The Incredible 5-Point Scale

Assisting Students in Understanding Social Interactions and Controlling their Emotional Responses

Adapted from Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis

Nebraska ASD Network
www.unl.edu/asdnetwork
Powerpoint Presentation

- http://seasdnetwork.wordpress.com
- www.unl.edu/asdnetwork
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of the intervention *the Incredible 5-Point Scale*
- View examples of the Incredible 5-Point Scale being used in school, home, work, and community settings
- Develop an understanding of the Anxiety Curve and how it relates to behavior
Primary Characteristics of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Atypical development of social competence
- Atypical development of communication
- Atypical range of interests and patterns of behavior

Student with ASDs don’t learn to recognize and express emotions indirectly and intuitively
Lack of Behavior/Social Skills Instruction Results

Individuals with poor social skill are at risk for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School drop out</th>
<th>Delinquency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Alcoholism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Low self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Peer rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile convictions</td>
<td>Social maladjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and emotional health problems</td>
<td>Employment difficulties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Abilities and Emotions

- Acting, reacting and interacting relies or is dependent on:
  - How quickly we assess people and situations
  - How efficiently we assess people and situations

- Directly teaching social abilities and emotional regulation provides practice and fluency in applying them
Support for Behavior/Social Skills Lessons

- Social skills deficiency in childhood best predicts significant problems in adulthood (Strain and Odom, 1986)

- Emotional intelligence is more important in predicting life success than IQ (Goleman, 1995)

- Poor social skills are responsible for much of our unemployment and underemployment (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998)
Incentives for Social/Behavioral Skills Instruction

- Research is clear that reducing behaviors increases focus on positive learning because of fewer
  - Behavioral problems
  - Office discipline referrals
  -Suspensions
  - Manifest determinations
The Incredible Five-Point Scale: A Cognitive Behavior Intervention

- Abstract concepts and feelings are made
  - Visual—depicts intensity or degree of emotion/behavior
  - Concrete
  - Static
  - Personal

- Is a direct, instrumental way of teaching emotions
  - Typical students learn to recognize and express emotions indirectly and intuitively from exposure to family, friends, school companions
The premise is easy and can be adapted for almost every behavior or expectation imaginable.

In their book, *The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Assisting students with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses*, Buron and Curtis (2003), provide multiple examples for use including: (a) controlling voice level, (b) dealing with obsessive behaviors, and (c) meeting and greeting others to name a few.
DESIGNING A 5-POINT SCALE

Given that the majority of individuals with ASD are visual learners, the Incredible 5-Point Scale simplifies behaviors by assigning them a number and/or color.
Purposes of the Incredible 5-Point Scale

- Provides a mutual definition of terms
- Simplifies language
- Breaks down unclear concepts
- Teaches recognition and cues for internal feelings
- Promotes self-managing behavior or emotional regulation
Versatility of the Incredible 5-Point Scale

- It can be used in social skills group or with individuals
  - Of different ages
  - Across a wide variety of circumstances
  - In a broad array of situations

**Designed for use with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder—applicable to students in general education**
USING THE 5-POINT SCALE

The Incredible 5-Point Scale can provide support at:

- School
- Home
- Work
- Community

(Can help alleviate power struggles)
The Incredible 5-Point Scale can be applied prior to, during, or after an event or situation.
Proactive Behavioral Support

Don’t FORGET!

It can used to prime an individual of behavior that is and is not acceptable and cue use of the appropriate skill.
During a Situation

It can provide a visual reminder of the individual's behavior at that specific point in time.
After a Situation

It can serve as an evaluation tool.

You stayed at a “2”!

Great Job!
Using the Incredible 5-Point Scale

- Student demonstrates a behavior or misinterprets a social situation
  - Define a specific behavior or emotion
    - Break the behavior into 5 parts/levels & define the behavior at each number
    - Discuss with the student when it is appropriate to be at each place on the scale

- Write a story at the child’s level and share in 1-on-1 teaching

- Discuss what it looks like

- Discuss what it feels like

- **Teach** positive alternatives to the behavior or actions to move from a higher point on the scale to a lower one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Looks Like</th>
<th>Feels Like</th>
<th>I Can Try to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5      | Holding my breath  
        Hitting others  
        Throwing objects | I will tear the place apart  
        I feel hot  
        Saying bad things | Lay on the couch covered up with the blanket  
        Punch a pillow |
| 4      | Breathing hard  
        Fidgeting  
        Face is white  
        Arms/legs shake  
        Tell people to shut up | There is a chill down my spine  
        Tingeling down my back | Bite on something  
        Squeeze something  
        Go to the sensory room  
        Deep pressure  
        Have my back scratched |
| 3      | Sitting in my chair  
        Paying attention  
        Face is normal | Happy  
        “Just right” | |
| 2      | Frowning  
        Breathing different  
        Still | Quiet  
        “Gone” — hard to listen | Drink Dr. Pepper  
        Take a break — play a game  
        Purple swing in sensory room |
| 1      | Eyes are closed  
        Tired  
        Falling asleep | Purple Swing  
        Take a short nap | |
An Example…

