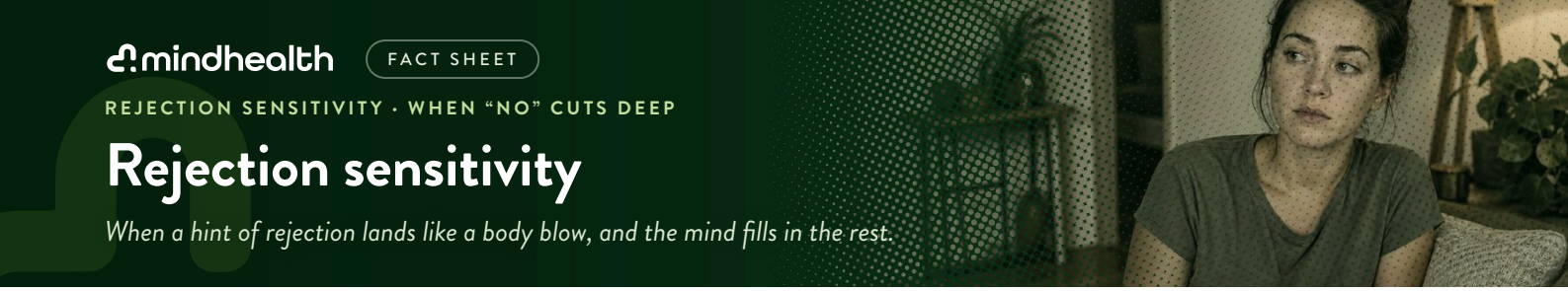
mindhealth FACT SHEET

REJECTION SENSITIVITY · WHEN "NO" CUTS DEEP

Rejection sensitivity

When a hint of rejection lands like a body blow, and the mind fills in the rest.



The jolt
A sharp, physical sting

Reading rejection
Into neutral or unclear cues

React & withdraw
Lashing out or pulling away

01 When rejection lands hard

For some people (often those with ADHD, anxiety, or early experiences of criticism) the fear of rejection is intensely painful, and its signals seem to be everywhere: an unanswered text, a flat tone, a change of plan. The feeling is real and strong. The trouble is that the mind often reads rejection into cues that are neutral, or simply unclear.

02 The story vs the facts

A perceived rejection can trigger a fast, painful story ("they're angry, I've ruined it"), and we react to the story: withdrawing, over-apologising, or lashing out. That reaction can then strain the very relationship we feared losing, seeming to confirm the fear. Slowing down to check the facts, and to consider kinder explanations, is what breaks the loop.

03 What genuinely helps

- Noticing the jolt before you act on it
- Checking the facts against the story
- Considering three other explanations
- Self-soothing until the intensity drops
- Support for any ADHD or anxiety underneath

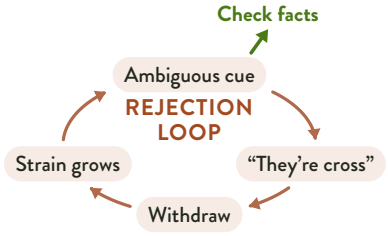
A PRACTICAL STORY

From reading rejection to checking the facts



THE CYCLE

Story vs facts



A painful story drives a reaction that strains the bond, seeming to prove the fear. Checking facts breaks it.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Check the story

1. Name the jolt: "that stung"
2. Ask: what are the actual facts?
3. Wait for the intensity to drop before replying

The feeling is real; the story may not be.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If fear of rejection is driving your reactions or straining relationships, a psychologist can help. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

DID YOU KNOW?

Psychologists Geraldine Downey and Scott Feldman described rejection sensitivity in 1996.

Downey & Feldman, 1996

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

The sting is real, but it isn't proof. You can feel it fully and still check the facts before you act.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

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