



**I Want it Now!!! (🌈 An Emotional Health Story)  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – 8-9 yrs)**

This story talks about learning how to control impulsive behaviors that are triggered by extreme emotions.

- 🌈 A temper tantrum is an example of an impulsive behavior that is often caused when someone cannot control their behavioral response to an emotional situation.
- 🌈 The part of the brain that controls your impulses does not fully develop until late adolescence. This is why children often exhibit behaviors that are out of control; they have not learned to control their emotional responses.
- 🌈 Being able to identify and control your emotional responses, especially when your brain is not adequately developed to do so, will help you to limit irrational and socially unacceptable behaviors. These strategies will also help you to keep your brain healthy.

🌈 **SLIDE #1 - INTRODUCTION:**

Good Morning (Afternoon)!

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I (describe who you are and give your relation to neuroscience – ex. you are a Neuroscientist, you study neuroscience, you have a friend that is a neuroscientist or you have recently been learning a lot about neuroscience).

Neuroscience, that's a really big word! But, a neuroscientist is a person who knows a lot about the brain.

I am here today to talk to you about how you can help to make your brain healthy – feeling good. It is REALLY easy and anyone can do it.

I love to talk about Brain Health because it's SPECTacular!!! SPECTacular means "GREAT". When your brain is SPECTacular, you are a happy and healthy person.

This story is about Emotional Health – which is the E in SPECTacular. Emotional Health helps your brain stay healthy when you understanding about how you "feel" – your emotions.

There are lots of emotions. Being happy, sad, surprised, disgusted or mad. These are all emotions.

Understanding that we have emotions and how we control our emotions is very important to making our brain healthy.

When you understand your emotions and learn how to control your emotions, that makes your brain healthy.

So, let's see how you can keep your brain healthy.

🌈 **SLIDE #2 – I WANT IT NOW!!!**

Have you ever really wanted something really badly – but then someone tells you that you cannot have it?

Doesn't that make you really angry? So, angry that you start screaming and yelling and asking "Why...why can't I have it?".

It does not make sense to you. And, you cannot believe how unfair it is. Congratulations...you have just had a temper tantrum.

This story, which is titled "I Want It Now!!!", is going to explain why you felt the way you felt and how you can avoid these situations in the future. In doing so, it will also help you to keep your brain healthy.

### SLIDE #3 – TEMPER TANTRUMS

Most of us have either seen or had a temper tantrum. Temper tantrums are unreasonable behaviors that people exhibit when they want something and they cannot have it.

It could be something tangible – like food or a toy.

It could be being able to do something – like staying up late or playing a video game.

It could even be something like wanting someone to pay attention to you or be friends with you – but instead they ignore you or even tease you.

When a person wants "something" and they are not getting it, this can cause them to be impulsive because of the "feelings" they are having. They may be feeling frustrated, angry, or sad. Or, they may be feeling all of these emotions.

In response to their emotions, either they cry or scream. They may throw things or bang their fists. Or, they may pout.

Temper tantrums are examples of impulsive behaviors that are not pretty and they rarely end up with the person getting what they want.

In a lot of cases, temper tantrums are caused by the brain not being developed enough to handle the situation. The person having the temper tantrum is not thinking clearly.

### SLIDE #4 – TEMPER TANTRUMS

We see babies and toddlers having temper tantrums all the time.

Part of the problem with babies and toddlers is that when they are told – no – they do not understand **why** they cannot have what they want.

Part of the problem with the babies and the toddlers is that they cannot talk very well or at all, so they may not be able to tell anyone **what** it is that they want.

### SLIDE #5 – EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES

The babies and toddlers do not understand why they cannot have what they want, so it causes them to have emotional responses.

The babies and toddlers may become frustrated because the person taking care of them does not understand what they want. This makes them angry. So, they may clench their fists and try to hit things, or scream or throw things, or do all of these behaviors.

The babies and toddlers are not getting what they want, so they may feel sad. This makes them cry – very loud and a lot.

The babies and toddlers are feeling very strong emotions and they do not understand them. This causes them to do impulsive behaviors – like having a temper tantrum.