- Video from a STEPS participant
The Anxiety Curve
Recognizing When to Teach

Teacher (Recognizing) Anxiety Scale

- Bite, hit, kick, explode
  - (Silently protect)
- Too late
- Give space
- Encourage
- Refocus
- Redirect
- Teach positive strategies here

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This is the foundation of your plan. This is where positive and valued relationships are built and where you teach skills needed to function successfully in challenging situations. Examples might include the 5-point scale, Social Stories, Power Cards, a calming sequence, yoga, or social skills.

1. This is the staff or parent curve. You need to control your own anxiety during a crisis in order to help to diffuse the person's anxiety. Your instincts tell you to engage in fight or flight, you can do neither. Use silence and your own calming sequence.

2. Use calm redirection here

3. Use encouraging, supportive words here. If possible, don't discuss the incident.

4. Now is the time to leave the anxiety-producing event if possible

5. This is not a time to ask the person to make choices. Model calming strategies

This could include hitting, throwing, biting, swearing and crying

This is peak anxiety. It is not a time to talk, direct or problem solve

Redirection here can result in a ripped assignment. The person should be encouraged to relax rather than make any decisions
Case Study: Jonah
# The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice Description</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the voice I use when someone is in DANGER!</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Watch out for that car!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a recess or P. E. voice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I’m open; pass me the ball!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use this voice in the classroom so my teacher and others can hear me.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The capital of NE is Lincoln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a quiet voice; I use it to work with a partner.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maybe, we can build a model of a volcano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence; no voice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>When my teacher is giving a lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Words Hurt

Sometimes other kids say or do thing that I get mad at. Sometimes they give a wrong answer or call me names when I can’t do something. When kids do these things, I get angry and before I think, I hit or kick. Using words is better than hitting or kicking but they can still hurt others or get me in trouble for swearing. When I swear or say mean things, other people may think I am going to hurt them or don’t like them. When I swear, other people might decide not to be my friend anymore. My teacher can help me by defining #4 words for me. I can write those words on the scale and try to remember to use them when am mad.
### Defining the Behaviors

#### Incredible 5-Point Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The bus home is noisy and smells like the gym.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I've had it; I'm going to explode.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t jump rope in p.e. Joey called me slow.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I called Joey a !&amp;%^^.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch changed from chicken nuggets to stew— I hate mixed food.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can’t eat that &amp; just drank my milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were out of my favorite cereal but Mom fixed French toast.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I told Mom to put Lucky Charms on the shopping list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I went to bed early, had my favorite cereal this morning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel happy. My day is off to a good start.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Next Steps

- Use a My _____________ Scale Sheet
- Filling in this sheet begins to make the alternative behavior more concrete and visual whether you choose to use words or, if you have a younger or developmentally less mature student, you draw picture to show Looks like, Feels like, and I can try to…
## The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Emotional Regulation-Anger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Looks/Sounds like</th>
<th>Feels like</th>
<th>I can try to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hitting, kicking</td>
<td>Volcano</td>
<td>Ask to call/go home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Swearing</td>
<td>I am about to erupt</td>
<td>Use words I learned from Mrs. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can’t sit &amp; my face is red</td>
<td>Fidgety</td>
<td>Take 3 deep breaths and ask for a break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I’m sitting and attending</td>
<td>Other kids, maybe</td>
<td>Stay in the groove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am ready for anything</td>
<td>Sitting on the beach</td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remember

- Just as some students have reading or math difficulties, some students have difficulty selecting and using appropriate social skills.

- Moving from correcting negative behaviors to teaching positive behavior is proactive instruction.

- Once an alternative behavior or social skill is identified, it has to be discretely taught.
Direct Instruction

- Clearly Define: What Do You Want Them To Do?
- Describe: What Does It Look and Sound Like?
- Rationale: Why Is It Important?
- Model: Demonstrate
- Practice; Examples and Non-Examples
- Feedback: Specific and Immediate
Autism Internet Modules

- The Incredible 5-Point Scale

- Visit this site
  http://www.autisminternetmodules.org
Selected References:

Books

Video
For Additional Information

- Think Social! A Social Thinking Curriculum for School-Age Students for Teaching Social Thinking and Related Skills to students with High Functioning Autism, PDD-NOS, Asperger Syndrome, Nonverbal Learning Disability, ADHD by Michelle Garcia Winner
- Thinking About YOU Thinking About ME by Michelle Garcia Winner
- Solving the Relationship Puzzle by Steven Gutstein
- Navigating the Social World by Jeanette McAfee
- Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome and Social Communication Problems by Jed Baker