

INCREDIBLE 5-POINT SCALE

CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input type="checkbox"/> PK	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior
			<input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech
			<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Being aware of their emotions is important for students with autism (AU) to help them deal with difficult situations and, therefore, prevent meltdowns. The Incredible 5-Point Scale (Buron & Curtis, 2003) helps students understand themselves and manage their emotions and behavior as consequences of the emotion. By rating themselves on these visual scales, students can learn to identify and label their own emotions.

DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Incredible 5-Point Scale is to help students with autism become aware of their emotions, such as anger, fear, or pain, and the stage of the emotion. The Incredible 5-Point Scale is considered particularly effective for students with Asperger Syndrome, but the authors point out that it also works well with students with classic autism. One-to-one instruction is suggested as the best condition for introducing this strategy to the student.

Using the scale, the student rates his emotions or status of a condition or situation. This in turn allows him to (a) provide information to the teacher about how he is feeling, (b) manage his thinking process, or (c) implement the desired behavior as a proactive approach. Talking in numbers instead of describing or naming their emotional or mental status helps students with AU think efficiently in order to make a right decision under a given set of circumstances. Buron

and Curtis (2003) suggest that a story, narrative, or memo written along with the scale can be very useful in providing information about the purpose of the scale.

Example uses of the Incredible 5-Point Scale include:

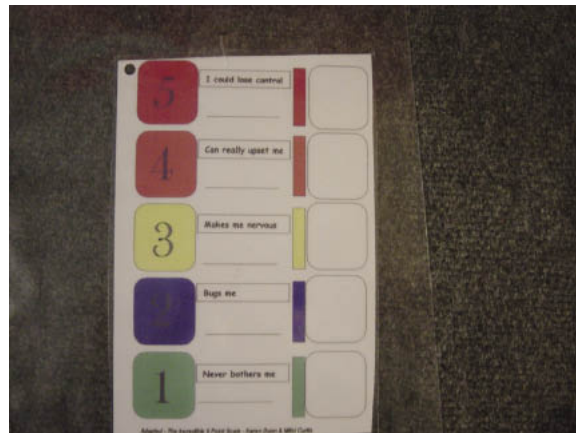
Rating own voice volume

- Facilitating the right voice volume for certain situations
- Rating anger levels
- Checking levels and types of inappropriate behaviors
- Self-monitoring obsessional levels



Fill in your own Stress Scale

Level	Person, place or thing	Make me feel like this:
5		This could make me lose control!!!
4		This can really upset me.
3		This can make me feel nervous.
2		This sometimes bothers me.
1		This never bothers me.



From the Geneva Centre on Autism (www.autism.net). Used with permission.

STEPS

The following steps may be used when implementing a 5-Point Scale with a student:

1. *Choose the target behavior.* Any kind of behavior or status can be a target behavior if rating the level or status of the behavior enhances adaptability. Anxiety or other feelings that usually result in problem behaviors may also be also targeted for rating.
2. *Decide on the content for each scale point associated with the target behavior.* In the Incredible 5-Point Scale, each of the five stages represents the level or magnitude of the target behavior.
3. *Develop a story or visual cue for the story, if necessary.* The story or visual cue should be developed carefully based on the student's interest or level of understanding. It should explain how the scale is to be used.
4. *Introduce the scale to the student.* To use the scale successfully, the student must learn how to discriminate and identify each stage.
5. *Practice the scale with the student, revising it if necessary.* Peers who understand the student can support her as she practices the appropriate behavior or interaction by using the scale. Adults, including parents, teachers, or others in the setting, can help by using the scale for the student in various situations.

BRIEF EXAMPLE

Aron is in the third grade. He likes to learn about states and their capital cities in social studies class. He is very sensitive to proximity related to space issues. He also feels overwhelmed by sensory stimuli, especially noise. When the class has a team activity to discuss and work it together, Aron covers his ears and sometimes screams. As a result, his classmates are afraid to be with him and reluctant to work with him.

Mr. Johnson developed the 5-Point Scale for Aron and explained to him about the scale. To prevent sudden upsets or disruptive behavior in class, Mr. Johnson taught each stage of the scale for Aron's participation in class activities as follows:

- 5 I can't control it. I want to go to a calm place out of the classroom.
- 4 I want to relax in a quiet place in the classroom.
- 3 I can't concentrate on the task and want to observe the activity nearby.
- 2 I am getting upset about the activity that I am working on. But I still want to be in a the class.
- 1 I feel great and want to keep participating in any activity.

TIPS FOR MODIFICATIONS

When the target behavior needs to be addressed, adults in the setting can carry the 5-Point Scale in their ID tags, for example, to have it close at hand.

RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
0				

REFERENCES

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

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Autism Notes: <http://www.autismnotes.com/meet-kari-dunn-buron-author-of-a-5-is-against-the-law-asa-award-winner/>
This links to a question-and-answer interview with Kari Dunn Buron, author of *A 5 Is Against the Law!*
- The Incredible 5-Point Scale: <http://www.5pointscale.com/>
This page includes links with additional ideas/suggestions for using the scale.

- Buron, K. D. (2003). *When my autism gets too big!* Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Buron, K. D., & Curtis, M. (2008). *The 5-point scale and anxiety poster*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
These materials describe how to use the Incredible 5-Point Scale.