

After an episode, you might feel a wave of shame and embarrassment. You may criticize your reactions, thinking you were "too sensitive" or should have handled your emotions better. These thoughts can lead to feelings of guilt or self-doubt. It's important to recognize these feelings and remember that understanding and support from others can help you recover and reconnect.

What Triggers My RSD



What Triggers My RSD Episodes

- ◯ Fearing that you are losing love, approval, or respect from others.
- ◯ Being mocked or becoming the target of jokes.
- ◯ Receiving criticism or feedback.
- ◯ Being reprimanded.
- ◯ Judging yourself harshly for not meeting your own or others' expectations.
- ◯ Worrying about or expecting rejection, even when there's no real reason.
- ◯ Feeling you are being excluded socially.
- ◯ Experiencing failure or believing you have failed.
- ◯ Being involved in arguments, disputes, or minor disagreements.
- ◯ Feeling ignored or unacknowledged in a group or relationship.
- ◯ Noticing changes in friendships or romantic relationships, such as slow responses or a partner seeming distant.
- ◯ Receiving unclear messages or mixed signals that could be perceived as rejection.
- ◯ Comparing yourself to others and feeling less successful or inferior.
- ◯ Making a mistake or fearing that you made a mistake, and fearing criticism, judgment, or disappointment from others.

Are any of the above true for you? Check which ones. You can use the space below to write about that.

What RSD is Like For Me



Checklist for What RSD is Like for Me

- ◯ I feel shame
- ◯ I feel hurt
- ◯ I feel sad
- ◯ I feel angry

→

- ◯ I isolate
- ◯ I fight and lash out.
- ◯ I shut down
- ◯ **Intense Emotional Pain:** The feelings are powerful and hard to handle, often described as "horrible" or "devastating."
- ◯ **Feeling Alone:** There's a deep sense of loneliness, isolation, or rejection from others.
- ◯ **Physical Pain:** The emotional pain also feels physical, like a sharp pain in the chest or sinking feeling in the gut.
- ◯ **Losing Control:** Emotions feel too intense to manage, making it hard to stay in control.

Are any of the above true for you? Check which ones. You can use the space below to write about that.

Write about anything you want here.

What RSD Feels Like for Me



The Fallout From RSD

RSD can reinforce old coping mechanisms, leading women to adopt certain protective behaviors to avoid future episodes.

To prevent experiencing another intense RSD episode, they might engage in behaviors that they believe will shield them from perceived rejection or criticism. However, these patterns aren't always obvious and may require deep self-reflection. Consider whether any of the following behaviors resonate with your own experiences:

Are any of these patterns true about your rejection sensitivity?

What RSD Makes Me Do

- ◯ **People-pleasing**: Going out of your way to make others happy to avoid losing their approval or love.
- ◯ **Self-SIlencing**: Avoid speaking up or sharing your true thoughts and feelings to prevent conflict or criticism.
- ◯ **Seeking constant reassurance**: Needing validation or affirmation from others to alleviate fears of rejection or losing respect.
- ◯ **Avoiding feedback**: Steering clear of situations where you might receive criticism or feedback to protect your self-esteem.
- ◯ **Over-apologizing**: Apologizing excessively to avoid reprimands or to smooth over-perceived conflicts.
- ◯ **Self-criticism**: Constantly judge yourself and use negative self-talk, such as "stupid," "crazy," or "too emotional."

