

# Ep #105 Helping kids who don't like correction

This is episode 105.

We welcome you to the ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siope Kinikini.

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Hello, my friends. How are you? I hope you're doing well. I am so excited about today because we are going to be talking about [Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria, RSD](#), in relation to ADHD. But this is also something that a lot of struggle with who have anxiety or other issues.

Now in addition to talking about RSD and how it affects your child, their self-perception, and their self-esteem, we're going to be talking about the skill of Correcting Behaviors because you're going to have to correct your child's behavior, but the way that you do it is going to make all the difference in whether or not you are building your child's self-esteem or you are actually creating more problems down the road. So, we'll talk about the skill of Correcting Behaviors. And then after that, what I want to talk to you about is why it's so essential for you to follow the skill that way that it's outlined in Smarter Parenting.

Now, this is a lot to unpack, and in fact, this is a topic that a lot of parents who have children who have had ADHD over a long period of time wish they knew earlier. So in a way, I am providing you with a lot of information that if you have younger children will be super, super helpful. It will also be helpful if you have an older child.

The example that I'm going to give today is from a young adult that I'm working with right now who is older, who struggles with RDS, or Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria, and what we are doing in order to help him overcome this really debilitating mindset that he has.

So let's start with definitions first because I think that will help guide the discussion and help you really understand what I'm talking about. Let's talk about Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria. Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria, we all know what the two words that come first are, rejection sensitivity, but dysphoria may be a new word for you. It's actually a Greek word, and the meaning behind it means hard to bear. It means it's hard to deal with or hard to carry. When we're talking about Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria; what we're talking about is the sensitivity your child has to rejection. So children with ADHD tend to have a lot of feelings in regards to how things are accepted or rejected with them. And it may be more sensitive than other children of the same age.

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Let me give you an example. If a child with ADHD comes to you, and they have created this beautiful painting that they have spent a lot of time, and they're looking for you to give feedback on. You may say, "Oh, that is beautiful. It has beautiful colors. I love the lines. I love the size. I love the way that it looks when I stand back. And this would go well in my house. But, I noticed in the corner here of your painting that there is this little scratch." Now typical people would be able to absorb all the positive feedback and not focus on the small scratch in the corner.

People who struggle with RSD or Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria will focus in on the corner and the scratch. In fact, that will be more powerful and have more of an impact to somebody who struggles with RSD than all the compliments you've given before. It doesn't only happen with children who struggle with ADHD. In fact, people with anxiety tend to have RSD.

I, fortunately, did not have RSD. I was able to accept things as they came and go back. And I think for me, it had to do a lot with my culture where I come from. Island life for us, it's a very laid back, and it's a lot more relaxed type of environment, and that's how I grew up. And so we were able to take things as they came and kind of just dismiss other things that weren't serving us as well. For me, I think that's why I didn't struggle with this. But people who do struggle with rejection sensitivity dysphoria really do have problems. They struggle. And you may notice this with your child. You can praise your child up and down, and when you give a small correction to their behavior, they tend to blame themselves or really focus in on just the negative. They're unable to recognize the other good that they've been able to do.

What happens over time is that people who struggle with RSD either become people-pleasers or they just give up. They don't even try anymore because their fear of rejection is so deep. Now the person that I'm working with right now, his name is Alex. He's 16 years old. He struggles with RSD. He has ADHD as well. He's gotten to the point where he just gives up. So for him, rejection is physically painful for him. Any type of rejection is very, very difficult. And in our progress of working towards building resiliency with him, the goal has always been to recognize that this is an issue that he is struggling with, and that there are ways that he can work through it. Now Alex also has ADHD. And so it had to work around a reframe in the way that he perceives the world around him.

When we talked about ADHD with him, obviously, there are some limitations to ADHD. And what I did in our discussion is I flipped it, and I said, "Okay. Well, you're right. There are limitations, and yet ADHD can be considered a superpower." Now that perked his interest because he thought, "Wait a minute. What? That doesn't make sense to me." And I was very adamant about him focusing on what it is you're allowed to do with ADHD that other people struggle with. And so this whole exercise of helping him reframe things was really helpful for him. So one of the examples that I gave is hyperactivity. So Alex struggles with hyperactivity. And I said, "Well, hyperactivity can be a problem if you are not interested in what you are doing." However, hyperactivity can be very helpful if you are interested in what you're doing because it makes you hyper-focused. And your ability to really get things done quickly and effectively and efficiently is amped up to the 100th degree.

