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LESSON 2

Evaluating IMPULSE CONTROL

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this chapter is for students to self-assess their abilities to use impulse control in various settings and to begin to feel excited for potential improvement.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Balloons, small pieces of candy, crayons or markers, drawing paper and pencils.

SCRIPT: ©

Last time we talked about the fact that all of us have impulses. We have impulses to say mean things when we are angry; we have impulses to interrupt when we feel like we have something important to say; we have impulses to act silly when we feel nervous. Sometimes we act on our impulses and sometimes we use impulse control. This may be due to the time of day that it is or due to the place that we're at or due to the people that we are with. Sometimes we may get in trouble for our impulses and sometimes we may not.

RATIONALE:

Self-evaluation creates a climate of self-improvement. It sets the groundwork for learning new skills. If children discover a negative outcome through self-evaluation, it helps them to identify changes that they need to make. As humans we continually evaluate our past actions and project that information forward into the future in order to make decisions. Impulsive children have difficulties doing this so it is important to guide their efforts towards creating strategies for change.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What impulses do you act on that get you in trouble? What impulses do you act on that do not get you in trouble?
- When do you have the most impulse control? When do you have the least impulse control?
- Do you have more impulse control at home or at school? Do you have more impulse control in the classroom or at recess? Do you have more impulse control with your parents or with your friends?
- Do you have more impulse control when you are tired or rested? Do you have more impulse control when you are hungry or full?

ACTIVITIES:

1

Blow up a balloon and tie a knot in it. Have two (2) students sit in chairs facing one another. (The distance between them will vary by age and ability.) Instruct the students to count how many times they can hit the balloon back and forth without it touching the floor and without getting out of their seats. Afterwards, discuss whether or not they had impulses to “slam” the balloon at the other person. If so, ask them to explain what they did about that impulse. How did they stop themselves? How well would they rate their ability to use impulse control during this exercise? This exercise can be used for grades 1-5.

2

Place a small piece of candy in front of each student (an M & M® is fine). Tell the students they can either eat the piece of candy now or, if they wait 15 minutes, they can have 2 pieces of candy. Continue with other discussions and activities during this “waiting period.” Periodically during the waiting period you can “tempt” the students with the idea of eating their candy early and then ask them what ways they are using to resist the temptation. After 15 minutes, allow the students to eat both the original candy and the reward candy. Ask them to rate how difficult this exercise was on a scale of 1-10. Ask them what they did to ensure success in waiting. This exercise can be used for grades 1-5.

3

Have the students draw a picture of a person as fast as they can. Then have them draw a picture of a house as carefully as they can (using stop and think). Discuss how the first one was done impulsively and how the second one was done with impulse control. Which one do they like better? What are some differences? Which one are they the most proud of? This exercise can be used for grades 1-5.

4

Direct students to take a piece of drawing paper and two (2) crayons—one crayon that represents their favorite color and one crayon that represents their least favorite color. Explain that the piece of paper is their “life” and instruct them to color the amount of their life when they use impulse control with the pretty color and the amount of their life when they don’t use impulse control with the “ugly” color. Discuss the drawings. This exercise can be used for grades 1-5.

5

Play the traditional game of Simon Says. Ask students to all stand and face the facilitator. The facilitator then gives directives such as “Touch your nose,” “Nod your head ‘Yes,’” “Sit down,” “Clap your hands,” etc. Sometimes the directives should be given with the preface “Simon says ...” and sometimes the directives should be given without the preface. Students are to only follow the directions that Simon says. In the traditional version of the game students are out of the game if they follow a directive that Simon did not say and the last person left in the game is the winner. You can play this way or simply allow all students to remain in the game for the time that you are giving directives. In order to be successful at this game students must stop and think before acting. Discuss how the students performed and how the ability to use impulse control helps one to win such games. This exercise can be used for grades 1-5.

HOW TO USE REPRODUCIBLE SHEETS:

Reproducible Worksheet 2.1

Evaluating Problems with Impulse Control, asks students to check off the ways in which they have gotten into trouble for not using impulse control. Older students can complete this on their own but younger students will need assistance with reading. Discuss what these experiences were like for them. Would they like to learn ways in which to avoid these consequences? This worksheet can be used for grades 1-5.

Reproducible Worksheet 2.2

More Evaluation of My Impulse Control, asks students to identify the environments in which they have strengths and weaknesses regarding impulse control. Again, older students can complete this on their own while younger students may need assistance with the reading. Facilitate a discussion around why it is that the students think they have better or worse impulse control in certain settings. Draw attention to any comments that describe the use of cognition (thinking), i.e. "I was afraid what the other kids would think of me." This worksheet can be used for grades 1-5.