What RSD Feels Like for Me



What RSD Makes Me Do

- ◯ **Overanalyzing social interactions**: Continuously replaying conversations or analyzing others' words and actions for signs of rejection or disapproval.
- ◯ **Avoiding social situations**: Withdrawing from social gatherings or group activities to avoid feeling excluded or ignored.
- ◯ **Over-preparing or perfectionism** involves spending excessive time and effort to ensure that everything you do is perfect, avoiding any potential criticism or failure.
- ◯ **Conflict avoidance**: Avoid arguments, disputes, or disagreements to prevent the discomfort of confrontation or perceived rejection. **This includes avoiding expressing needs and feelings to prevent conflict.**
- ◯ **Withdrawing emotionally** means distancing yourself from relationships or becoming less engaged to avoid the pain of changes, slow responses, or perceived disinterest from others. It may also include avoiding intimacy due to fear of rejection.
- ◯ **Self-isolation**: Isolating yourself to prevent the risk of making mistakes or receiving judgment, criticism, or disappointment from others.
- ◯ **Excessive monitoring of others' moods**: Becoming hyper-aware of others' emotions and behaviors to avoid any sign of dissatisfaction or rejection preemptively.
- ◯ **Adopting a persona**: Changing your behavior, personality, or interests to align more closely with what you believe others want, to avoid rejection or disapproval. This includes masking genuine emotions to avoid judgment.
- ◯ **Feeling ashamed for not controlling emotions**: Experiencing shame or humiliation for being unable to manage emotional responses effectively.
- ◯ **Difficulty seeking help**: Feeling too ashamed or embarrassed to reach out for support or talk about your feelings or experiences following an RSD episode.

Are any of the above true for you? Check which ones. You can use the space below to write about that.

Write about anything you want here.

RSD and The Old Coping Skills

Research shows that just imagining rejection can be enough to trigger an RSD episode.

What a neurotypical person considers minor could be overwhelming for someone with RSD.

ADHD girls and women often have incredible anxiety about being inadequate. They also don't want to feel any of the feelings associated with an RSD episode.

That anxiety is so intense the fear of being inadequate is so strong that they will do anything to avoid it!

So, to avoid certain behaviors, the old coping mechanisms are created. The three we talk about most are:

1 . Perfectionism:

Front-end perfectionism is the need to have all circumstances just right before a task gets done so you don't fail. This often leads to never doing the things you need to do.

Back-end perfectionism involves endlessly refining or revising a task after starting or completing it, making it hard to finish due to a constant need for improvement.

2 . People-Pleasing: Engaging in behaviors to gain approval and avoid potential rejection.

3 . Avoiding Failure: Avoiding new or challenging activities due to an overwhelming fear of failure or not meeting expectations.

Which of these are the ones you experience?

The literature often calls these behaviors maladaptive, but they aren't. They are perfectly adaptive for children. ADHD girls don't have any other resources to deal with the stress they feel, and they aren't given the necessary resources and support.

Once you experience RSD or shame, especially as a young girl, you might conclude that the best way to help yourself avoid those feelings is by working **even harder to please others and avoid disappointment.** You may want to do things perfectly to avoid feeling rejected.

You may also want to please people to avoid making them feel unhappy and risking this feeling. Furthermore, these behaviors are REWARDED in girls and women!

With the responsibilities and resources of an adult, you have more choices at your disposal.

RSD and Shame

What is Shame?

Definition of Shame:
Shame is a strong, uncomfortable feeling that comes from believing there is something inherently wrong with you. It happens when you feel judged or think you've failed in the eyes of people who are important to you. Shame makes you feel unworthy or like you're not good enough. For people with Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria (RSD), shame can easily be triggered, making them feel even more inadequate.

> Unlike guilt, which is the feeling you get when you've done a wrong action, shame makes you feel like **you, as a human being, are t**he problem.

Shame is hard to overcome and isn't quickly helped by telling yourself to think it away.

Shame can lead to behaviors and old coping skills—do any of these sound familiar to you?

- ◯ Wanting to hide from others leads to isolation when you need support.
- ◯ Feeling the urge to lash out or get defensive can push others away.
- ◯ Shutting down, avoiding situations, or struggling to function after feeling ashamed.
- ◯ Being afraid to make mistakes.
- ◯ Avoid trying new things out of fear.
- ◯ Becoming a perfectionist to avoid feelings of inadequacy.

What Research Shows Helps with Shame:

Research shows that self-compassion, expressing feelings, and seeking support can reduce shame.

A Note on Medications

Medications for Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)

Important: This information is for educational purposes only and not medical advice. Always consult a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and treatment.

Dr. William Dodson suggests that certain medications can help manage Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) in people with ADHD. Clonidine and guanfacine, originally used to treat high blood pressure, may help with RSD by improving emotional regulation.

It's important to remember that these recommendations are based on clinical experience, not extensive research. Not everyone will respond the same way. Always consult a healthcare professional for personalized advice.



RSD and Loved Ones

One practical approach to managing rejection sensitivity dysphoria (RSD) is to educate your partner, friends, and family about the condition. You can help them understand your experiences and receive therapeutic support by sharing what you're learning.