## SLIDE #6 – TEMPER TANTRUMS

But, did you know that temper tantrums are not just for babies and toddlers.

Elementary school, middle school, high school and even college age people have been known to have temper tantrums.

Depending on how much their brain has developed or whether or not they have learned to control their emotions, we may see very similar kinds of behaviors that we saw with the babies and toddlers.

It is not pretty when a baby or toddler has a temper tantrum, and it is even worse when an older child or young adult has one.

Just think...you are in the middle of class and you decide you want to play a game on your tablet or laptop.

The idea of playing the game makes you feel really happy and makes you REALLY want to play. You pull out your tablet, turn it on, open the game, and begin to play while your teacher is still teaching the lesson. This is definitely an impulsive behavior because you know that there are rules of when you can be on your device and what you can do on it.

The teacher sees you on your tablet and asks you what you are doing. You tell the teacher, and then they tell you to put it away.

This causes you to get very angry. You start to scream and yell at the teacher. The teacher tells you to calm down and that you can be on your device later in the day. But, you want play the game and you want to play it RIGHT NOW.

Obviously, this is not the kind of behavior that you should be having in the classroom (or anywhere else).

## SLIDE #7 – IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS & BRAIN

So, what is going on and how can you stop this kind of behavior?

There is a part of your brain – your frontal lobes – which is in the front of your head which controls a lot of behaviors which can be considered to be impulsive.

These parts of the brain are still growing and will continue to grow and develop until people are in their mid 20's or even later. (Remember everyone has a brain, but everyone's brain grows and develops at different rates.)

This part of the brain takes so long to grow and develop because it needs information about the world the person lives in to be able to help the person make good decisions.

## SLIDE #8 – FRONTAL LOBES

When the frontal lobes in your brain are not completely developed, you may respond impulsively to certain situations.

Acting impulsively means that you do things without thinking about them. You are motivated to do them because you have a strong desire – or you REALLY want – something – like food, toys or playing a video game.

Impulsive behaviors can be what you do in response to an emotional situation – like someone not giving you something you want, or not letting you do something that you want to do, or ignoring you or teasing you.

Because your frontal lobe is not fully developed – you act in response to your emotions without thinking.

## SLIDE #9 – IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS

Impulsive behaviors can also be behaviors that are risky.

Risky behaviors do not always get you what you want. They may also cause harm to either you or someone else, or to someone's stuff.

Most impulsive behaviors are also behaviors that you should not be doing – so they are bad choices of what to do.

Like chasing a ball into the street without looking for cars, or trying to touch something on a hot stove.

Again, impulsive behaviors are usually done because someone is not thinking about the consequences for their action.

## SLIDE #10 – PREVENTING IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS

So, how do you stop doing impulsive behaviors – when your brain is still growing? There are actually a number of different things that you can do to stop impulsive behaviors.

When you are feeling a very strong emotion that makes you want to do something right away, then do something that makes you stop or pause.

Either take a deep breath and breathe out slowly or maybe count to 10 – whatever will make you stop before you do something.

Then think about what you want to do and decide if that is a good thing to do. Be sure to think of the consequences of your behavior.

In our “playing a game during class” example, rather than immediately getting out your tablet – you needed to stop and think about what you were going to do.

Are you supposed to play while the teacher is teaching? Of course not, so even though you know that playing on your tablet makes you happy – this is not the time.

When your teacher told you to sit down and you started yelling was that the right thing to do? Of course not, you KNOW that yelling in the classroom is not acceptable – we learn about “inside voices” early. Plus, if you thought about it before yelling you would have realized that yelling in a classroom is bad enough, but then yelling at a teacher – not good. You would probably be getting into trouble.

So, by stopping and thinking about what you were going to do, or, breathing or counting to 10 – hopefully, you would have been able to stop yourself and your impulsive brain.

## SLIDE #11 – IDENTIFY WHAT TRIGGERED THE IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

What triggered the impulsive behavior?

