



An Overview of Impulse Control

Impulse is an immediate response without prior thought or planning, often driven by our emotions or instincts. However, acting impulsively can lead to behaviours, decisions or reactions that we may regret later. We can make better choices by managing and restraining impulsive behaviours, thoughts or reactions. Impulse control is a skill that can be developed through practice. By raising awareness of impulsivity and training students to control their emotions, they can consciously manage and choose when an urge arises.

The Benefits of Teaching Impulse Control

Impulse control is a crucial skill that can benefit various aspects of life, such as academic achievements, emotional well-being, healthy relationships, and long-term success. By developing these skills, students can make better decisions, think critically, and understand the potential consequences of their actions before acting impulsively. This can help students navigate social interactions, build positive relationships, and develop empathy and conflict-resolution skills.

Tips to help with Impulse control in your classroom

- **Establish Clear Expectations:** Set clear and consistent expectations for classroom behaviour, rules, and consequences. Make sure students understand what is expected of them.
- **Teach Self-Regulation Strategies:** This may include deep breathing exercises, like blowing the candles on their hand, mindfulness techniques, or taking short breaks to regain control of their emotions.
- **Provide Visual Reminders:** Display visual reminders or cues to prompt students to think before acting. This can be in posters, charts, or visual prompts encouraging self-reflection.
- **Encourage Reflection:** Incorporate reflection activities and time into your lessons to encourage students to think about their actions and the potential consequences. Prompt them to consider choices or solutions before making impulsive decisions.
- **Invite students to use thinking time:** Teach students how to make the most of their thinking time. This empowers them to think through their options and make more considered choices.
- **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Recognize and reward students who demonstrate good impulse control. Praise their efforts and reinforce positive behaviours to encourage them to continue practising self-control.
- **Break Tasks into Smaller Steps:** Break down complex tasks or assignments into smaller, manageable steps. This helps students feel less overwhelmed and reduces the likelihood of impulsive reactions due to frustration or stress.



- **Foster Emotional Awareness:** Teach students to recognise and understand their emotions. Provide a safe space to express their feelings and guide them in developing healthy ways to cope with strong emotions, reducing impulsive responses.
- **Collaborate with Parents/Carers:** Encourage consistency between home and school environments to reinforce impulse control skills.
- **Model Self-Control:** Be a positive role model for your students by demonstrating self-control in your actions and reactions. Show them how to manage impulses and make thoughtful choices.



Integrating Impulse Control into the Curriculum

Connect Impulse Control to Academic Content: Look for opportunities to discuss impulse control in the context of academic subjects.

- **Literature Scenario Analysis:** Provide students with written or visual scenarios that depict impulsive behaviours and ask them to analyse the consequences of those actions and discuss alternative choices.

Use Real-Life Examples: Share stories or news articles where individuals faced impulsive situations and discuss the outcomes, encouraging students to reflect on alternative choices.

Incorporate Reflection and Self-Assessment: Encourage students to identify areas for improvement and set goals for managing impulses in the future.



- **Personal Journals:** Encourage students to keep personal journals where they can reflect and record impulsive situations they encounter. Ask them to reflect on their emotions, impulsive reactions, and potential alternative responses. Encourage them to develop strategies for managing impulses in the future. Prompt them to write about instances when they successfully demonstrated self-control or times when they wished they had made more thoughtful choices.
- **Reflective Discussions:** Facilitate class discussions on impulse control, encouraging students to share personal experiences and strategies they have used to manage their impulses. Prompt them to reflect on the impact of impulse control on their lives and relationships.

Collaborative Problem-Solving: Provide students with opportunities to work in groups, discuss different perspectives, and collectively make decisions while considering impulse control factors.

- **Decision-Making Dilemmas:** Present students with realistic decision-making dilemmas where they need to consider various options and consequences. Encourage them to think critically, weigh their choices, and discuss their reasoning for making more controlled decisions.

Integrate Mindfulness Activities: Incorporate mindfulness activities into daily routines or as part of specific lessons.

- **Mindfulness Breathing Exercises:** Teach students simple breathing exercises, such as belly breathing or square breathing, to help them calm their minds and bodies when faced with impulsive urges. Practice these exercises during transition times or before challenging tasks.

Your role in developing lifelong learners

With this resource, you will guide students in developing impulse control skills vital for effectively managing their actions and emotions. Teaching impulse control empowers students to make thoughtful choices and resist impulsive urges. Additionally, this skill helps them navigate various situations and make decisions that align with their long-term goals.

You will raise students' awareness of their impulsive tendencies and provide them with tools to regulate their behaviour and emotions. By promoting self-reflection, you will help them understand the triggers that lead to impulsive reactions and develop strategies to pause, think, and choose their responses consciously.