Self-advocacy is crucial in treating yourself with the love, care, and respect you deserve. Self-care involves setting boundaries, educating others, developing assertiveness, and seeking supportive relationships.

Teaching Loved Ones about RSD

Here are some suggested phrases to explain RSD to people you love.

1. Educate them about how RSD can Feel Like Pain

"RSD can feel like physical pain in my body. I learned that I share this in common with other people who have ADHD and other forms of neurodivergence.

Do you remember when you (fill in the blank with an incident of physical pain)?

One thing you can do to help me is to remember that your words can cause me physical pain; if you aren't careful with your words, it hurts me, and it can take me a long time to heal."

2. Encourage them to give you positive feedback:

> *"Please remember to tell me the things I have been doing well."*

3. Remind them to be aware of facial expressions:

> *"Please be conscientious of your facial expression. I learned that I could be really sensitive to facial expressions, which can have a significant impact on me."*

4. Ask them to use collaborative phrases:

> *"When you give me feedback or ask me to do things, are you willing to use collaborative phrases so I don't feel shamed or controlled?"*

Example: "Would you be open to...", "Would you be willing to...", "I would love it if you would..."

5. Ask them to check in before initiating conversations:

> *"If you check first with me to make sure that I am feeling good, regulated, and calm, it can help me avoid the pain of RSD."*

Example:

"Is this an okay time to discuss X?

How do you feel about talking about this right now?"

6. If you validate feelings, it will help me feel safe and regulated.

> *"Will you validate and listen to my feelings? When I have feelings, it can help if you just listen to them and reflect them back to me rather than telling me if they are right or wrong. Reminding me that my thoughts and feelings matter to you is really helpful and will decrease RSD for me, helping me to feel safe. I have had many years where I was taught my thoughts and feelings didn'tmatter."*

Self-Advocacy Notes:

Mental health professionals sometimes misdiagnose RSD as bipolar disorder or borderline personality disorder in women. It is essential to be aware of this possibility and advocate for yourself to ensure an accurate diagnosis and appropriate support.

The Amygdala Hijack and RSD

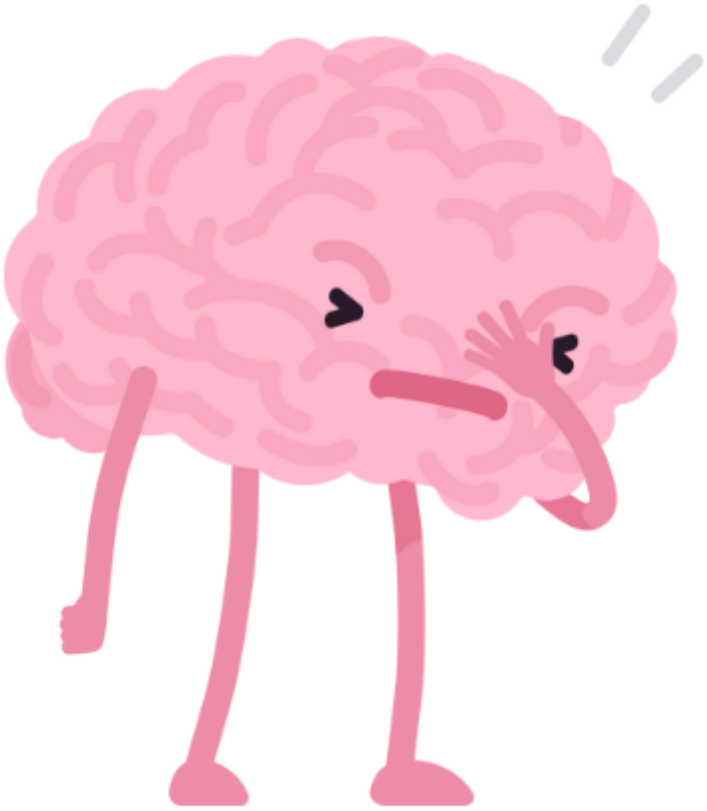
The amygdala, one of the most primitive parts of our brain, continuously collects data from our five senses and remains on the lookout for dangerous situations where it must act. When the amygdala senses danger, real or imagined, it secretes a series of hormones that signal the fight/flight/freeze response to occur.

