

**Session 3:**  
**Self-Regulation II**  
*(Inhibition & Motivation)*

# Parent Summary: Self-Regulation II

## Session Overview

- ◆ Homework review
- ◆ Inhibition
- ◆ Motivation
- ◆ Homework assignment

## Key Information

- ◆ Inhibition is the braking system of the brain. It allows us to:
  - ✦ Think ***before*** acting.
  - ✦ ***Resist*** a conscious urge.
- ◆ Children who struggle with inhibition may:
  - ✦ Have difficulty stopping once they've started.
  - ✦ Act without conscious intent.
  - ✦ Have difficulty resisting urges.
  - ✦ Have difficulty following rules or social norms.
  - ✦ Talk too much or have difficulty sticking to one topic.
  - ✦ Say/do the wrong thing at (exactly) the wrong time.
  - ✦ Jump into things without forethought.
  - ✦ Rush to complete tasks/have difficulty slowing down.
  - ✦ Be unable to alter their actions in response to negative consequences.
  - ✦ Be incorrectly seen as inconsiderate, unempathetic, attention-seeking, or deliberately oppositional.
- ◆ Strategies to support children who struggle with inhibition may include:
  - ✦ Address contributing factors that may negatively impact self-regulation, generally.
  - ✦ Do not punish impulsivity. Instead, support the child in the moment, and address reoccurring problems with PCPS.
  - ✦ Predict and prevent problems.
  - ✦ Teach your child strategies to address the negative outcomes of impulsivity.
  - ✦ Practice inhibition skills.
  - ✦ See the strategies in your Inhibition worksheet.
- ◆ Motivation is our sense of drive, or energy directed towards an activity, task, or goal. It is neurologically based, just like all executive functions.
- ◆ Children who struggle with motivation may:
  - ✦ Have difficulty getting started and/or maintaining effort.
  - ✦ Have difficulty completing tasks, particularly those that are boring, unrewarding, or stressful.
  - ✦ Difficulty finishing projects and long-term goals.
  - ✦ Inconsistent drive and/or effort
  - ✦ May feel exhausted after a period of intense drive, and/or take a long time to recover their energy.

- ✦ May feel most motivated when tasks are new and interesting and/or during a crisis.
- ✦ May be incorrectly perceived as inconsistent, lazy, or unmotivated. People may also incorrectly assume the child chooses whether or not to exert effort.
- ◇ Strategies to support children who struggle with motivation include:
  - ✦ Making use of areas of interest.
  - ✦ Turning things into games.
  - ✦ Getting dopamine pumping.
  - ✦ Modify the environment to promote alertness.
  - ✦ Use a first-then strategy.
  - ✦ Build self-awareness.
  - ✦ Work with your child's brain.
  - ✦ Build goal-focussed thinking.

### Homework Checklist

- Inhibition worksheet
- Motivation worksheet
- Print out the activity materials for session 4



## Worksheet: Inhibition

Think about some recent occasions when your young person has experienced problems due to weak inhibition.

1. Consider some potential contributing factors that may have been impacting your child's inhibition on those occasions (refer to your child's self-regulation profile). For instance, were they emotionally dysregulated? Were there internal or external stressors at play?

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2. Consider the types of strategies that might be most useful to your child, given their self-regulation profile and the situations in which their impulsivity is most often causing problems. ***As you read the strategies related to each condition, below, mark those that might be useful for your child.***
  - If problems with inhibition are often related to certain situations and/or context-specific demands (e.g., when adults are on the phone or working; when playing board games; when joining a group activity; during meals):
    - Consider reminding your child of expectations before they enter situations in which their impulsivity frequently causes difficulties.
    - Practice strategies for meeting those expectations, outside of those situations.
    - Increase supervision, structure and/or support at times when your child struggles most with impulsivity (e.g., dinner, playing with friends or siblings, etc.)
    - Consider using PCPS to address problematic situations that occur frequently or that have particularly problematic outcomes.
  - If specific contributing factors occur frequently when your child struggles with inhibition:
    - Consider preventative strategies to reduce the occurrence of those factors (e.g., schedule more frequent snacks, remind your child to take breaks, pre-emptively help your child re-regulate after experiencing specific stressors, reduce sensory and environmental stressors, etc.).
  - If your child is often unaware of the factors that contribute to their problems with inhibition:
    - Consider teaching them to identify contributing factors, one step at a time. For instance:
      - i. Share your observations over time, so your child becomes more aware of the factors that you notice (e.g., hunger, reactivity after homework or videogames).
      - ii. When problems occur, walk your child through their day up to that point, and help them identify any unmet basic needs, stressors, or other factors that may have had a negative impact on their inhibition (e.g., by contributing to a build up of stress, fatigued, etc.).
      - iii. Help them identify factors that contributed directly to the incident (i.e., situational factors in the moment the problem occurred).
      - iv. If your child usually takes medication, but did not take it that day, or if their medication was wearing off by that time, help them see how that may have made it more difficult for them to inhibit their actions or words.

