

## **Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Adult version (A-RSQ)**

Rejection sensitivity (RS) is a cognitive-affective processing disposition to anxiously expect rejection, shaped by cognitive-social learning history and triggered in situations when either rejection or acceptance is possible. The RS-Adult questionnaire (A-RSQ) is an adaptation of the RSQ (Downey & Feldman, 1996) for assessing RS in adult research participants.

This measure is available to the public. Please be sure to read the scoring instructions and relevant literature.

For information on the development of the measure, and psychometric properties including convergent and discriminant validity, see Study 2 of the following paper:

Berenson, K. R., Gyurak A., Ayduk, O., Downey G., Garner, M. J., Mogg, K. Bradley, B. P., & Pine, D. S. (2009). Rejection sensitivity and disruption of attention by social threat cues. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 1064-1072.

For information on the original RSQ, see the following paper:

Downey, G., & Feldman, S. I. (1996). Implications of rejection sensitivity for intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(6), 1327-1343.

### **How to Score:**

**1. Calculate a rejection sensitivity score for each situation by multiplying the level of rejection concern (the response to question a) by the level of rejection expectancy (the reverse of the level of acceptance expectancy reported in response to question b).** Here are the formulas for each situation:

**rejection expectancy = 7-acceptance expectancy**

**rejection sensitivity = (rejection concern) \* (rejection expectancy)**

**2. The total rejection sensitivity score is the mean of the rejection sensitivity scores for the 9 situations**

### **Psychometric properties in previous research:**

In 685 adults who completed the measure over the internet, the measure had the following characteristics (as reported in Berenson et al., 2009, Study 2):

- Mean (SD) = 8.61 (3.61), Range = 1.00 - 24.22

As reported in Berenson, Downey, Rafaeli, Coifman & Paquin (2011), 85 adults (including 45 who met DSM-IV-TR criteria for borderline personality disorder and 40 healthy participants recruited from the general community) completed the A-RSQ twice, an average of 6.9 weeks apart:

- Internal consistency (alpha) = .89 (for each administration)
- Test-retest reliability (Spearman-Brown coefficient) = .91
- Scores were significantly higher in the borderline personality disorder group ( $M=14.86$ ,  $SD=6.09$ ) than in the healthy comparison group ( $M= 6.19$ ,  $SD = 2.80$ ),  $t(63.4) = 8.58$ ,  $p < .001$ .
- Reference: Berenson, Downey, Rafaeli, Coifman & Paquin (2011). The rejection-rage contingency in borderline personality disorder. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 120, 681-690.

### **For questions, contact:**

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The items below describe situations in which people sometimes ask things of others.  
 For each item, **imagine that you are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it.**

**1. You ask your parents or another family member for a loan to help you through a difficult financial time.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your family would want to help you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that they would agree to help as much as they can.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**2. You approach a close friend to talk after doing or saying something that seriously upset him/her.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to talk with you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me to try to work things out.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**3. You bring up the issue of sexual protection with your significant other and tell him/her how important you think it is.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over his/her reaction?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would be willing to discuss our possible options without getting defensive.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**4. You ask your supervisor for help with a problem you have been having at work.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to help you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would want to try to help me out.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**5. After a bitter argument, you call or approach your significant other because you want to make up.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your significant other would want to make up with you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would be at least as eager to make up as I would be.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**6. You ask your parents or other family members to come to an occasion important to you.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not they would want to come?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that they would want to come.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**7. At a party, you notice someone on the other side of the room that you'd like to get to know, and you approach him or her to try to start a conversation.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to talk with you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**8. Lately you've been noticing some distance between yourself and your significant other, and you ask him/her if there is something wrong.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not he/she still loves you and wants to be with you?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she will show sincere love and commitment to our relationship no matter what else may be going on.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	

**9. You call a friend when there is something on your mind that you feel you really need to talk about.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to listen?	very unconcerned						very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I would expect that he/she would listen and support me.	very unlikely						very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	