The amygdala is likely the central part of the brain responsible for RSD. To respond with your thinking brain, you need to calm down and recover from this hijack, so breathing, resting, and restoring your body to a calm place is essential before you try to think about what happened.

When RSD hits, good judgment and thinking can go offline.

This is why creating a sense of safety for yourself during an RSD episode is helpful. RSD episodes can be pretty traumatic.

Your brain needs to get the signal that you are safe. If it does, your amygdala calms down, and your thinking brain can re-engage.



Let's look at ways to create safety in response to an RSD episode.

Grounding

Grounding is a way to cope with trauma and heal!

It helps you connect with the present moment and can make you feel centered, safe, or distracted.

When you ground yourself, you remind yourself that you are in a different situation than the one that caused those feelings.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, triggered, or distressed, grounding techniques can help you calm down.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

1. **Get Comfortable:**
    - Sit down or stand up straight and take a deep, calming breath.
2. **5 Things You Can See:**
    - Look around your surroundings and identify five things you can see.
    - They can be anything, like a picture on the wall, a plant, or a piece of furniture.
    - Name each item out loud as you see it.
3. **4 Things You Can Touch:**
    - Reach out and find four things you can physically touch.
    - This could be the fabric of your clothing, the surface of a table, or the texture of a nearby object.
    - Touch each item and focus on how it feels against your skin.
4. **3 Things You Can Hear:**
    - Listen carefully and identify three sounds you can hear.
    - It might be the hum of a fan, birds chirping, or distant traffic.
    - Say each sound out loud to acknowledge it.

5. **2 Things You Can Smell:**
    - Take a deep breath and try to find two things you can smell.
    - It could be the scent of a candle, the aroma of food, or even the smell of fresh air.
    - Focus on each scent and try to identify it by naming it.
6. **1 Thing You Can Taste:**
    - Focus on one thing you can taste.
    - This could be something you're eating, drinking, or even the taste in your mouth.
    - Please pay attention to the flavor and texture and acknowledge it.
7. **Repeat as Needed:**
    - You can repeat this exercise as often as needed until you feel more connected to your surroundings and less overwhelmed by your thoughts or emotions.

Remember, grounding is a simple yet powerful tool for reconnecting with the present moment. Whenever you feel overwhelmed, use this technique to help you return to a place of calm and safety.

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4-7-8 Breathing

4-7-8 breathing is a simple yet effective breathing technique that can help reduce stress and anxiety. It involves taking a deep breath in for a count of 4, holding the breath for a count of 7, and then exhaling slowly for a count of 8. This technique can be used anywhere and anytime.

Activate Your Parasympathetic Nervous System

One way to calm your mind and body is to activate your parasympathetic nervous system when you're feeling overwhelmed. This part of your nervous system helps you relax and feel safe. Here are a few techniques to help you do that:

1. Cold Exposure

- **Try a Cold Shower or Splash Cold Water on Your Face:** Exposing your body to cold can increase vagus nerve stimulation, which helps activate your parasympathetic nervous system.
- **How It Works:** When your body adjusts to the cold, the “fight or flight” response (sympathetic activity) decreases, and the “rest and digest” response (parasympathetic activity) increases, helping you feel calmer and more centered.

2. Physical Movement

- **Go for a Walk or Exercise:** Physical activity, such as walking or exercising, can calm your nervous system. Movement helps shift your focus away from distressing thoughts and encourages a more balanced nervous system response.

3. Shift Your Focus: Engage in Enjoyable Activities

Another effective way to manage overwhelming emotions or Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is to shift your focus to something you find interesting or exciting.

- **Find an Activity You Enjoy:** Engaging in an activity that interests you can help distract your mind from negative thoughts or feelings. This could be anything from reading a book to painting, cooking, or playing a musical instrument.
- **Why It Helps:** According to William Dodson, engaging in something enjoyable can reduce episodes of RSD, redirecting your attention and energy away from emotional pain and toward something that brings you joy or satisfaction.

Incorporating these strategies into your daily routine can help activate your parasympathetic nervous system and help you find calm in moments of distress.

Happy Memories

Research suggests that savoring positive experiences can protect against rejection sensitivity. This means actively noticing and appreciating enjoyable moments, engaging in joyful activities, and reflecting on positive memories.

