Slide 1

Low Frustration Tolerance: Strategies and Solutions

Jenny Nordman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Reading and Literacy
Program Director, M.Ed. Reading Specialist
Regis University

Justin Adcock, Ph.D.
Affiliate Faculty of Special Education - Regis
Principal, Westminster Public Schools

Westminster Public Schools
Where Education is Personal

REGIS UNIVERSITY

Slide 2

What is low frustration tolerance (LFT)?

- Frustration tolerance is when one responds to difficult or challenging situations with patience and emotional stability. (Chand, 2015; Shi et al., 2021)

- Those with low frustration tolerance (LFT) become quickly upset when they encounter obstacles and may exhibit intense emotions such as anger, hostility, or depression. (Filippello et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2007)

How became interested in topic; reading intervention/cog skills

N

Slide 3

How does LFT impact classroom performance?

- Higher frustration tolerance is associated with self-control, perseverance, and academic success.
- Lower frustration tolerance is associated with procrastination, task avoidance, and lack of emotional control. (Miendl et al., 2019; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984)

A

Slide 4

How does LFT impact classroom behavior?

- Students with LFT can have angry outbursts and may act aggressively when they encounter academic or social situations that are stressful. (Fives et al., 2011; Sorrenti et al., 2019)

- This is challenging for teachers, who need to address these immediate concerns while also trying to counteract a loss of motivation. (Ghisi et al., 2016)

A

Slide 5

It is important to note that students with specific learning disabilities or developmental disorders are often impacted by low frustration tolerance (LFT) due to struggles understanding content, organizing thoughts, and/or self-regulating emotions.

N

Slide 6

Research on LFT: Specific Learning Disabilities

- Students with specific learning disabilities (i.e. dyslexia, auditory processing disorder) may have a lower threshold for frustration because of struggles understanding and/or expressing content. (O'Brien, 2020; Ryan, 2004)
- These students may also have higher stress levels and exhibit anxiety, especially during high-stress situations like test taking. (Mahon, et al., 2017; Sorrenti et al., 2019)
- Academic struggles can be a trigger for students with learning disabilities, and outbursts or a refusal to participate can be exacerbated by stress and/or fatigue. (Chand, 2015)

LD- throw chair during spelling tests; changed to a making words informal asses.

N

Slide 7

Research on LFT: ADHD

- Students with ADHD often lack persistence and may give up when faced with a long or challenging task. (Seymour, Macatee & Chronis-Tuscano, 2019; Seymour et al., 2018)
- They may also have difficulty controlling emotions when facing frustration, resulting in more frequent classroom outbursts. (Banaschewski, 2010; Kaypakli & Tamam, 2019)

Organizational challenges; ADHD/ Turrets, meltdown over changing classes

N

Slide 8

Research on LFT: ASD

- Students with ASD and LFT may have difficulty controlling emotions when frustrated, and may respond aggressively or impulsively to academic stressors. (Reyes et al., 2019; Samson et al., 2015).
- Others may respond by 'shutting down' and even exhibiting signs of depression (Cai et al., 2018).

A

Slide 9

Research on LFT: Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities

- Mental and emotional health influence student self-regulation and frustration tolerance.

- Trauma can impact levels of frustration tolerance and academic development. (Duplechain et al., 2008; Fives et al., 2010; Frieze, 2015)

2nd grade; EBD; under desk; cat

N

Slide 10

It is important to note that low frustration tolerance has been linked to an increase in substance abuse disorder, since addictive substances may be used to temporarily alleviate negative emotions.

(Ramirez-Castillo et al., 2019)

A

Slide 11

How has LFT affected your classroom?

Think, Pair, Share – What are the ways LFT may present in the classroom and impact learning?

- Put your hand up
- Find a partner
- Clap hands
- Person who traveled the furthest goes first.
- When both partners have shared, hand up and find another partner
- We will share out.

A

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Slide 12

LFT: Recognizing the Signs

- Agitation
- Refusal to respond
- Verbalizing negative self-talk
- Inflexibility
- Physical responses (i.e. pounding desk)
- Crying; blinking back tears
- Over-reaction to constructive feedback

(Chand, 2015; Fillippello et al., 2014; Fives et al., 2011)

A

Slide 13

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS LFT AND INCREASE EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION

- ADDRESS EXTREMES IN THINKING
- REDUCE TRIGGERS
- SUPPORT PERSEVERANCE
- INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS
- PROVIDE A SAFE OUTLET FOR EMOTIONS
- INTERRUPT NEGATIVE SELF-PERCEPTIONS
- TRANSITION FROM EXTRINSIC TO INTRINSIC MOTIVATION
- USE ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