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Now after we discussed this, Alex was able to point out examples where this was absolutely true for him. Then we focused in on the impulsivity because he's impulsive. Now Alex was raised in a home where they talked about his impulsivity quite a bit. And so for him, it was a negative. He was unable to see the positive side of impulsivity. And for me, I switched it for him. I said, "Okay. Well, let's talk about impulsivity." The one great thing about impulsivity is it actually moves you to action. Where a lot of people will be stuck thinking about, processing, and working through something, impulsivity says, "No, we're just going to do it, and then we will learn from it, and then we will continue to move forward."

So helping Alex recognize these things, that was a way to help us work through Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria. It's a reframe of what's happening. Now is it only in your mind? Is it only in your child's mind? No. RSD is not only in your child's mind. Some scientists believe that this is genetic, that there's a genetic component to RSD. And there are medications to help people who struggle with RSD calm themselves down. It doesn't help them resolve the issues, but it does help them calm down. And the reason that it's important for them to calm down is when they receive rejection, it kicks in their nervous system. And the nervous system overreacts, and this increases stress and stress responses.

Now, if you think about children who've been diagnosed with ADHD, they're largely males. This can be very debilitating for males who struggle with ADHD because in our Western culture, the idea that tough guy and emotions are weak, and this can cause a whole other slew of issues that are happening. And so you have to be mindful that this may be part of that way that your child who's struggling with either anxiety, or bipolar, or whatever it may be, ADHD, this may be the reality of how they perceive the world around them. RSD can be very debilitating. In the case of Alex, again, I had mentioned earlier, it's painful for him to receive any type of rejection. So because the pain is so immense and so intense for him, he tends to avoid interactions with other people. This has caused a lot of problems in his ability to connect and form relationships and maintain friendships over time. And for him, he came to me because of these issues and wants to find a way to work through them.

Now you're probably wondering. Okay, this sounds really heavy-duty, very, very specific. It is. It is very specific. It's very real. People with ADHD tend to be highly sensitive to things around them, more so than other children of the same age. And so if you have a child that's struggling with ADHD, it's absolutely important that you recognize that they may have breakdowns more often than you think they should. And you should be okay with that, and working with them through those issues. So the second thing I wanted to talk about, as we have defined RSD and I've given you an example of how that can affect an individual like Alex, let's talk about the skill of Correcting Behaviors.

You're probably wondering. Well, how do I correct behaviors than for my child who struggles with Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria? How can I correct a behavior that I know is wrong, knowing that my child is super sensitive, and this may cause them to have a meltdown and cause us to have problems in our relationship?

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[This is where the beauty of the Teaching-Family Model comes in because the steps that are included in using Correcting Behaviors are very mindful about the relationship, the overall relationship that you are creating with your child when you correct their behavior.](#)

I'm going to outline the steps to Correcting Behaviors because I think it's important for you to hear and for you to see how I applied this with Alex. So there are seven steps. Now don't be intimidated because there are seven steps. I understand that's a lot to process. But it's important for you to understand each of the steps and how we are going to implement this with a child who struggles with RSD.

So step number one is to get the child's attention and to stop the problem behavior if there's a problem behavior. In this case with Alex, it involves his thought process.

Step number two, express empathy and realize that they are struggling through something. So you want to side on the positive of what they're experiencing and what they're feeling. So step number two, express empathy.

Step number three, describe the bad behavior. You want to be sure to be descriptive and to avoid judgment. So you don't want to ask any questions. You just want to describe the bad behavior.

Number four, you want to deliver a consequence. Now, this may sound kind of weird. You're going to give a consequence. Now, remember there are things that make consequences effective. And you can find that on the Smarter Parenting website. But we'll go more in-depth about consequences and how they fit in correcting a behavior. But you want to deliver a consequence. So the consequence should be a doable action, something that you can do, and that is tangible.

And it's meant to teach your child, not to punish your child. Again, the whole focus of the Teaching-Family Model is all about teaching. We're here to teach children how to shape their behaviors, how to change their behaviors. We're not here to force them. We're not here to punish them. This isn't prison. We're not in jail. They're not in jail. Our goal is to put them on the right path and just make the correction so they can continue on that path well, and they won't have any issues down the road. That's step number four, deliver a consequence. And the whole purpose of the consequence is to teach.

Now step number five, describe what you want your child to do instead. So use words your child will understand or use words that are understandable and that make sense. Step number five, describe what you want your child to do.

Step number six, give a reason why this good behavior is important to your child. Now again, you want to be focused in on, "Why is this important for your child to do? Why is it important for Alex to do this new behavior?" And it has to be meaningful. So this is a time to be very focused in on the needs and the wants and desires of the child that you're working with.

