

WEEK 6

GROUP ACTIVITY

IDENTIFYING IMPULSIVITY

10-15 MINUTES

We are going to read a vignette (or utilize a video clip if available, see links on next page if using video clips) where impulsiveness might be present. I want each of you to identify one instance of impulsivity that we discussed earlier in this group.

Vignette 1:

Stephanie and Carmen are at a shopping mall. They go into a store with nice perfumes laid out on various tables for customers to try. They know they can't afford the perfumes, but they want to look anyway and test some out. While in the store, Carmen sees a particularly beautiful perfume bottle and reaches out to test it. She sprays it, sniffs it, sighs happily, and reluctantly puts the bottle back down. Stephanie watches her, and when Carmen walks away, Stephanie decides to try to take the bottle out of the store with her. She thinks about how happy Carmen will be when she gives her the gift later on! Stephanie looks around to check if anyone is nearby, then quickly steps forward toward the table where the bottle sits...

Vignette 2:

Joe has been locked up in the county jail for five months, and misses his family. He looks forward to calling home when he can, even if it's only for a few minutes. He usually calls at around three, and his wife or mom is always around to answer the call. This time, though, Joe calls the home number but the phone only rings and rings before going to voicemail. He tries a couple of times, getting more upset each time he hears the voicemail message pick up. He cannot believe they're not answering! This is it- they have finally given up on him! At the sound of the beep, Joe begins yelling at the answering machine, questioning where his wife is and accusing her of doing things she should not be doing. He yells at his mom, too, accusing her of being in on it and of leaving him high and dry. He yells at the machine until his phone time runs out, and then slams the phone down. This startles the guys around him and earns him a lot of curious looks.

Two options are included here, but feel free to bring other clips that illustrate impulsivity (vignette included in appendices):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cxy88GeEAxg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq0jfzgvvrM>

Now let's take some time to pick apart these scenarios and talk about what could have been done better.

- First, what were some instances of impulsivity that you observed?
 - If participants struggle, allow for several minutes of discussion before providing examples (e.g., substance use)
 - What might the consequences of those impulsive actions been?
- Can you identify when the use of Stop-Think-Act could have helped?
 - How could that have changed the outcome of the scenario?

Facilitator should hand out the "Journaling on Impulsive Behavior" handout and the "Stop, Think, Plan, Do" handout (found below in handout section).

Review each section (read aloud, preferably) with the participants, noting how the handout emphasizes the Stop-Think-Plan-Do approach. You may want to outline these processes on the white board to ensure that the participants digest them. Suggest to participants that they get help from their support person and/or treatment provider the first time they engage in the journaling exercise, if necessary - it is ok to struggle with it, journaling is a challenging task, especially when one is inexperienced at it! Explain also that because this session is the last meeting of the group, this handout will not function as homework per se, but is something that participants may want to work on in their own time and share with their individual treatment provider.

Provide background by explaining the following to participants:

- What is the function of journaling?

Journaling is a method of organizing thoughts and experiences in such a way that they become clearer to us than when we only keep track of them in our minds. By writing down your experiences and thoughts, you make them easier for yourself and others to understand patterns, thinking errors, and powerful ideas that you may not have known were at play. In this exercise, laying out your symptoms and triggers, and your responses to them, is meant to highlight for you the areas in which you may want to focus your skills-based work going forward. It will also help you to see which areas you are doing well in so far! That's why it will be helpful to share the process and/or results of your journaling with your treatment provider, as a tool to help you both plan the next steps of your work on your TBI symptoms.

BREAK

5 MINUTES

Let's take a quick five-minute break to stretch. During this break, I want you to think about what we have discussed today.

- *After break) Are there any questions you have about the material we have discussed today?*
- *I want you take notice of moments where you may be struggling with impulsivity. What was the outcome of the situation and what could have gone differently?*
- *If you find yourself using the skills, take the time to reflect on what helped you make rational decisions. How did you effectively stop-and-think, and then act? The more you practice stopping and thinking before acting, the more naturally it will come to you in a stressful moment!*



CLOSING DISCUSSION

10-15 MINUTES

- Review of overall course of TBI modules; participant views of what was most helpful; and participant suggestions. Use the following wrap-up questions as prompts for this closing discussion.
- What piece(s) of information did you find most helpful? Most interesting? Most surprising?

- What topics do you wish you had learned more about?
- What motivates you to face and overcome the challenges your TBI presents in your life? Please share these motivators with the group if you are comfortable doing so.
- What has been your biggest struggle with TBI symptoms?
- What helped you overcome that struggle? If you have not yet overcome it, what do you feel you need to do (in terms of strategies and approaches discussed in this group) to make progress towards your goal?
- What has been your greatest victory so far over the challenge your symptoms present?
- What role does belief in yourself play in your ability to overcome these challenges?
- What is one piece of knowledge or wisdom you would like to share with your fellow TBI group participants?

Facilitator should hand out “Tips and Suggestions for Caregivers” handout (found below in handout section) and instruct the participants to share same with their Support Person, if applicable. Facilitator should thank group members for participating, and may wish to include a personal farewell (such as good luck wishes) to group members as the group comes to a close. Invite group members to send each other off with well wishes if they desire.