

Impulse Control Skills Activity Guide Grade 3-5



Know Your Neuro

Quiz Questions

1. What is impulse-control? Answer: The ability to control your behavior regardless of what you are thinking or feeling.
2. What part of the brain has been nicknamed your accelerator? Answer: The limbic system.
3. What organ inside the limbic system is known for seeking new things to make you feel good? Answer: The nucleus accumbens or the 'gas pedal'.
4. What part of the brain is known as the 'brakes' and controls impulses? Answer: The frontal lobe.
5. According to research, what is the #1 predictor of adult success? Answer: Self-control.
6. In the marshmallow test, the kids who delayed eating the marshmallow were able to? Answer: Meet more of their own long-term goals including higher levels of education, feel more confident, eat healthier foods, have more satisfying relationships, and save more money.
8. How many seconds does it take for an urge to subside? Answer: About 4 seconds.
9. The technique that includes taking three deep breaths to wait for an urge to subside is called? Answer: Urge surfing.
10. What are other impulse control techniques? Answer: Slowing down, pausing, distracting yourself, brainstorming for alternative behaviors, evaluating what behavior would be better, and acting in more mature ways.



Classroom Activities

Honest Moments

Ask students to divide into pairs, small groups, or do this activity as a whole class.

Ask them to identify situations that are the most difficult to control their impulses in. Challenge them to discuss why.

Give students two minutes to think of as many tools to control impulses as they can. Write their answers on the board.

Decide which one is the funniest, the most effective, and the silliest.

Risky Behavior

In pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. Ask students to discuss how drugs, alcohol, or mood problems may affect impulse control.

Marshmallow Test

Watch the video about the Stanford University marshmallow test in class. Ask students to look for impulse control techniques and make note of how many they saw the kids use. Discuss.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ

To My Teen & Adult Self

Knowing that self-control is the number one predictor of adult success, ask students to write a two-part letter to themselves including a paragraph for their 15 year-old self and another for their 25 year-old. The paragraphs should describe what they want to achieve by that age. The letter should include advice on what impulse control skills they will need to practice in order to achieve these goals

Discussion Questions

- On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best, rate your impulse control skills.
- How well do you reflect and predict the consequences of your behavior?
- Does being around certain peers affect your impulse control? Why?
- How does lack of sleep or food affect your self-control?
- When have you reacted impulsively and what were the consequences?
- What is your self-talk when you are trying to control an impulse? Does your self-talk increase or decrease your self-control? Why?
- What is your favorite technique for controlling your impulse to eat unhealthy food? to try a risky behavior like drink alcohol? to say something mean or yell at someone?