

## Impulsivity

### Instruction

Being impulsive, or acting without thinking through the pros and cons of a situation, is a common problem after any brain injury. Read this example and then complete the rating chart that follows.

#### Example: James

One day, James bought £3,000 worth of shares in Marks & Spencer. He made the decision on impulse, as he had just read about the share price in the morning paper and happened to be walking past the bank. Before his brain injury, he would always have discussed such a major purchase with his wife, but on this occasion he made the decision without consulting her. Understandably, she was very angry.

James likes shopping, but since his brain injury his judgement is somewhat suspect. On one occasion, he bought six bags of bananas because there was a special offer (three bags for the price of two), and he likes bananas. He did not bear in mind that they were going away on holiday, and most of the bananas would not be eaten and would rot.

Tick any of the following statements that might explain James' impulsiveness and put a cross alongside those that are not relevant.

1 He has difficulty holding in mind three or four 'bits' of information at the same time, and synthesising them – weighing them all up together and reaching a balanced decision.	
2 He suffers from fatigue, gets tired more easily, and needs more sleep.	
3 His brain is slower at processing information.	
4 The part of his brain that dampens down, checks, or inhibits impulses – the frontal lobes – is not working as well as it should. So he is generally rather disinhibited, saying and doing whatever comes into his mind without holding back.	

*Describe a situation when you have been more impulsive since your injury.*

How did you find this exercise? Easy  OK  Hard  What one thing have you learnt from it?