What is intermittent explosive disorder (IED)?

IED is a behavior disorder. A person with IED can’t control their anger and will impulsively explode into rage with little or no apparent reason. These outbursts are sudden (with little or no warning) and difficult to predict. The outbursts are out of proportion to the situation. People with IED have described feeling as though they lose control of their emotions and are overcome with anger. Some experience a sensation of building tension in the head or chest that is finally released when they react aggressively.

IED usually begins in the early teens but can be seen in children as young as six. It is most common in people under the age of 40.

**What does it mean to have IED?**

A person may experience the following symptoms before or during an episode:

* Rage, including road rage
* Irritability
* Increasing sense of tension
* Racing thoughts
* Increased energy
* Tingling
* Tremors
* Palpitations
* Chest tightness
* Verbal aggression (temper tantrums, threats, heated verbal arguments, shouts, or fights)

Reference: Child Mind Institute, Intermittent Explosive Disorder Basics. Retrieved on June 25, 2019. <https://childmind.org/guide/intermittent-explosive-disorder/>

* Physical aggression, or destruction of property, and/or physical assault

After an episode a person may feel a sense of relief and tiredness, followed by regret and embarrassment.

**Are there other problems from IED?**

Yes. IED can impact school, home, relationships, and work. Some people may develop depression and anxiety or turn to alcohol and drugs to try and control their behaviors. However, using alcohol and drugs only makes things worse. Some people also may develop physical health problems (e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, ulcer, and chronic pain).

**How can I help myself if I have IED?**

In Job Corps our goal of treatment for IED is to help you understand and manage your condition so you can move toward finding employment. It may include brief therapy (especially cognitive behaviorally focused), medications, and participation in groups and activities.

* Talk to your counselor and health and wellness staff
* Ask for reasonable accommodations (e.g. take a time-out if you feel you are about to lose your temper)
* Know your stressors and learn stress-relief activities (yoga, deep breathing, relaxing imagery, etc.)
* Leave or avoid upsetting situations
* Ask for help to better handle difficult situations
* Keep good sleep practices
* Engage in physical activity
* Develop heathy eating habits
* Participate in support groups
* Learn ways to communicate without saying the first thing that pops into your head
* Limit the use of technology and connect in positive ways
* Stay on medication, if prescribed
* If your medication is making you feel strange or bad, please contact health and wellness staff

**I know someone who has IED. What can I do?**

* If they are thinking about hurting them self or someone else get help immediately
* Do not leave the person alone
* Let the nearest Job Corps staff member know NOW!
* If not able to find a staff member, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room
* Access the Job Corps Safety Hotline (844-JC1-SAFE) via text, email, phone, mobile app or web site
* Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
  (800) 273-TALK (8255)  
  TTY: (800) 799-4TTY (4889)