Reproducible Worksheet 2.3

Rating My Impulse Control Behaviors, examines, on a Likert scale, students' performance on specific behaviors that require impulse control. This is an excellent tool for self-evaluation and for helping students identify specific behaviors related to impulse control. Younger students may have some difficulty self-evaluating differentially on a Likert scale so use this on a case-by-case basis with younger students. A modification of this exercise would be to read the statements to the students and have them give a "thumbs up" if they are good at the particular behavior and a "thumbs down" if they are not good at the behavior. This worksheet can be used for grades 1-5.

Reproducible Worksheet 2.4

Impulse Control Grade Card, is another self-assessment tool that examines discrete behaviors which require impulse control. The format of this worksheet is a rubric, so it may be difficult for the youngest students to follow. It can be used kinesthetically with these students, by reading the statements aloud and asking the students to rate themselves by (1) sitting on the floor if they have trouble with this behavior, (2) sitting in a chair if they are "so-so" with this behavior and (3) standing up if they are really good at this behavior. This worksheet can be used for grades 1-5.

EVALUATING PROBLEMS WITH IMPULSE CONTROL

Impulses can get us into trouble if we don't control them. For example, if I follow my impulse to yell out an answer in class without raising my hand, the teacher might get angry with me. If I follow my impulse to hit my sister when I am angry with her, I might get grounded.

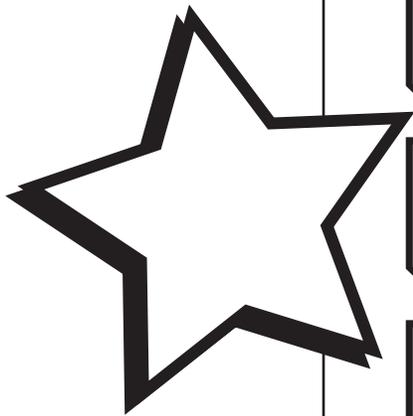
Have you ever gotten in trouble for not using your impulse control (for not *stopping* and *thinking* before you did something)?

Check the ways that you have gotten into trouble for doing things (because you didn't *stop* and *think* first):

- GROUNDED FROM TV**
- GROUNDED FROM COMPUTER GAMES**
- YELLED AT**
- SPANKED**
- TIME OUT**
- SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**
- PEOPLE GOT ANGRY WITH YOU**
- LOST FRIENDS**
- GOT DETENTION AT SCHOOL**
- MISSED RECESS**
- SENT TO YOUR ROOM**

MORE EVALUATION OF MY IMPULSE CONTROL

Sometimes it is easier and sometimes it is harder to *stop* and *think* before doing certain things. Listed below are places and situations when some children have trouble using their impulse control. Draw a **stop sign** next to the situations in which you need to take more time to stop your impulses. Put a **star** by the situations in which you do a good job stopping and thinking.



AT SCHOOL

AT HOME

ON THE PLAYGROUND

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

WHEN I'M FEELING ANGRY

WHEN I'M FEELING SAD

WHEN I'M FEELING EXCITED

WITH MY PARENTS

WITH OTHER KIDS

WITH TEACHERS



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RATING MY IMPULSE CONTROL BEHAVIORS

Sometimes impulses are easier to control than at other times. Listed below are some impulsive behaviors. Read each one and rate your impulse control by circling one of the numbers next to it.

- 1 = *Excellent*
- 2 = *Good*
- 3 = *Fair*
- 4 = *Not So Good*
- 5 = *Poor*

1. I ask permission to join in on others' games.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I stand patiently in line for my turn at the water fountain.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I think of several solutions to a problem before I try one.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I remember to raise my hand in class before speaking.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I stop myself from interrupting my parents' phone conversations.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I keep my hands to myself.

1 2 3 4 5

Now go back and put a star by the item that you are best at and circle the one that you most need to work on.

IMPULSE CONTROL GRADE CARD

Put an X in a box to the right of each statement that best describes how well you do each one.

Excellent Good So So Poor

I wait patiently for my turn in games.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I listen to my teacher without talking to my neighbor.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I calm myself down when I feel angry.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I ask to borrow things before taking them.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I behave nicely in public places.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I walk through the halls quietly.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I think before I speak.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

I stop myself from laughing at others.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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