Step number seven is to practice the new behavior and then reduce the consequence. So you're going to practice this new way of behaving or processing what's happening, and then the consequence that we had in step number four, we're going to reduce it. We're going to make it smaller. Why? Because the goal again is not to punish, it's to teach. We do want consequences because children do need to understand that there are consequences in the world for their behavior. However, if they're able to make corrections and they're able to adjust and pivot, we want to be able to say, "Hey, you've made the correction. It's worth it to you not to receive the larger consequence."

Think of it this way. If you're driving down the road, you get pulled over by a police officer, he issues you a ticket for something that you have done. You have options to correct the ticket. You can go to court. You can go to court, and if you're found guilty, and you say, "I can't pay a fine," they may send you to traffic school. They're finding ways to teach you in that, but there's still a consequence for the behavior so that you want to be able to provide this whole environment for your child that, "Hey, we're here to teach you, and we're on your side. And we're here to guide you along this process. As long as you learn the behavior, we can reduce a consequence."

And it makes sense. If you are a hard stickler about consequence, and it's just black and white, boom, boom, boom, you are going to be setting yourself up for failure when you are working with a child who has Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria because your child will internalize that as, "I have an issue, and I'm behaving this way to, I am the issue because I'm behaving this way." Very different mindset. You never want to be in a position where you as a parent are helping your child internalize rejection and their sensitivity towards it to saying, "Hey, you have an issue and we need to address it," to, "You are the issue." Very, very big difference between the two.

Now we've gone through the steps of Correcting Behaviors. Let me tell you why it is important to follow this with fidelity and how it works with Alex. Now Alex is an older child. And in order to help him, he had to learn how to accept rejection in a way that would serve him and help him understand that rejection will not kill you, even though it was physically painful.

His parents had called me, and we were talking on the phone about his sensitivity. Now his father was not 100% on board with him being able to feel these things. And for him, he thought he just needs to be more positive. He needs to think more positively. And so that involved a discussion about understanding Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria. It's estimated that children from the ages of zero to 12 receive 20,000 messages that are reconfirming this idea that they are the problem, that they don't have these problems, but that they are actually the problem.

And so over time that becomes reinforcing, and that starts to debilitate a lot of children in their overall functioning in the world around them. So we started to talk about Alex and his early development and how he was involved in sports. He was involved in art. His parents wanted him to do karate. He did piano for a while. And they found that whenever he started something, he started to lose interest fairly quickly. Not so much because of the ADHD, but we started to be

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able to trace instances where he was being rejected. And because it was so painful for him to process this, that he had to make an adjustment and he decided to abandon it and try something new.

So once we recognized the pattern, we started to focus in on, "How can we teach him to work through correction, or work through when somebody is communicating a correction in his behavior, or in the way that he processes the world, in a positive way?" So we came to the skill of Correcting Behaviors. Now with his parents, we went through all the steps, step number one, get the child's attention to stop the problem behavior. So one of those was in helping Alex recognize the thought pattern that was happening.

Step number two for the parents, and specifically for dad, this was to express empathy. I wanted dad to be able to say, "Hey, I understand you're struggling emotionally with this. I understand that this is very difficult for you." And it was important for dad to express empathy in order to build rapport with his son and also help his son realize, "Hey, I can receive input. I can receive feedback, and it will not crush me because I have a support system around me."

Now step number three was describes the bad behavior or the negative behavior. In this case, it was him running away from situations. So Alex had a job, and Alex struggled because before he would go into work, he felt like, "Oh, no, something's going to happen at work. The boss and manager are going to yell at me. I'll be in trouble." And then he would just not go in. And in fact, he started to create these scenarios in his head beforehand. So he started to process what was happening before he would go into the home. And so we would focus in on correcting and describing the behaviors he was doing, which was ruminating. Thinking about these things that he anticipated would happen, but that wasn't necessarily going to happen.

Now, whenever this happened, I had dad and mom deliver a consequence. And the consequence was, "Well, here's a consequence for you, Alex, is that when you start to behave in this way, in this negative way, when you struggle this way, the consequence for you is that you will have to sign up for an additional day of work." Now you may think that's a weird consequence, but the idea behind the consequence was to help him understand and relate it to what was happening with the behavior that he was exhibiting.