- If your child’s problems with inhibition are harming their sense of self or relationships with others:
  - Help them understand how their brain is different, in ways that are sometimes great, and in ways that make certain things much harder for them. For instance:
    - i. Help them understand what weak inhibition looks like, and the role of the brain in helping people choose their behaviours. Help them understand that other children aren’t better than they are, they just have stronger brain brakes.
    - ii. Help them learn to be proud of the strengths that come from having weak inhibition, such as being brave, daring, adventurous, or performing well in emergencies.
    - iii. Help them develop self-compassion, and to understand that self-compassion will even have a positive impact on their stress cycle, which will help keep their inhibition as strong as possible.
    - iv. Advocate for your child with their teachers and schools, as well as extended family (e.g., they should not be suspended for behaviours that are a direct result of a disability; suspensions usually require formal paperwork that includes the steps to appeal them).

3. Consider how your child addresses negative outcomes that occur due to weak inhibition.

- Consider teaching your child to address negative outcomes in a positive way, as soon as they are able. Steps to develop this capacity over time may include:
  - Gently drawing their attention to how the situation affected them and others.
  - Asking them to acknowledge what happened, privately to a safe person.
  - Asking them to acknowledge how their actions impacted the situation or people involved.
  - Teaching them to validate themselves and their own experiences.
  - Teaching them to validate others and their experiences.
  - Teaching them how to help others understand their limitations, while also letting people know that they are working to learn ways to help them get better at what is difficult for them.
  - Teach them to find ways to repair relationships and undo any damage that has occurred, without being unnecessarily punitive (e.g., we don’t make people in wheelchairs pay for ramps, or people with seizure disorders pay for breaking something when a seizure occurred).

4. Help your child practice skills related to inhibition.

- Provide your child with opportunities to practice coping strategies outside of the situations in which they need them (e.g., self-advocacy; emotion regulation skills).
- Help your child practice using inhibition skills through games and activities that require them.
  - Young children: games such as “What Time is it Mr. Wolf,” “Red Light/Green Light,” “Freeze,” and “Simon Says.”
  - Older children: board and card games, such as “Slamwich,” “Twister,” “Monopoly Cheater’s Edition,” “Jenga,” etc.

5. Choose 1-2 strategies to implement this week.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PARENT MOTIVATION STRATEGIES

### Problems I would like to work on this week:

Problem 1:

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Problem 2:

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### Strategies I will try:

Strategies for Problem 1:

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Strategies for Problem 2:

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### End of Week Review

Highlight the strategies you liked and found helpful.

1. How did these strategies help?

- It made me feel more motivated
- It helped me feel better while I worked
- It helped me work longer
- It helped me finish tasks
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The problem(s) they helped with were:

- Problem 1
- Problem 2

3. The problem(s) I still need to work on are:

- Problem 1
- Problem 2

4. The strategies I would like to try next are:

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## YOUTH MOTIVATION STRATEGIES

### Problems I would like to work on this week:

Problem 1:

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Problem 2:

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### Strategies I will try:

Strategies for Problem 1:

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Strategies for Problem 2:

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### End of Week Review

Highlight the strategies you liked and found helpful.

5. How did these strategies help?

- It made me feel more motivated
- It helped me feel better while I worked
- It helped me work longer
- It helped me finish tasks
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The problem(s) they helped with were:

- Problem 1
- Problem 2

7. The problem(s) I still need to work on are:

- Problem 1
- Problem 2

8. The strategies I would like to try next are:

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