



**Hatton School
& Special Needs Centre**

Incredible 5 Point Scale





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The Incredible 5 Point Scale



- High levels of stress and anxiety related to social situations, sensory issues or general frustration are common in children with Autism.
- Stress can lead to a loss of control resulting in a range of outward and obvious behaviours. It can also result in huge anxiety which may be less obvious and possibly masked by superficial compliance.
- Individuals with ASD tend to work best when taught with visual and predictable routines which make use of their good systematizing skills.
- There are many different tools which can be used to support social understanding. These include-: social stories, comic strip conversations. Social skills stories, Visual timetables, jigs, story boards, mind maps and rating scales.
- It is important to remember that good practice for Autism can be good practice for many other as well.
- The Incredible 5-point Scale (Buron & Curtis. 2003) introduces the use of a scale to teach social and emotional concepts to individuals who have difficulty learning such concepts, but who have a relative strength in learning systems.
- It is linked to research into systematizing and based on cognitive behavioural management.
- Cognitive behavioural management focuses on teaching children to recognize their own feelings of anxiety and then teach strategies to help to control them.
- The 5 point scale is a way to explain behaviour that makes it easier to understand, it does this by breaking down social and emotional concepts into 5 parts and using a number system rather than just spoken words to clarify each level of emotion or behaviour. This makes it easier to understand the different degrees of behaviour and helps pupils to focus on recognizing their feelings.

Rating	Looks or sounds like	Feels like	Safe people can help/ I can try to
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			



- This structured yet flexible child and adult friendly intervention can be used in many environments- making meltdowns more concrete
- Teachers and parents can use this technique to help children identify their behaviour at each of the 5 stages and remember things they can do if their worries get too big.
- Behaviours or emotions should be discussed individually. The behaviour is broken into 5 parts (levels or intensity of behaviour)
- There are a variety of formats that can be used to approach what the behaviour looks or sounds like, feels like and what might help.
- You can use words or pictures to suit the developmental maturity of the individual.
- There are some great stories which can help in this exploration e.g. When My Worries Get Too Big.
- You can also write a personalised social story which can help to introduce the purpose of the scale and clearly outline how it works.
- The 5 point scale is a proactive instruction which seeks to correct negative behaviour by identifying and teaching alternative positive behaviours.
- It is important to remember that teaching alternative behaviours needs to take place when a pupil is calmer. On the scale of anxiety, teaching can take place when a pupil is at 1, 2 or 3 but should not be attempted when a pupil has reached 4 or 5.
- There are many practical ways that this scale can be used at home and school to address a range of emotions, behaviours and practical issues.

Example of practical use for voice scale

An example of learning a concept with a scale can be illustrated by a student who often talks too loud for the situation. Telling that person to “be quiet” or “use an inside voice” may have no effect on the behavior.

Using a scale to further break down the expectations might be helpful. The first step is to decide how you want to break down the concept. You can use the scale to break volume down to illustrate silence all the way to screaming. Once you have created your scale, you can write a story for the pupil to explain the scale.

You can then post the scale near the pupil's desk or personal space.

The schedule should be reviewed often when the pupil is calm and ready to learn. Do not wait until the person is upset or in the midst of screaming to teach.

Once the pupil learns about the volume scale and has studied it repetitively, the parent or teacher can begin practicing its use in different environments. One way to do this is to use a small 5 point scale as a visual prompt. When the pupil is then talking loudly in the, the teacher can get their attention, point to the 4 on the small scale and pull her finger down to a 2. This provides a non-confrontational, systematic and visual way for prompting them.

Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis



- The Incredible 5 point scale can be used in this systematic and visual way to serve as a non confrontational prompt across a range of behaviours.
- The 5 point scale can also be used to support a functional analysis of behaviour and lead to greater understanding for pupils and teachers/parents.
- It is important to remember that the 5 point scale is a process that is built on relationships, listening and understanding.

The more someone with ASD understands his or her emotions, the more able that person is to express themselves appropriately
 Dr Tony Atwood

References

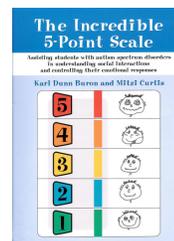
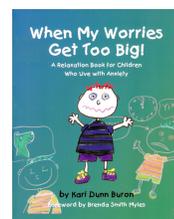
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Website

www.5pointscale.com was developed to share information about the use of the 5-point scale and other systems to teach social and emotional concepts to individuals on the autism spectrum



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