Now he did not want to sign up for more shifts. He didn't. He just didn't want to be subjected to more shifts than he already had. However, providing something that was meaningful for him as a consequence was motivating for him to challenge the thoughts that he had. There are specific ways that you can implement effective consequences with your child. That was the consequence that we came up with in order for him to internalize, "Wait a minute, I'm thinking this way. And if I continue to think this way, then I have made a commitment that the consequence will be I'll have to work extra to process and work through these difficult emotions."

Now step number five was describe what you want you child to do instead. So in this case, we role played it quite a bit. And that's also in step seven, but being descriptive by dad and mom

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was to help him understand, "Okay, first, this is what you need to do. You need to open the door. You need to get out of the car, close the door, walk into the building." That was it. So we were going to focus on the smaller behaviors that got him to the point where he needed to be at work. So first, open the car, get out of the car, close the door, walk in the building. Now some children may need even smaller instructions. For Alex, because he's a teenager, we could use larger instructions, so you're going to have to tailor that based on your child's needs.

After he was to get in the store, then we focus on step six, which is give a reason why this good behavior is important to your child. So we gave the reason, if he was able to get into the door, this would help him overcome his feelings of fear and anxiety and concern. And also, it would lead towards him not signing up for another shift at work. So step number six give a reason why this good behavior is important to your child. And then, step number seven was to practice the new behavior. So we actually drove down to the store, had him practice this whole exercise of him sitting in the car, going through each of these steps. Right?

[Now in the case of a parent with a child at home, a parent can guide and walk you through this whole process for him because we individualized it for Alex, is we had this form of Correcting Behaviors that you can download and print on the Smarter Parenting website.](#) And we had him put it in his car, so he could walk through the steps on his own. Now Alex is a very independent, smart, brilliant young man. And so this is the approach that we used with him because we wanted to tailor it based on his abilities and his skill level. You and your child may do it a little bit differently, and that's okay. So we customized this whole interaction based on his ability to complete things.

So in his car, he had the steps to Correcting Behaviors, all seven steps. [And we Role-played walking through it.](#) So whenever he came into the parking lot for work, he would sit in his car and he would go through the steps. Okay. Get the child's behavior to stop the problem behavior, if he started to have these thoughts going through his head of whether or not he should go in, he would stop. Then he would walk through each of the steps, express empathy. "Okay, I realize that I'm feeling this way. Okay, I understand that. Yay." Step number three, describe the bad behavior, "Right now, I have ruminating thoughts that are keeping me from walking inside. Because I am doing this and not getting out of the car, if I don't get out of the car, I have to sign up for an additional shift this week." That's step three and four.

. Step number five, and we had Alex verbally say this. Describe what you want you child to do instead. Open the car door, get out, close the door, walk into the front door. So we had him say this verbally so he could hear himself, tell himself to do this. So describe what you want your child to do, which is step five. And then step number six, give a reason why it's important. "Well, if I do this, then I don't go home early, and then I won't have to sign up for an additional shift." And then, step number seven is to practice the new behavior and then reduce the consequence. So we had him practice. He had to practice getting out of the car, closing the door, walking over to the front door, and being there until we moved on to the next step. So we practiced this four or five times.

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Now we were teaching Alex how to correct his own behavior because he's an older teenager, and because this is a way for him to learn greater independence and greater resilience in himself. For a parent who's correcting behaviors at home, you can walk through this whole process with your child, and you can be there to guide them along the process.

But again, our whole goal was to teach him how to do this on his own, to deal with Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria. I have explained what RSD is, that it is something that a lot of children struggle with, not only with ADHD, but with anxiety, bipolar. This is this sensitivity to rejection that is unusually higher than it is for peers of the same age. We've talked about definitions of that. We've talked about the skill of Correcting Behaviors. And I've given you an example of how a young man is able to implement this with himself.

This is also a recommendation for parents to do this as well with yourselves. As you are Correcting Behaviors with your children, take stock into how you're doing it yourself, and realize that if you are behaving in a way that is negative toward your child, that this will affect their overall interaction and relationship with you.

Now the reason that this is super great because Alex is able to do it with himself, is that we juxtaposed this whole process with dad. We had dad walk through this process on his own, so he could correct his own interactions with Alex. Now can you see the power in this? If Alex is doing this, and he's doing his very best, and then we say, "Dad, you go ahead and do this, and you implement it in the way that you're interacting with your child." Then we have this really strong connection between the two on focusing on improving their behaviors and how they correct themselves in their interactions with each other.

