

### The Incredible 5-Point Scale

The Incredible 5-Point Scale simplifies behaviors by assigning them a number and /or colour. A scale is created for a specific individual or group of individuals and tailored for a specific situation or behavior. The key is to identify the behavior to be addressed and then to break this down into 5 concrete parts or stages.

For example, if a member of support staff was able to work 1:1 with the pupil in an effort to help him address his anger, they could follow steps such as the following (for further advice please refer to the original text 'The Incredible 5 point scale' by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis)

- The first stage is to trial different means of relaxation and emotion regulation with the child. There are a host of ideas on the internet for strategies the child can use – play with these, ask the pupil which ones he would like to try. Examples include: taking 5 deep breaths, counting to ten on each out-breath; progressive muscle relaxation, where you tense and relax the muscles up your body, starting with your toes and ending with your shoulders; counting to ten; drawing; colouring; standing outside the classroom; phoning home; physical exercise; listening to a piece of music etc. Ask the child to trial a strategy for a week. Remind the child every morning what they are trying and why they are doing this. At the end of each day ask whether there was an incident which upset them and if so, to rate out of ten, how effective the strategy was



The second stage uses the 5 point scale:

- Ask the pupil if it is ok to discuss a recent time when he lost his temper.
- Ask the pupil ; Was that the most angry you have ever been? If not, can he remember a time when he was even more angry? Once you have established such a time, ask him to discuss what he remembers about it, crucially, what it *felt* like and what other people would have *seen*?
- The pupil's response might be along the lines of *"It feels horrible, my head hurts, I've lost control I just want to get out of the room and away from people"*. It doesn't matter what the pupil says at this point, but you must write exactly what he says. Do the same for what does that behaviour look like (eg. *"I will throw over tables, punch walls and shout really loud, then I will run away"*)
- Once you have written this down, you then have what a '5' looks and feels like on the pupil's scale of anger
- Compare the above to what it feels and looks like when the pupil is really happy and chilled out. This would be a '1' on the pupil's scale – again write down the pupil's responses for this
- Then ask the pupil to think of a time when he wasn't a '5' or a '1'. Ask the pupil to tell you about what happened first, get him to really think about it before answering the question
- At the end of all this, you should be able to start to fill out a table, such as the one on the following page
- The final column of this chart outlines what the pupil can do to help himself either regulate or deescalate his anxiety. Refer back to the first piece of work and add the strategies in the chart, reserve the most effective strategy for when the pupil is at a five and work backwards
- When using the intervention in class, or at home you can then speak in numbers – the pupil, you are looking like a 3 right now, what can we do to help you get to a 1 (or 2)? Better still, the pupil does not have to rely on speech to articulate how he is feeling – *"Sir, I am at a 4, I need to....."* Children typically find this an easier concept to understand compared to being asked *"How are you feeling?"*

The "Tried and True" Scales from the First Edition

Name: David My scared/Afraid/Trembling Scale

Rating      Looks/sounds like      Feels like      Safe people can help/ can try to

<b>5</b>	 Wide-eyed, maybe screaming, and running, hitting.	I am going to explode if I don't do something.	I will need an adult to help me leave. Help!
<b>4</b>	 Threaten others or bump them.	People are talking about me. I feel irritated, mad.	Close my mouth and hum. Squeeze my hands. Leave the room for a walk.
<b>3</b>	You can't tell I'm scared. Jaw clenched.	I shiver inside.	Write or draw about it. Close my eyes.
<b>2</b>	I still look normal.	My stomach gets a little queasy.	Slow my breathing. Tell somebody safe how I feel.
<b>1</b>	Normal - you can't tell by looking at me.	I don't know, really.	Enjoy it!

