

Impulse Control Strategies for Neurodivergent Adults

This printable reference sheet includes practical strategies to help neurodivergent adults strengthen impulse control. These methods support the pause between urge and action—making space for intentional, values-aligned choices.

1. Core Impulse Control Strategies

- **Practice the Pause Technique:** take a 5-10 second break before responding.
- **Name the Urge:** label what you're feeling (e.g., 'I want to interrupt', 'I feel like quitting').
- **Use prompts or scripts:** sticky notes or reminders like 'Pause. Breathe. Choose.'

2. Time-Based Strategies

- **Delay & Distract:** tell yourself, 'If I still want this in 10 minutes, I can come back to it.'
- **Use a 'Waiting Timer'** before acting on spending, reacting, or interrupting impulses.

3. Cognitive Reframing

- **Future-Self Check:** ask, 'Will this help or hurt future me?'
- **Use If-Then Planning:** pre-decide responses (e.g., 'If I get frustrated, then I'll take a short walk').

4. Sensory-Based and Physical Strategies

- **Redirect energy** with a fidget or grounding object.
- **Use cold water or a cool object** to reset focus and regulate your nervous system.

5. Emotional Regulation Crossovers

- **Practice Box Breathing** or 4-7-8 breathing to calm reactivity.
- **Identify impulsive states** (e.g., tired, overstimulated, dysregulated) and track patterns.