ADHD Coaching

Strategy Workbook

SESSION 1

Understanding RSD

(Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria)



"The emotional response is real.
The story your brain creates
may not be."

Client: _____

Coach: _____

Date: _____

PART 1

What Is RSD?

Many people with ADHD experience intense emotional reactions to situations that feel like rejection, criticism, disappointment, or disapproval.

The important thing to understand is:

✓ **The emotional response is real.**

♡ **The story your brain creates may not be.**

RSD often causes the brain to fill in missing information
and present assumptions as facts.

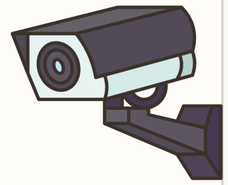
Today's goal is to learn how to separate:

✓ What actually happened (the event)

from

✓ What ADHD may be adding to the story

THE RSD FRAMEWORK



STEP 1 THE EVENT

What objectively happened?
Think of this as what a security camera would record.

EXAMPLE: *"My manager hasn't replied to my email."*

MY EXAMPLE – What happened?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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STEP 2 THE STORY

What meaning did your brain immediately attach to the event?

EXAMPLE:

- *I've annoyed her.*
- *She thinks I'm incompetent.*
- *I've done something wrong.*
- *I'm going to lose my job.*

MY STORY – *What thoughts immediately appeared?*

STEP 3 EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

How did those thoughts make you feel?

EXAMPLE

Anxiety → Shame → Overthinking → Rumination → Constant checking → Difficulty focusing

MY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

What emotions showed up?

What behaviours followed?

- ☐ Avoiding
- ☐ People pleasing
- ☐ Over-explaining
- ☐ Constant checking
- ☐ Seeking reassurance
- ☐ Withdrawn / shutting down
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Other:

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COACHING QUESTION



What do we actually know, and what is ADHD filling in?

WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY KNOW?

Looking back at the event, list only the facts. No assumptions. No interpretations. Only evidence.

FACTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

WHAT IS ADHD FILLING IN?

Write down everything that is a guess, prediction, assumptions, fear, or interpretation.

ASSUMPTIONS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE 3-COLUMN RSD REFRAME EXERCISE

When we experience rejection sensitivity, our brains often mistake assumptions for facts.
This exercise helps slow down the process and create a more balanced perspective.

INSTRUCTIONS: When something triggers an emotional reaction, fill in each column before acting on the feeling.

What Happened? (The Event)	What Story Am I Telling Myself?	What Else Could Be True?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What patterns do I notice in the stories I tell myself?

_____

_____

What would I say to a friend who was in this situation?

_____

_____

REALITY CHECK EXERCISE

For each assumption, ask:
Is there actual evidence for this?

Thought	Evidence For	Evidence Against

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

What are three (or more) other possibilities that could explain the situation?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Produced by Arise Coaching