

# Outreach Service Guide

## ADVICE ON HOW TO USE THE 3-POINT EMOTION/STRESS SCALE

Pupils with autism often have difficulty understanding and dealing with their emotions. Without an appropriate way to recognise and express their feelings, a pupil may display unpredictable and swift changes of mood, going from happy and engaged to frustrated and inconsolable.

The purpose of the emotion/stress scale is to:

1. Support pupils understanding their own emotions, particularly the middle emotional states (e.g. between the two ends of the emotional spectrum 'happy' to 'furious' are the 'build up' emotions - worried/anxious, etc.).
2. Teach pupils how to respond and deal with their emotions in an appropriate manner (e.g. 'if I am a worried I can take a couple of deep breaths')

### Implementing the emotion/stress scale

The first thing to do when using the emotion/stress scale is to decide with the pupil which three key emotional states to work on (e.g. calm/happy/ok, anxious/worried/frustrated, angry/lost control/furious, etc.). Use the pupil's language whenever possible (e.g. *'this could make me feel like the Hulk!'*)

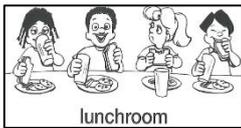
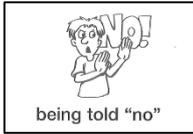
Level	Person, place or thing	Makes me feel like this	What I can do
3		 This could make me feel <i>angry</i>	
2		 This could make me feel <i>worried.</i>	
1		 This <i>never</i> bothers me - I feel <i>ok!</i>	

Subject: [tpad](#)

In order to help the pupil identify what triggers these key emotional states, you will need to focus in separate sessions on the following:

- **places** that make him/her feel..... (e.g. calm, anxious and out of control)
- **people** that make him/her feel..... (e.g. calm, anxious and out of control)
- **things** that make him/her feel..... (e.g. calm, anxious and out of control)

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Level	Person, place or thing	Makes me feel like this	What I can do
3	Playing with the iPad and a child takes it off me without asking	This could make me feel angry	
2	Playing with the iPad with another child sitting right	This could make me feel worried.	
1	Playing with the iPad by myself	This never bothers me - I feel ok!	

Subject: ipad

Ensure that this information is clearly recorded under the relevant headings (places, people and things) e.g. Use a highlighter or write/draw possible scenarios on blank playing cards (see examples above).

You then need to work with the pupil on identifying simple and clear coping strategies especially for when they have reached **Level 2/Amber** on the scale. The pupil needs to learn to use the coping strategies at this point in order to prevent reaching **Level 3/Red**, as by this point they would probably need an adult to intervene.

Level	Person, place or thing	Makes me feel like this	What I can do
3	Playing with the iPad and a child takes it off me without asking	This could make me feel angry	I will need Mary (my teacher) to support me and go to the quiet area till I feel calm again.
2	Playing with the iPad with another child sitting right	This could make me feel worried.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask Mary (my teacher) for help</li> <li>• Try moving to another chair (away from the child)</li> </ul>
1	Playing with the iPad by myself	This never bothers me - I feel ok!	Keep going!

Subject: ipad

**N.B.** It is important to complete and use the emotion/stress scale forms regularly, as situations arise. The forms could also be collected into a folder or a book as this will provide the pupil with a concrete resource they can refer back to when needed.

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Support the pupil to use the 3-point scale on a daily basis. A discreet portable 3-point scale visual prompt could be developed, so that the pupil can use it around the school and in the playground.



Check in regularly with the pupil where he/she is on the scale. Initially you may need to prompt the pupil where you think they may be on the scale and when to use one of their coping strategies if they reach the **amber level**. Gradually you can reduce/fade prompting as the pupil will begin to use the system more independently.

Ensure that the pupil is praised and rewarded for using the 3-point scale, in order they associate it with a positive way of communicating with others about their emotional states, as well as to encourage them to try new coping strategies when they become anxious/stressed/worried, etc.

Once the pupil is confident in using the 3-point emotion/stress scale, you might want to consider working on more subtle emotions using the 5-point scale. Below are a couple of very useful resources you might want to use:

- **'A 5 could make me lose control!' - Kari Dunn Buron**
- **The Incredible 5-point Scale – Kari Dunn Buron & Mitzi Curtis**