

Is It RSD?

A Quick Quiz for Parents

If your child crumbles after a small correction, melts down when they feel left out, or lashes out when they think they've disappointed you, this quick check will help you see what might be going on underneath.

Adapted from the work of William Dodson, M.D., for educational use. This is a reflection tool, not a diagnosis.

How to use this

Read each statement and choose the answer that fits your child best. Tap or circle as you go. There are no right or wrong answers, you're simply noticing patterns.

☒ Very often
 ☐ Often
 ☐ Sometimes
 ☐ Rarely
 ☐ Never

1 My child has intense reactions when they think they've been criticised or left out.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

2 They often assume they're "in trouble" or that adults are disappointed in them.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

3 They are very self-critical and spiral after small mistakes.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

4 They try hard to please others and fall apart if someone seems unhappy with them.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

5 They avoid challenging tasks because they're afraid to fail.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

6 When they feel rejected, they lash out or withdraw completely.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

7 Their emotional pain can look physical, like clutching their chest or crying.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

8 Afterward, they feel embarrassed or ashamed.

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

9 They replay painful moments and can't "let things go."

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

10 They say things like "You don't love me" or "I can't do anything right."

☒ Very often

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

What Your Answers Might Mean

QUICK READ

Count how many **Very often** and **Often** answers you chose. If several statements landed there, your child may be feeling emotional pain more deeply than most children their age, especially when they feel rejected, corrected, or left out.

This doesn't mean something is "wrong" with your child.

It means their brain and nervous system are more sensitive to perceived threat, particularly **social** threat, like disappointment, disapproval, or failure. This is what's often called **Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)**, and it's common in children with ADHD.

Children who experience rejection sensitivity often...

- Feel loved one moment and rejected the next.
- React with tears, anger, or shutdown before they can explain why.
- Carry deep shame afterward, wishing they could control it.

What they need most in those moments isn't punishment or logic. It's **safety, empathy, and co-regulation**. Your calm body and gentle presence are the message.

"You're safe. You're loved. You can feel big feelings and still belong."

That message alone can begin to soften the intensity of RSD reactions.

IF THIS SOUNDS LIKE YOUR CHILD

When Everything Feels Like Rejection

A short, practical mini course with real tools to help you navigate RSD moments: what to say, what to avoid, and how to help your child come back to calm. Priced at just **\$27**, because I want it in as many parents' hands as possible.

Explore the mini course →

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