When you thought about playing games during the lesson – that may have made you feel really happy because you really love that game. When you really enjoy doing something, your emotions can be exaggerated, and this could cause you to do impulsive behaviors.

By stopping and thinking before you pull out your tablet, you then may realize the reason the whole "game" idea popped in your head was because you did not get to play at all yesterday. You were busy with homework and soccer practice. You also felt like you knew what the teacher was going over today.

Because you really wanted to play and felt confident in the material the teacher was teaching, you felt like you could break the rules, just this once. Then, you made it worse by having a temper tantrum.

By stopping and thinking about the situation, you may realize that you were not really mad at the teacher for stopping you, so you are not sure why you were yelling.

In fact, you are probably embarrassed for not realizing that your brain wanted you to do something that you KNEW you should not be doing.

Stopping and thinking about what you were feeling – identifying your emotions - before you do something impulsive will help you to avoid temper tantrums.

## SLIDE #12 – EXAGGERATED EMOTIONS

Understanding that your emotions tend to be exaggerated when you are really excited or know something makes you really happy may make you more careful to plan and schedule times for those activities. Doing things that make you happy, makes your brain happy.

Emotions can also be exaggerated when you are tired or hungry, so getting enough sleep and food is also important for you to be able to help your brain stay healthy.

When your emotions are exaggerated, you tend to act impulsively, and you do not think clearly.

This is because of chemicals that are being released by the emotional parts of your brain.

These chemicals affect your frontal lobes, making it even harder for your frontal lobes – which control your impulsive behaviors and which are still growing, to do its job.

## SLIDE #13 – THINK ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

You can help your brain by identifying the emotions that are triggering your impulsive behaviors. You can also help your brain by stopping to think when you feel like doing something impulsive.

It also helps if you think about the consequences for what you are about to do. Do some "if-then" scenarios.

If I play on my tablet during class, then I will probably get in trouble.

If I yell at the teacher for not letting me play on my tablet, then I will definitely get in trouble.

If I get in trouble at school, then I will not be able to play with my friends after school.

Thinking about the consequences for your actions before you even do them can help you to stop impulsive behaviors.

## SLIDE #14 – PEOPLE YOU TRUST

If someone tells you that you cannot have something or do something that you want to do, then you also need to think about who is telling you and why they are telling you that you cannot have or do something that you want to do.

If this is someone that you trust to take care of you – either parents, caretakers, or teachers – then you need to understand they have your “best interests” in mind.

They are stopping you from doing something that they know is not good for you.

They are trying to help you control your impulses, which will help you to keep your brain healthy.

## **SLIDE #15 – CONTROLLING IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS**

Learning how to identify your emotions – especially when they are exaggerated – is important to being able to control your impulsive behaviors.

Learning that things like being hungry and being tired are some of the things that cause your emotions to become exaggerated is also important because it helps you control your impulsive behaviors.

Learning how to stop the impulsive reactions – like temper tantrums, that you may have with exaggerated emotions, is a skill that will help you throughout your entire life.

Because everyone is different – including everyone’s brain – you have to find out what you can do to stop your impulsive reactions – whether it is taking deep breaths, counting, or something else. Do whatever it takes to make sure you are stopping and thinking.

This will help you develop good strategies that you can use throughout your life.

Being able to identify what emotions trigger your impulsive behaviors and coming up with good strategies that you can use throughout your life, will not only keep you out of trouble - but these things will also make your brain healthy.

## **SLIDE # – CONCLUSION**

Thank you all for letting me talk to you about how emotions can cause you to do impulsive things – like having a temper tantrum - and how you can stop this from happening.

I have enjoyed spending time with you today talking about the brain. I hope that you have had some fun and learned something about your brain.

REMEMBER, while your brain – particularly your frontal cortex - is still growing, you need to understand that you may not always make the right decisions on how to behave. Be on the lookout for impulsive behaviors and help your brain to make the right decisions. It can be as easy as stopping to think or stopping to count. Being able to control your impulsive behaviors will also make your brain healthier and we all know that helping your brain stay healthy is SPECtacular.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP!!! Brain Health is not just SPECtacular...it is FUN!!!**