

IMPULSIVITY/INHIBITION

FOR PROFESSIONALS



Impulsivity is the conscious or unconscious inability to suppress or refrain from engaging in an action or thought.

Problems with impulsivity are very common in individuals with brain injury. It is important to remember that the impulsivity is at fault, *not the person.*

LOOK FOR:

- Does or says things without regard for safety (*sensation seeking*)
- Has trouble knowing when to stop an activity
- Sexual promiscuity
- Difficulty managing finances; impulse buying
- Does not follow directions
- Unable to wait for their turn; dominates conversations or interrupts
- Fails to see the consequences of their actions

IMPULSIVITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

- Use grounding exercises to regain attention to the room (*e.g., ask the individual to describe an object in the room with great detail for 60 seconds*)
- Encourage the individual to write down their comments and questions or silently repeat to themselves to help with verbal impulses
- Suggest breathing techniques
- For tasks prompt them to create a checklist or write down step-by-step instructions
- Use brief mindfulness exercises
- Provide incentives for accomplishing shorter-term goals
- Respond directly to inappropriate behavior (*e.g., say, "What you just said was not OK."*)
- Be clear and consistent when setting expectations, limits, and consequences

CITATIONS

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