

# The Incredible 5 Point Scale

## What is The Incredible 5 Point Scale?

The 5 Point Scale may help children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) learn how to identify and manage their own behaviours and emotions. At each level your child will identify what each rating may look like, feel like, and possible solutions to control them. By using a graphic 5 point numerical scale, this may help put abstract information into a concrete, visible, and measurable format that can be referred to at any time by either the child or parent (Dunn & Curtis, 2003).

## Why might you use The Incredible 5 Point Scale?

- It is a visual strategy and many children with ASD benefit from learning with visuals
- May teach social understanding and expectations
- May work as a self-management tool for children to identify their own feelings and emotions during difficult situations
- Can be used as a visual reminder for children of the level they are currently at and where they should try to be (e.g., volume of voice)
- Can be used to address many different issues
  - Social issues
  - Emotional issues
  - Voice volume
  - Meeting and greeting others
  - Anxiety
  - Stress management
  - Repetitive behaviours

Rating	Looks like...	Feels like...	I can try to...
5	Wide-eyed, screaming and running, hitting.	My head is going to explode if I don't get away.	Show an adult that I am at a 5 and need to leave the area to go to my safe zone.
4	Threaten others, swear or push into them.	People are staring at me. I feel angry and upset.	Count to 10. Leave the room for a walk.
3	You can't tell I'm scared. I start to shake my leg and tapping my fingers.	Stomach is in knots.	Doodle in my book. Draw about how I feel. Close my eyes.
2	I still look fine.	My stomach gets a little queasy.	Slow my breathing. Tell someone safe how I feel.
1	Normal- Smiling, talking nicely.	Can't explain.	Enjoy it!!!!

(Dunn & Curtis, 2003)

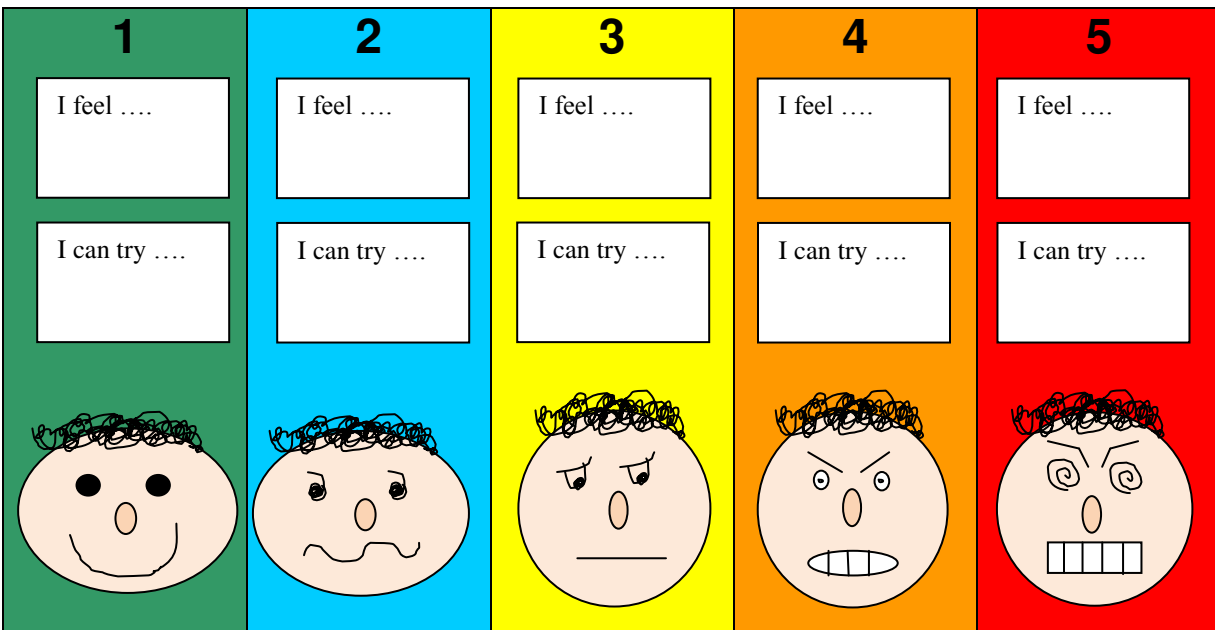
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## Where could you use The Incredible 5 Point Scale?

- The Incredible 5 Point Scale can be used in many different settings, including home, school and community

## How could you use The Incredible 5 Point Scale?

- Prioritize the feeling, emotion, or skill to be targeted in the scale (e.g., anxiety, anger, volume of voice)
- Determine the number of levels to be included (e.g. 1-5, or 1-3)
- Identify possible replacement or coping skills (e.g. "I can try to")
- Work with your child to develop the scale
- Use your child's own words at each level
- Identify (when required):
  - Safe places
    - A prearranged space that your child is allowed to go to when they begin to feel anxious/frustrated
  - Safe people
    - A list of people who know and understand the needs of your child and are aware of the strategies
- Prepare for a variety of situations/environments (e.g., home, community outings, school)
- Introduce the scale during a neutral activity and when your child is calm
- Encourage your child to rate themselves several times a day with adult support
- Assist your child by helping him/her attend to the scale, practice using it in a calm environment and then by reinforcing each of your child's attempts





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## Keep in mind

- Have the scale available for your child to refer to at all times (e.g. on a card in his/her pocket, inside his/her backpack, or on the fridge)
- Colour code the numbers
- Reinforcement will be necessary throughout the learning process
- Reinforce attempts to use relaxation techniques in appropriate situations
- Praise your child's ability to recognize stress levels
- Reinforce practice sessions of relaxation techniques and replacement skills
- *It is important to identify appropriate relaxation techniques for each individual child. What might be relaxing for one child may not be for another child*

## Before implementing any strategy, remember to:

1. Assess: What is your child currently able to do?
2. Goal: what is a specific goal for your child to work towards?
3. Strategies: How will you teach to reach the goal?
4. Monitor: How will you know if the teaching strategies are working?

## References

Dunn, K., & Curtis, M. (2003). *The incredible 5-point scale: Assisting students with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing.

McAfee, J. (2002). *Navigating the social world: A curriculum for individuals with asperger's syndrome, high functioning autism and related disorders*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.

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Rating	Looks like...	Feels like...	I can try to...
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			