> This savoring intervention builds more neuroplasticity in the brain, making people less susceptible to RSD episodes.

- [ ] Find a collection of photographs that remind you of happy memories. This could be physical photo albums or digital ones on your phone or computer.
- [ ] Choose one photograph that resonates with you and take a few moments to observe every detail of the photo.
- [ ] Pay attention to the colors, the expressions on people's faces, the setting, and anything else that stands out to you.
- [ ] Allow yourself to relive the emotions and sensations associated with that moment.
- [ ] Remember how you felt, what you thought, and how the experience made you feel.
- [ ] Think about the people you were with and how they made you feel.
- [ ] Remember the sounds you heard and the smells in the air. Allow yourself to immerse yourself fully in the happy memory.
- [ ] You can keep this memory and feeling for as long as you like, savoring the positive emotions it evokes.
- [ ] When ready, move on to another photograph and repeat the process.

Using Self Talk for RSD

Self-talk is a powerful tool to help you regulate your emotions and calm yourself down in difficult situations.

Externalizing language is beneficial for women with ADHD. Talking to yourself out loud or writing down your thoughts can help.

When you use self-talk for RSD, you are self-compassionate. You use language to communicate with yourself in a kind, supportive, and reassuring way. By using self-talk this way, you can help reduce anxiety, fear, and stress and promote feelings of calm, safety, and well-being.

Here is how you can use self-talk to help yourself with RSD.

- ◯ Identify the situation that is causing you distress. This could be anything from a difficult conversation with a friend or family member to a stressful work meeting to a memory of a mistake.
- ◯ Use calming words or a mantra to remind yourself that you are okay and safe. The focus is only on safety and calming yourself**, not making your feelings disappear**. For example, you might say to yourself, "This hurts, and I am scared, but I'm okay," or "Even though this feels awful, I will be okay."
- ◯ Try generating a statement you can use repeatedly ahead of time that helps with safety and posting it somewhere to use whenever you have an episode.
- ◯ Speak kind statements about your experience, as if you were talking to a friend or loved one. For example, you might say something like,

> *"You're doing the best you can. What can you do to be kind until this get less painful? "*

Here are some more ideas

- "I am safe right now, even though this situation is difficult."

- "It's okay to feel scared and unsure; these feelings are natural and will pass."
- "I am here for myself; I can handle this with kindness and patience."
- "This is hard, but I have been through tough times before and made it through."
- "I can breathe through this moment, and each breath helps me feel a little more grounded."
- "Even though this feels overwhelming, I am taking small steps to care for myself right now."
- "What do I need right now to feel a bit better? Maybe a comforting cup of tea or a quiet moment alone."

1. Repeat your self-talk as often as necessary to help you feel calmer and more centered. Try different phrases. What feels good?
2. Remember, self-talk is a skill that takes practice to develop. Be patient with yourself as you learn to use it. With time and practice, you can learn to use self-talk to cope with life's challenges.
3. A bonus is asking yourself what you might need to feel better. Do you need a cup of tea? A blanket? A hug? A rest?

Using Distraction

You can do these activities to distract yourself when you begin meditating and need to pull yourself out of your head.

You can do these until you feel less "in your head" or less focused on your thoughts.

- ◯ Find all objects in your environment that fit a particular characteristic, such as all objects that are green or square. Continue doing this exercise until you feel more connected to your surroundings.
- ◯ Count up and down again, as high as you need to go. For example, count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, then 4, 3, 2, 1 until you feel more connected to your surroundings.
- ◯ You can also repeat the words to a song, quote, poem, or prayer that is meaningful to you. You can even read or write it out.
- ◯ Think about things you look forward to or are curious about shortly.
- ◯ Another option is to play category or concentration games on your phone.

Self Awareness After an Episode

After you have recovered from an episode of RSD and gained some distance, you can engage in some reflection.

If it feels helpful, ask yourself questions about the incident.