So for dad, the whole point of correcting his behavior was to focus in on how he was interacting with his child because for him, he felt like his son should just tough it out and be tough. And when I explained to him, hey, this is a real issue, and a lot of kids have it, he was able to soften up and understand, "Okay, I need to work around this to help him overcome it." Rather than be accusatory and push him away by being another form of rejection. Absolutely do not want to be the parent that is driving home the point of rejecting their child. Fantastic, fantastic approach between the son and the dad. And we are working through this process. Now this is super important. This is to my third point in this podcast, why this works.

If you have steps, like we have steps to Correcting Behaviors on the Smarter Parenting website, if you have steps to follow, you will be able to do them effectively every single time. It's consistency that makes the difference. If you are just doing it off of your mind and what you think you remember from something, you are bound to forget a step. And when you forget a step, it collapses the entire structure of what it is you're trying to do. So I told them both, you need to make this the most important structure that you establish in the way that you are Correcting Behaviors for yourself and for your child.

Now for Alex and his dad, we also used this for ways that he could correct his child's behavior at home whenever something was to happen. For example, if Alex didn't take out the garbage, he



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could use these steps to correct his behavior. If Alex didn't do the dishes, he could use these steps to correct his behavior. And he could use this in a lot of different areas, and then we were also using it as ways for them to help correct their own behavior. I want to be sure that you understand how that works when we're correcting a behavior at home with a child. So let's say that Alex didn't do the dishes at home. Let's say that he came home, he had the chore to do the dishes, but he didn't do the dishes. So with dad, we would practice step one, get the child's attention. He would say, "Alex." Step two, express empathy, "I know you're busy and overwhelmed. There's a lot to do."

Okay. Step number three, describe the bad behavior. "You didn't do the dishes as asked and as we agreed." Step number four, which is deliver a consequence, "because you did not do the dishes, you will have to do the dishes again tomorrow." Step number five, "what you should've done is come home and finish your chores before the agreed time that we had." Step number six, give a reason. "If you do your chores and you do the dishes when you are supposed to do them, then you wouldn't receive such a big consequence." Now step number seven, which is practice the new behavior. "If you are able to go and do the dishes right now, I'll reduce the consequence." And reducing the consequence could be, "Well, you won't have to do the dishes tomorrow, but you will have to dry them and put them away."

So that's reducing it if he practices the new behavior because again, we are teaching to children. If you notice if I skipped any of those steps, there is a possibility that I would reinforce the feeling of rejection in Alex because if I didn't express empathy, if I didn't express empathy to him, if I didn't describe the bad behavior, he would start to feel like, "Hey, I am the bad behavior. I am the problem, not I didn't do this, and this was the problem." If I didn't deliver the consequence, then he wouldn't understand, "Hey, if I don't do A, a consequence happened." I mean, all these steps are built into this whole structure to give parents a very specific way of Correcting Behaviors in their children that is safe, in a way that you will reinforce positive interactions, and that your child will feel like, hey, I've made mistakes, but behaviors are different than who I am as an individual. And I can Correct Behaviors. Right? But my value as your child and as your son is still intact.

You see the beauty of that? It's just gorgeous. Right? This is why I love the Teaching-Family Model, everybody. I love it because it is so focused on behaviors. It is so focused on relationships, and really creating this sense of connectedness and creating this sense of, "Hey, I love you. And because I love you, I'm going to teach you, and I'm not going to reject you." It's so great, so fantastic.

[Anyways, this is my challenge to you as parents, is I want you to go to the Smarter Parenting website and print out the steps.](#) I want you to practice it with your child. You can use the example of washing dishes, which I just explained. And you can use it on yourself as ways to help correct something that you're trying to do. Internalize it to something you want to improve on.

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This is a powerful way to help children who struggle with RDS or Rejection Sensitivity Dysphoria. Remember their sensitivity to rejection is super high, higher than other children of the same age. And so we need to be respectful and meet our children where they are at. That's my challenge to you. Go over there, print that.

Now if you need help, and you want me to guide you along this entire process of how you can do it with your child, because let's face it, every child's just a little bit different, contact me. [If you jump on the Smarter Parenting website, you will see a tab there for coaching. And there, you can sign up for coaching.](#) So in the coaching section, there are different levels. We can do something that's intense, where we are communicating almost weekly, to where we are communicating maybe once a month. Or you can walk through the whole process on your own, which is in the silver level.

So there are different levels on the Smarter Parenting website of coaching that is there for you. And again, we are providing this as a service to help families around the world. I'm so excited about this stuff. That is it from me this week. I want you to take care of yourself. Be safe. Love your children. I know you do. Thank you for joining me during this time. It means the world to me that you're here and spending time learning these steps and these skills to improve your family. That's it from me, and I'll see you again next week. All right. Bye.

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