

# WEEK 6

## CONTENT



### INTRODUCE IMPULSIVITY AND GOALS FOR THIS MODULE

5-10 MINUTES

*Ask participants to provide their own definition of impulsivity.*

*Briefly describe impulsive behaviors.*

- “Impulsive” means rash, quick, or hasty (without careful consideration of future consequences). An impulsive decision is one made very quickly, with little time given to consider the possible outcomes of that decision.
- Examples can include:
  - Destroying property when angry
  - “Borrowing” something without asking first
  - Acting without thinking
  - Irritability and temper outbursts
  - Yelling out answers before questions have been completed
  - Intruding or interrupting conversations
  - Not waiting patiently for your turn

*Ask participants how they think brain injuries can affect impulsivity.*

- Brain injuries can make it more difficult to resist giving in to impulsive thoughts and urges, particularly if the injury occurred to a part of your brain responsible for helping you to control those impulses. Brain injury can sometimes cause changes in your personality. Damage to specific areas of the brain, including the frontal lobe (which controls executive function) can impair impulse control. Learning to identify impulsivity can help you improve your life skills and this will help you navigate through life. The more you learn about this, you will be more likely to avoid unwanted personal consequences in the future.

- It is important to remember the impulsive behavior is related to the injury on the brain, it is often not deliberate, it might not be noticeable by the person, and it can fluctuate depending on other factors such as:
  - Substance abuse
  - Environmental factors (noise, crowds, lighting, etc.)
  - Person-centered situational factors (time of day, lack of sleep, hunger, etc.)



## STRATEGIES FOR IMPULSE CONTROL

5-10 MINUTES

Can you tell me about a time when you behaved impulsively?

Discuss these situations and ask these follow up questions:

- What was the outcome?
- What factors contributed to your impulsivity in these situations?

*Hand out the stop-think-plan-do model and write it on the board. Explain each section of the model and what it means, provide examples or ask participants to offer examples for each section. Once you review the model with the participants, ask the following questions.*

- Can you think of a time that you were able to stop and think before acting?
- What strategies did you use in that instance?

## MINDFULNESS BREAK

5 MINUTES

Now we are going to take a five-minute break. During this break, we are going to practice a mindfulness exercise. Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not be overwhelmed by our surroundings. Mindfulness is a good strategy for dealing with overwhelming emotions and helping you manage impulsive behavior. For this exercise you can stay in your chairs, or you can sit on the floor.

**Read the following exercise out loud.**

Begin by bringing your attention into your body.

You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

*You can notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor.*

*Take a few deep breaths.*

*And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen enlivening the body. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.*

*You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.*

*You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.*

*Notice your back against the chair.*

*Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.*

*Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.*

*Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.*

*Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.*

*Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.*

*Then notice your whole-body present. Take one more breath.*

*Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. And then when you're ready, you can open your eyes.*

*\*After the break is finished, encourage the participants to do mindfulness on their own if they found it useful.\**