N

Slide 14

ADDRESS EXTREMES IN THINKING

- Distorted thinking patterns can result in defeatist or emotional responses to frustration: 'all-or-nothing' perspective; negative self-talk; learned helplessness; situation avoidance. (Sorrenti et al., 2015; Harrington, 2005)

- Address this by teaching reframing techniques. These can help students to replace negativity with a more positive and constructive perspective. (Filippello et al., 2018; Karpetis, 2015; Panichelli, 2013)

N

Slide 15

ADDRESS EXTREMES IN THINKING: Reframing Techniques

- Avoid absolute words: Model avoiding words that promote 'all-or-nothing' thinking. *always, never, all, every, can't*
- Change point of view: Instead of focusing on mistakes, encourage students to focus on correct items and their progress instead of mistakes.
- Remember a previous success: Remind students of a recent academic success, which will help to ground them in a positive recent memory. (psychology technique)
- Encourage empathy. Help students to empathize with classmates, which helps bring perspective to their own situation as well. (multiple intelligences)

N

Slide 16

TRIGGERS

- A trigger might be a task, assignment, or expectation that could create struggle

Common triggers may include:

- Command (giving a student a direction)
- Environment (classroom condition)
- Peer (antagonism, class clowning, distractions)
- Intrinsic motivation (wanting to do something else)
- Extrinsic motivation (not enough incentive)
- Maslow's (hunger, sleep, medical, bathroom)
- Trauma (abuse, neglect, stress)

A

Slide 17

How can you reduce triggers in the classroom or at home?

Partner work: Create a 2-Column Graph

- With a partner, write down 3 real or theoretical triggers that may affect a student with LFT. (Column 1)
- Then, possible solutions to minimize (Column 2)
- Share with another pair

A

Slide 18

SUPPORT PERSEVERANCE

- Perseverance is the dedication to finish a task once it has been started, even if it becomes challenging.
- To support perseverance, students should set goals, document their progress, and celebrate incremental successes (Harrington, 2011).
- Teachers should model positive self-talk that encourages perseverance: *"Everyone makes mistakes"; "I am going to try that again"; "I won't give up".*
- Help students to see their mistakes or failures as part of the growth process and not a cause for distress.

N

Slide 19

INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

Jot Thoughts

1. Teacher announces the topic.
2. Students attempt to fill the table with ideas. Write an idea on a post-it note, then place it on the table in front of you, stating your idea as you place the post-it on the table
3. Attempt to cover table

TOPIC: How can you support perseverance and self-awareness in your classroom or home setting?

A

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Slide 20

PROVIDE A SAFE OUTLET

- Students with LFT have difficulty with emotional self-regulation. (Surman et al., 2013; Sorrenti et al., 2015)
- Because of this, it is important for students to not only recognize their emotions, but then to have safe outlets for expressing them.

N

Slide 21

PROVIDE A SAFE OUTLET
Emotional Outlet Strategy Examples

- Build in time for physical exercise: Walking, stretching, recess, or even taking an outside running break can be a way to safely remove frustration.
- Allow space for journaling or drawing: A quiet outlet for expression that is not disruptive to others.
- Facilitate relaxation techniques: Guided deep breathing or visualization exercises can help frustrated students to relax. These can be simple and quick. One example is picturing the details of a calming place in nature (i.e. beach, waterfall).
- Encourage self-care. Remind students of the importance of taking time to do things they enjoy as well as eating healthy foods and getting enough sleep.

N

Slide 22

How can you provide a safe outlet for student emotions in your classroom?

Open Forum Idea Sharing: Just shout it out!

N

Slide 23

INTERRUPT NEGATIVE SELF-PERCEPTIONS

- Students with LFT should be taught to recognize when they are 'stuck' in a negative thought pattern. They can then be taught to refocus and see things from a growth mindset. (Zeng et al., 2016)
- Counteract negative thinking patterns by guiding students through positive and encouraging self-talk: *'I am almost half-way done'; 'I am doing a much better job of understanding this now'; 'I know that if I take this step-by-step, I can make progress'*. (Harrington, 2011; Pouyamanesh & Firoozeh, 2013)
- Praise for effort and progress as opposed to just achievement. This helps students to see that growth is more important than results.

