

Impulsive

Concern

Impulsive, rash behavior characterized by blurting out, acting without thinking about consequences, starting and abandoning projects, appearing “thoughtless” by saying first thing on their mind.

Description

These kids leap before they look. When it comes to impulse control, some kids don't have it, because they haven't seen it modeled. Some kids don't have it, because their processing speed is so fast they operate more quickly and have many more ideas than others. Some students who have disabilities, like ADHD, struggle with impulse control and may find it difficult to learn.

There appears to be a high correlation between the “feeler-doer” learning style and impulsive behavior. These students are informed by feeling and prefer to learn by jumping in and doing, not by standing back and watching. Experience can be a harsh teacher. Their actions put them at risk not only of academic failure and discipline infractions, but of reckless behavior related to drugs, alcohol, sex and violence.

A disproportionate number of these students are placed in Special Ed programs. Many have some trouble with the basic concept of “if/then”, “why/because.” These language structures are the essential to good decision-making and understanding real life consequences. For some students, this impulsive behavior is tied to hyperactivity and inattention as well, which may signal ADHD.

Sometimes environmental factors make impulsivity a survival skill. Students with parents who are physically abusive, have substance abuse problems, are inconsistent with discipline or are in precarious financial positions, may learn that – when it comes to their behavior – there is not a direct connection between cause and effect. They learn that to react rapidly is a more useful skill than to think in a linear fashion.

Impulsive kids need teachers to establish boundaries and to enforce limits because they have difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviors on their own. In addition, highly impulsive children may have a harder time getting along with peers and say hurtful things they quickly regret. This can lead to low self-esteem, withdrawal from social interactions and depression.

Goals of intervention - students will:

- Understand their learning style and how that may contribute to impulsive behavior
- Develop the core skills of stopping reactions and predicting consequences
- Develop the ability to control specific impulses related to their infraction
- Master the process for systematic, step-by-step decision-making
- Include or exclude ADHD as a cause of behavior related problems
- Understand the role of family patterns in learning (and unlearning) impulsive behavior

A suggested scope and sequence - Teens

Learning

Learning styles
ADHD
Bored
Brain

Impulsivity

Impulsive
Mindfulness
Triggers - outside
Triggers - inside
Frustration
Controlling impulses

Reactions - stopping

Reactions - confronting
Predicting consequences
Perseverance
Understanding motives
Talking back
Cheating,
Stealing
Graffiti
Fighting
Punishment

Self-understanding

Goals
Strengths
Weaknesses
Self-acceptance
Responsibility
Background - family
Background - community
Addicted parent
Child abuse

Connection to others

Apologies
Peer pressure

Decision making

Making decisions
Identifying the problem
Brainstorming
Evaluating alternatives
Trying solutions

Specific impulsive choices:

Weapons
Smoking
Drinking
Drugs
Skipping

A suggested scope and sequence - Kids

Learning

Learning styles
ADHD
Brain

Impulsivity

Triggers - catching
Frustrated
Impulse control
Reactions -controlling
Predicting consequences

Perseverance
Motives - understanding
Talking back
Hitting
Cheating
Stealing
Fighting
Pushing & Shoving
Hands & Feet
Self-talk
Self-understanding

Goals
Strengths
Liking yourself
Responsibility
Background - family
Parents' substance use
Beaten
Connection to others
Apologies
Peer pressure

Decision making

Decisions
Problem naming
Brainstorming options
Options - weighing them
Solutions - testing
Smoking
Drugs