

Introduction to The Impulsive Child Mode

When the Impulsive Child is activated in our system, it is often characterized by what seem selfish or uncontrolled behaviors, primarily in response to our emotional childhood needs not being met in the current situation. In the extreme version of this mode, we may seem to others like we are behaving in reckless or manipulative ways toward the people around us in order to get our own personal needs met. The Impulsive Child will do things without thought for the consequences, not because it doesn't care, but because it does not have the ability to think things through in a rational or logical way.

When asked about the impulsive nature of our behaviour, we may justify it by labeling it as, "Just the kind of person I am, I'm just way to spontaneous" without the knowledge of the difference between these 2 behavioral responses. The Impulsive response is usually designed to avoid a difficult emotional experience we are expected to participate in, and often has us compromise our true core values and beliefs, leaving us battling with the guilt and shame that is activated as a result of this.

“Emotional reactions were at the core of my addictive lifestyle. In recovery, these impulsive behaviours did not go away, they just shifted to a different focus.”

~Steven Morris RP

For me, my impulsive behaviours revolved around a desire for instant gratification. I was unable to sit with myself when there was nothing to keep me occupied, and when there was an extreme amount of emotion in my system, my desire to escape went through the roof. Running away from my fears was a learned behaviour from an early age. My inability to cope came from the things I had seen, and the things I was told, along with my own emotional sensitivity overwhelming my system.

My vulnerable child was at the centre of my impulsive behaviours, my desire for instant gratification was strongly connected to my fear of loneliness, sadness, guilt, and shame. When there was a possibility of experiencing these feelings, not necessarily the experience of the feelings themselves, my Impulsive Child kicked into action in an attempt to escape from anything associated with actually facing my perceived emotional state.

I learned to run away from things that were difficult for me to do, things that I was afraid of failing at, and people that I didn't think I could connect with. These were my unmet childhood needs for attachment and autonomy, and when those needs were not being met, my impulsive child wanted

to escape immediately. This need for impulsivity used to lead me to my substance and process of choice because it worked in conjunction with my detached Self-Soother.

When I stopped using substances to cope with my emotional state, my impulsive child manifested in so many different ways. Watching my unhealthy desires for sugary food, binge watching TV shows at times when I had other responsibilities or hiding from people when I was supposed to be interacting were all indications that I might be struggling with an emotion.

Stepping into my fears meant learning how to work with my Impulsive Child mode. Soothing its desire to run from these fears was a key factor in my recovery. Understanding my own emotional maturity was a difficult to face and using the skills available in limited reparenting helped develop my emotional children and gave me the opportunity to Live the Life I want to Live.

Next, let's check in to see how you relate to this Mode in your own behaviours. Answer the questions below based on your personal experiences and the rating scale provided.

Never 0	Sometimes 1	50/50 2	Often 3	Always 4
Description				Score
When I am upset, or triggered by other people, I say what I feel, or do things impulsively, without thinking of the consequences for myself or those I care for.				
When I am expected to do something I don't want to do, I have trouble controlling my impulses, I often do other things without thought for the impact.				

Based on the scores you gave for the questions above, and the way you relate to the description provided on the previous pages, how Relevant is the Impulsive Child Mode to you in your life? Add the two scores together to calculate your prevalence score. On a scale of 0 – 8, 0 being not present at all, and 8 being present in my life every day, rate your experience of the Impulsive Child Mode.

My Impulsive Child Mode has a prevalence score of ___/8.

On the next page, take the time to explore your experience of the Impulsive Child Mode, see if you can identify how you feel when this Mode is active, how you are thinking when this Mode is active, what you do when this Mode is active, and what situations you might need to be aware of that can activate this way of thinking in your personality system.

- a. When I am in the Impulsive Child Mode, I am experiencing the following feelings (List the emotions and feelings you experience in the Impulsive Child Mode, focus on the emotions you experience when Impulsive reactions are present in your behaviour).

- b. When I am in the Impulsive Child Mode, I am having the following thoughts (List the things you are thinking when you are blended with the Impulsive Child Mode, be specific, focus on thoughts of impulsivity, want to do things regardless of the consequence, see if you have thoughts that ignore minimize, or deny the existence of the consequence).

- c. When I am in the Impulsive Child Mode, I behave in the following ways (List the things you do, the way you act, and how you react when in the Impulsive Child Mode).

- d. The following situations are likely to be involved in triggering my Impulsive Child Mode (List situations you are aware of that have activate this mode of behaviour in the past).