A

Slide 24

TRANSITION FROM EXTRINSIC TO INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Frustrated students may be focused on the short-term discomfort rather than potential long-term benefits, which is why it is helpful to transition the student extrinsic to intrinsic motivators. (Harrington, 2011)
- Provide more opportunities self-direction and choice, which will help the with ownership. Help the student to identify individual interests.
- For longer assignments that are overwhelming (i.e. research paper), help the student to see the benefits of accomplishing a larger task: increased self-confidence, positive feelings that come with success.

N

Slide 25

USE ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

- Shortened assignments
- Longer time to complete/Longer testing time
- Scaffolded, direct, cooperative instruction/intv.
- Oral presentation
- Calculator!
- Preferential Seating
- Access to teacher notes
- Manipulatives
- TTS - STT
- Audial supports
- Modified curriculum (modification)

A

Slide 26

How can you use accommodations or modifications to decrease LFT?

Think of a student who could benefit from an accommodation or modification. Create an "I will statement...."

E.G. ("Starting on Monday, I will allow David an opportunity to orally present his book report using graphic organizers to guide him. We will find a quiet time in the classroom where he can share his ideas directly to me with an audience of 1") Then, share your I will statement with your partner.

A

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Slide 27

Slide 28

References

Banaschewski, T. (2010). Emotional liability in children and adolescents with ADHD. Clinical correlates and familial prevalence. *European Psychiatry*, 25, 25. doi: 10.10116/S0924-9338.

Chand, L. (2015). A study of frustration tolerance in relation to achievement motivation and sports achievements. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1, 92-94.

Duplechain, R., Reigner, R. & Packard, A. (2008). Striking differences: The impact of moderate and high trauma on reading achievement. *Reading Psychology (29)*2.

Fillippello, P, Harrington, N., Buzzai, C., et. al. (2014) The relationship between frustration intolerance, unhealthy emotions, and assertive behavior in Italian students. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 32(4), 257-278.

Fives, C., Kong, G., Fuller, J., & DiGiuseppe, R., (2011). Anger, aggression, and irrational beliefs in adolescents. *Cognitive Therapy and Research (35)*1.

Frieze, S. (2015). How trauma affects student learning and behaviour. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education (7)*2.

Ghisi, M., Bottesi, G., Re, A. M., Cerea, S., & Mammarella, I. C. (2016). Socioemotional features and resilience in Italian university students with and without dyslexia. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*, 478. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00478

Harrington, N. (2005). The frustration discomfort scale: Development and psychometric properties. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*. 12, 374-387.

Kaypakli, G.Y. & Tamam, L. (2019). Emotional intelligence in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 11(1), 112-119.

Mahon, N., Yarcheski, A., Yarcheski, T., & Hanks, M. (2007). Relations of low frustration tolerance beliefs with stress, depression, and anxiety in young adolescents. *Psychological Reports (2007),* 100.

Meindl, P., Yu, A., Galla, B. M., Quirk, A., Haeck, C., Goyer, J. P., Lejuez, C. W., D'Mello, S. K., & Duckworth, A. L. (2019). A brief behavioral measure of frustration tolerance predicts academic achievement immediately and two years later. *Emotion 19*(6), 1081–1092.

Reyes, N. M., Pickard, K., & Reaven, J. (2019). Emotion regulation: A treatment target for autism spectrum disorder. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, *83*(3), 205–234.

Seymour, K. E., Macatee, R., & Chronis-Tuscano, A. (2019). Frustration tolerance in youth with ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *23*(11), 1229–1239. Doi: 10.1177/1087054716653216

Seymour, K. E., Rosch, K. S., Mostofsky, S. (2018). The effect of frustration on response control in children with ADHD: The importance of sex and comorbidity. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 57, S178.*

Shi, S., Zhang, Z., Wang, Y., Yue, H., Wang, Z., & Qian, S. (2021). The relationship between college teachers' frustration tolerance and academic performance. F*rontiers in Psychology*. 12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.564484.

Solomon, L. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (1984). Academic procrastination: Frequency and cognitive-behavioral correlates. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 31, 503-509. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.31.4.503.

Sorrenti, L., Spadaro, L., Mafodda, A., Scopelliti, G., Orecchio, S., & Filppello, P. (2019). The predicting role of school learned helplessness in internalizing and externalizing problems. An exploratory study in students with Specific Learning Disorder. *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology (7)* 2.

Sorrenti, L., Filppello, P., Caterina, B., & Costa, S. (2015). Frustration tolerance and psychological well-being: What relation? *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology* 65-86.

Surman C., Biederman J., Spencer T., Miller C., McDermott K., Faraone S. Understanding deficient emotional self-regulation in adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: A controlled study. *Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders*, *5*(3), 273–281. doi: 10.1007/s12402-012-0100-8.