

Impulsivity in Evidence - What To Do Next

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Been There?

Are there times when you are held hostage with subtle, uncompromising, relentless impulsivity, and you simply don't know what to do next – in spite of considerable experience? Have you had enough?

You have come to the right place because we all live in the best of new-brain times. New biology provides multiple keys that will release us from our collective imprisonment. This recent evolution in brain and body science dramatically corrects previous, incomplete intervention protocols. It's time to rethink old patterns.

Many more options are available, and new 'functional' science discoveries provide improved options for different intervention strategies. With new biologically based systems, we can sprinkle on that 'ounce of prevention' because we now know so much more about the 'working biology' of those who suffer with impulsivity.

Keen awareness of these new factors will encourage better questions, higher levels of predictability, more targeted interventions, and better resolution of behavioral regressions - if impulsivity does get out of hand. Anyone can benefit from this new biological brain information at any level - from parents, to physicians, to teachers, to all those in charge of groups on any level.

But isn't this brain stuff way over our head? And just how does the new body based information, such as breakfast and sleep, fit into the puzzle? Let's first set the stage.

Then and Now

At the outset, let's take a quick look at the past 'big picture' to simplify the current complex situation.

About 40 years ago, the only way we could look at behavior and impulsivity was *from the outside*. Back then we suffered daily from an advanced case of 'label psychobabble' because we could only see the tips of impulsivity icebergs. Today, regrettably, psychobabble often persists as our only intervention strategy.

Psychiatry then, as it often is now, was caught up with labels and superficial diagnoses based on appearances. We had no tools to measure brain and body functions, so we had to guess a lot. Back then we focused on imagination and dreams, today we have remarkable modern tools to focus on biological reality. Back then impulsivity was considered 'passive-aggressive,' and now impulsivity is often simply described as 'oppositional and defiant.' And, to use those labels,

ask yourself this question: just what does one do with 'passive aggressive character disorder?' What exactly is the utilitarian value of a marker like that?

The problem with labels: they imply a permanent makeup, a fixed monolithic entity, and do little to address child, adolescent, and adult *function* over time. They are as superficial as the shirt on your back, and completely *fail to address the person inside*.

The solutions also need re-examination. Did someone say we should use 'structure' for impulsivity? Is 'structure' the only tool in our kit? Just how do we apply structure? Often these old solutions are actually more complex than the new ones.

Beyond Structure

Since I was a medical intern in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I have been dwelling on the psychological and scientific limitations and the real destructive potential of labels – and I'm excited to report to you that we have come a long way since then. We now know more about brain and body physiology than ever in the history of humankind... but, surprisingly, many have not yet decided to use it!

I have been writing about troubles regarding the limitations of labels, imprecision with medications, and superficial diagnosis since my first book [*Deep Recovery*] in 1992, and for almost three years on CorePsych Blog. Now I'm taking this deeper perspective out on the road, with my first stop in our hometown, at the ODU Webb Center in Norfolk on October 16.

My message is simple: I know that the average person can understand this brain and body material, simply because I talk to the 'average person' all day, everyday in my Virginia Beach office. If the average person can get it and can consistently improve with these insights, we might as well tell everyone who will listen to the operational details. The details are about fixing *function*, not labels.

I won't be teaching you about the physics of gamma cameras; I will not try to make you an expert on SPECT imaging, but I will show you the basics on several different levels of actual evidence and how to apply that solid evidence to improve your handling of impulsivity. Topics will include ADHD, Bipolar, Brain Injury, Addictions, medications, sleep, nutrition, and new measurement tools - from some brain imaging, to even more precise body and brain neurotransmitter measurements. These facts come with street value, the benefit of immediate application.

What To Do

Each portion of the presentation will build on the next, with the objective of covering every aspect of the most commonly seen impulsivity problems. Let's turn the negative experience of impulsivity into an affirmative growth experience. Please link up with your colleagues and friends, - and let's spend the

day together to explicitly change the landscape of intervention possibilities for impulsivity.

This seminar is presented by:

Old Dominion University, Programs for Continued Learning Department and the Institute for the Advancement of Human Behavior.

For more information, please visit:

<http://education.odu.edu/pcl/impulsivebrain> or call 757-683-4686.

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