Here are some suggestions to provide insight:

1. Can you discuss what happened with someone you trust to get feedback?
2. If the RSD episode was related to someone who has judged you, **ask yourself if that person's opinion truly matters.**
3. If this episode was related to someone else, consider evaluating the people you spend time with. **If someone consistently criticizes, judges, or treats you poorly**, they may not deserve a place in your life. Surround yourself with people who celebrate you. That is one of the best ways to combat RSD.
4. If this episode involved someone you love and trust, consider revisiting and sharing your self-advocacy notes with that person.

Importance of Feedback and Making Mistakes

In upcoming sessions, we will discuss the importance of making mistakes and adopting a growth mindset, which is crucial to leading a fulfilling life.

In some cases, when making mistakes are part of the learning process, RSD can make it hard to function. If you've determined that RSD prevents you from accepting feedback, such as at work, try memorizing one particular phrase.

A good one to say is, "Thanks for the feedback. I'll be sure to work on it." This phrase can save you from potential embarrassment. As soon as you feel RSD being triggered, say this to yourself, then say it out loud and nod. This is okay to do.

Group Exercise

Strategy: Using Safe Imagery

Imagery is a powerful tool for calming down a scared or traumatized mind because it taps into the brain's ability to tell your body it's safe.

These scenes can provide comfort and relaxation, helping to counteract the fear or distress associated with RSD and build resilience.

When dealing with ADHD and RSD, I've had success using imagery exercises to help individuals access their inner resources and foster a sense of calm.

Regularly using imagery to create a safe place or a safe memory can have a profound impact on overall well-being. By consistently revisiting these comforting mental scenes, you can train your mind to access feelings of safety and relaxation more efficiently, even amid challenging situations! This practice helps cope with immediate stressors and contributes to long-term emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Here is our group activity

> Safe Place Imagery: Steps

- ◯ Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit or lie down.
- ◯ Please close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose, hold it for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale through your mouth.
- ◯ Imagine yourself in a place or with someone you love. It could be a memory or a fantasy.

Visualize the details of the scene.

What colors do you see?

What shapes and textures surround you?

Pay attention to the sounds and smells around you.

Are there any particular scents or noises that stand out to you?

As you relax, try to incorporate more details into your imagination.

Are you sitting or standing?

What are you wearing?

Is there a breeze, or is it still?

Allow yourself to be fully immersed in this scene and feel the emotions that come with it.

Are you happy, content, or relaxed?

Take your time and enjoy the experience. Fill in as many details as you like. You can stay in this imagined scene for as long as you want until you feel more relaxed and present.

You can also write, draw, or paint this scene and revisit it whenever you like!

When you are ready, take a deep breath and slowly open your eyes.

What Techniques do you plan to employ?

Checklist for Managing Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)

Use this checklist to help manage RSD and foster emotional well-being:

Self-Compassion and Self-Talk

- ◯ Practice self-compassion: Treat yourself with kindness and understanding after feelings of rejection.
- ◯ Challenge negative self-talk: Replace self-critical thoughts with more balanced, compassionate statements.
- ◯ Engage in and practice grounding practices: Stay present in the moment without judgment.
- ◯ Savor positive memories: Recall and immerse yourself in happy experiences to counter negative emotions.
- ◯ Practice positive imagery: Visualize calming or joyful scenarios to create a sense of peace.
- ◯ Resist social isolation: Reach out to friends, family, or support groups to maintain social connections.
- ◯ Practice Using Distraction: Shift your focus to an engaging activity or task to redirect your mind from distressing thoughts or feelings.
- ◯ Practice Using Breathing: Use deep, slow breathing techniques to calm your nervous system and reduce anxiety.
- ◯ Practice Activating My Sympathetic Nervous System**:** activate the part of your nervous system that helps you feel safe.
- ◯ Seek professional support: Consult a mental health professional for a proper diagnosis and personalized treatment plan.
- ◯ Explore medication options with a healthcare professional: Discuss potential medications, such as alpha-2 agonists, to help manage symptoms.

Other thoughts

Ongoing Practice

- Be patient with yourself: Remember that managing RSD is an ongoing process.
- Review and update your strategies regularly: Adjust your approach to find what works best.

Use this checklist to guide your efforts in managing RSD. Remember that combining various strategies can be effective in fostering resilience and emotional well-being.

It's essential to recognize that Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is not your fault. For women with ADHD, this sensitivity can often be a result of accumulated stigma and criticism experienced over time.

What did you learn about your RSD from this workbook?