

# IMPULSIVITY



## ★ Impulsivity and Overthinking

### Let's Start With This

Your brain is not “wrong” or “bad.”  
It just works in its own unique way.

Some young people act quickly.  
Some think a lot.  
Some do both.

And all of those ways are **okay**.

You have strengths — creativity, kindness, energy, fairness — and they matter.

## ★ What Is Impulsivity?

Impulsivity means you sometimes:

- act fast without thinking
- say something before you mean to
- shout out or interrupt
- react with big feelings
- find it hard to stop once you've started

This is not you being naughty.  
It's how your brain works — especially if you're autistic or have ADHD.  
Your brain might process things fast, or feel things very strongly.

You're not doing it on purpose.

## ★ Why Impulsivity Happens

### If you have ADHD, your brain might:

- find waiting harder
- need quick stimulation
- struggle with planning ahead

### If you're autistic, you might:

- feel overwhelmed by sensory things
- get anxious

- stick strongly to one idea



**And sometimes impulsivity happens because of:**

- stress
- trauma
- big emotions
- feeling unsafe or overwhelmed

NONE of these mean “bad behaviour.”

**★ How Impulsivity Can Make Life Hard**

Sometimes:

- grown-ups think you’re being rude
- you get in trouble even when you didn’t mean to
- unsafe situations happen too quickly
- your feelings build up and become meltdowns or shutdowns

You don’t *choose* this — your brain reacts fast.

**★ What Is Overthinking?**

Overthinking means your brain gets stuck on a thought loop, like a wheel that won’t stop turning.

You might think again and again about:

- choices
- mistakes
- scary what-ifs
- things people said
- things you’re unsure about

It can feel loud and tiring inside your head.

**★ Why Overthinking Happens**

**If you have ADHD, your brain might:**

- focus too much on worries
- struggle to switch thoughts

**If you’re autistic, you might:**

- feel safest when things are predictable

- hate uncertainty
- get stuck on one idea or fear

**If you feel anxious, you might:**

- worry more
- imagine worst-case scenarios
- find it hard to stop thinking



This doesn't mean you're weak.  
Your brain is trying *very hard* to keep you safe.

**★ When Impulsivity + Overthinking Happen Together**

Sometimes you might:

- ⚡ act too fast
- AND
- 🧠 think too much

These are signs that your brain is stressed or overloaded.

It doesn't mean you're broken.  
It means you need safety, support, and tools — not judgment.

**★ Tools You Can Try**

**For Impulsivity**

**Safe outlets**

- fidget toys
- movement breaks
- sensory play

**Pause scripts**

Practise saying:

- "Let me think."
- "I need a minute."

**Quick calm tools**

- counting breaths
- holding something soft
- squeezing a stress toy

## Planning tools

- ADHD timers
- reminder apps
- visual schedules

## ★ For Overthinking

### Thought Parking

Write your worry down and come back to it later.

### Worry Timer

Let yourself worry for 10 minutes — then stop.

### 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Notice:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you touch
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste

## ★ Helpful apps

- Worry Tree
- Headspace
- Calm
- Moodnotes

## ★ Things Grown-Ups Can Do to Help You

- stay calm and patient
- use visuals instead of long talking
- make routines predictable
- help you notice patterns
- practise tools with you
- praise your effort (not just the result)
- build a calm corner or toolkit

You deserve support that matches your brain.

## ★ Combined Tools (For When You Do Both)

### Impulse Pause Kit



Fill a small box with:

- fidget toys
- calm cards
- breathing reminders
- worry cards



## STOP Technique

Stop

Take a breath

Observe

Proceed

## Visual Charts

“Do I need to slow down or stop worrying?”

These tools help your brain find balance.

## Key Message for You

Impulsivity and overthinking are not flaws.

They show that your brain is:

fast

sensitive

powerful

creative

With practice, support, and kindness, you can learn to:

- ✦ pause when you need to
- ✦ slow down racing thoughts
- ✦ feel calmer
- ✦ stay safe
- ✦ make choices that work for you

You’re not supposed to get it perfect — you’re learning, step by step.

And you’re doing great.

## Online Resources

[Resources for autistic teenagers](#)

[Home | Spectrum Gaming](#)

