



TOURETTE SYNDROME

Tourette Syndrome is not a learning disability but the symptoms and co-occurring conditions impact greatly on learning. Vocal and motor tics can be simple or complex and vary in intensity and frequency. Approx 1% of pupils in schools have Tourettes.

Strategy 1:



Don't insist that the pupil is looking at you, this might be very difficult/uncomfortable for them. Some pupils use strategies to try to stop tics such as staring at an object to gain focus. Controlling tics takes a lot of effort and concentration. Pupils might avoid eye contact because they do not want their tics to be noticed.

Strategy 2:



Ignore tics. Certain tics can be disruptive and distracting. They will worsen if attention is drawn to them or the pupil feels pressured or in conflict. Lead by example with the class. Smile and reassure without drawing attention. Show support and that you know they are struggling. Rewarding or sanctioning will make no difference as tics are involuntary.

Strategy 3:

Tics can be internal such as stomach clenching and thought tics which can take a lot of concentration to master. This can cause distraction so allow pupils time to complete work and think about responses. Never cold-call - always give warning if you require verbal feedback or a response in front of the class.



Strategy 4:



Give short, simple and clear instructions and tasks to allow easy processing of information and opportunities to concentrate for short periods of time followed by a quick brain break before moving on! Short bursts of work are the key to success and managing intrusive thoughts!

Strategy 5:



People with TS have sleep problems which affects overall functioning, they tend to tic more at home. Make sure homework is about quality rather than quantity. Lack of sleep, poor attention and struggling to concentrate leads to tiredness, irritability and disengagement which cases tics to worsen, as does hunger and thirst. This will be worse at the end of the day, week, term and before lunch. Keep tasks short and sharp.

Strategy 6:

Movement is VERY important! Don't insist on sitting still at a table with a pen for a whole lesson. Movement breaks must be allowed, these could be to collect something in or give out. Make it as interactive as possible.

