

Tics in the Classroom

TEACHERS

- Tics are sudden, non-rhythmic repetitive movements or vocalizations.
- Tics are not purposeful and are generally experienced as involuntary
- Tics change, and can increase or decrease all the time.
- Tics are often worse when anxious, in loud or busy classrooms, are stared at or get pointed out for their tics.
- Tics can change lesson to lesson depending on both internal and external factors such as if they like the lesson, if they find it easy or hard, if they have friends in the lesson and how the teacher responds to their tics.
- Tics can vary from small simple tics, to complex tics
- Some children have inappropriate tics (swearing/racial/inappropriate)
- Tics can be random, but they can also be contextual, meaning they look and sound purposeful.
- Be mindful that most people with tics have co-occurring conditions and their symptoms may make it even harder for them in class

How can you support a child with tics in your class?

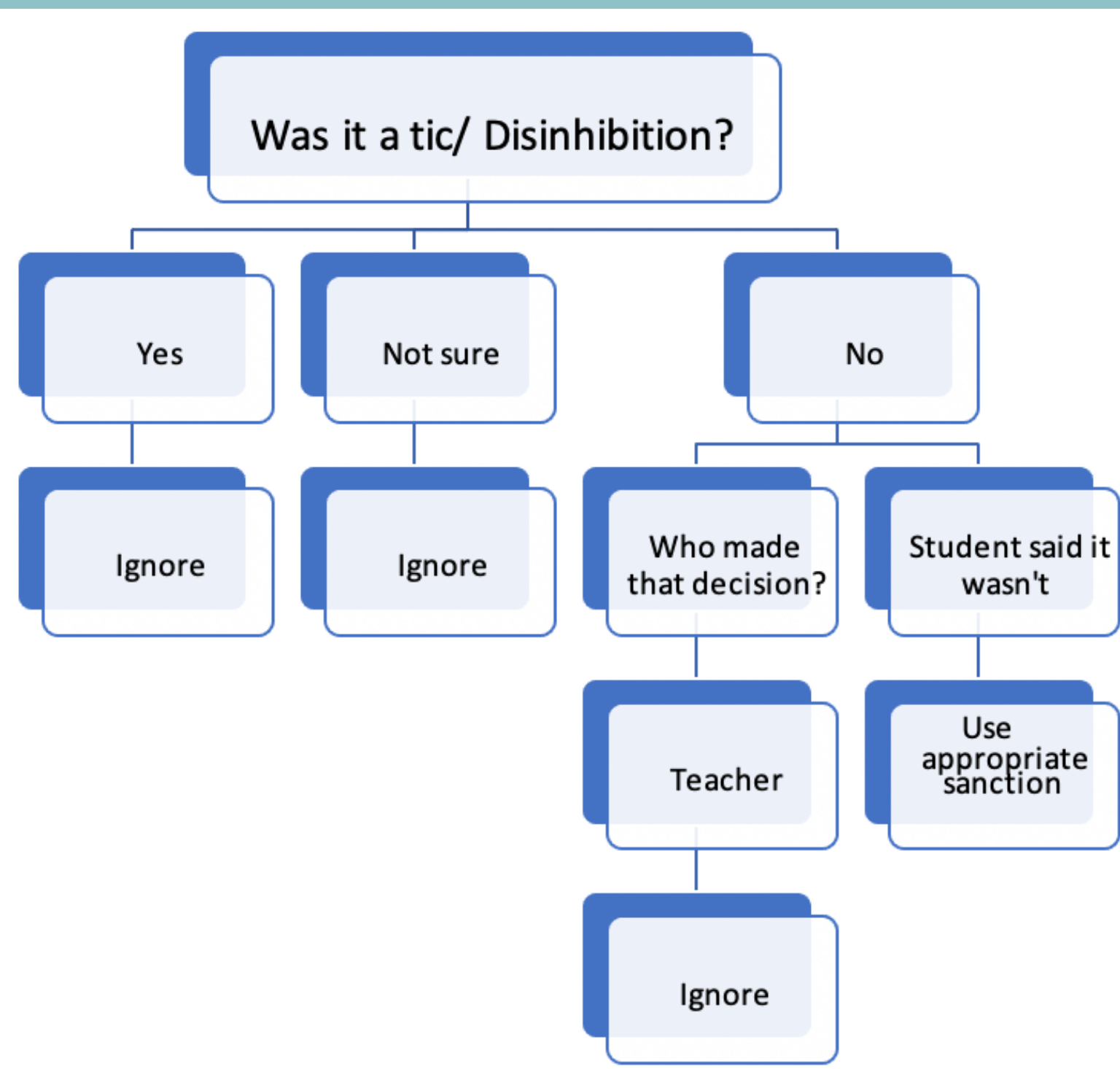
- Tics should be ignored
- Any form of comment, stare, touch or even asking if they're ok can in fact reinforce tics making them increase
- Ask the child where they feel most comfortable sitting in the lesson (this may differ in different classrooms)
- Give them a 'hall pass', the opportunity to take five minutes out of lesson if needed. (this is not for a teacher to use to send them out)
- Make sure all staff are educated and know to ignore the tics
- Educate the children in the class (or ideally whole school) on what tics are, and that they too should ignore them.
- Focus on the child's strengths, some days maybe tougher than others if their tics are high, or lacking sleep (tics often impact sleep) so make reasonable adjustments to accommodate this (EG: accept verbal answers instead of written work)

Commonly known Tics

Motor movements
facial grimacing
shoulder shrugging
tummy tensing
banging things
sounds
words/phrases
whistling
shouting
swearing
being inappropriate

Less Commonly known Tics

Mental tics (in mind)
Contextual tics (appear purposeful)
Throwing things
Snapping things
Ripping up paper
Racial
Linked to the environment



Other things too consider

Those with tics are likely to also have disinhibition, Disinhibition is the inconsistent ability to inhibit behaviours despite knowing they are inappropriate.

Individuals experience movements, swearing, emotional outbursts, rage, infantile behaviours, noises, laughter and so on. These can all be either contextual or not. Essentially, disinhibition is when it becomes extremely difficult to use learned inhibitory skills "in the moment".

If you do not observe tics in the classroom, this could be because they're suppressing them. A child may suppress their tics when they're anxious and do not want peers to see them tic. Suppressing tics is hard work and will take a lot of concentration and therefore they may struggle to access the learning whilst suppressing. encourage tic breaks if you think they need to go and let some tics out in private.

It is not appropriate for a student with SEN to miss breaks or lunch times, it is also not appropriate to expect them to be able to "sit still and quiet" in detentions or isolations.

A child should NEVER receive a sanction, detention, or isolation for anything part of their disability.

A school has a legal obligation to amend the policies accordingly for SEN children.

For more information or to organise teacher training please visit www.tictocktherapy.co.uk