

Behavioral Response Script Using the Incredible 5-Point Scale

The “Incredible 5 Point Scale” (Kari Dunn Buron; <http://www.5pointscale.com>) is a visual system to assist students in understanding social, emotional, and behavioral concepts and expectations and to recognize varying levels of stress and anxiety. It is a cognitive behavioral method of teaching students how to recognize their own internal emotional states and then to practice successful responses to those emotions. Information on a variety of other uses of the scale can be found on the Autism Internet Modules website (www.autisminternetmodules.org). For use in developing behavioral scripts for staff and a behavioral self-management system for students, the following steps should be followed:

- 1) Identify what the student says and does during each phase of a behavioral escalation and document on the scale form. Fewer levels can be used if 5 distinctive escalation levels does not exist. To use as a self-management system, have the student also identify how he/she feels during each phase of the escalation and document on the scale form. A fillable form is available below.
- 2) Develop a step by step script for staff to follow when the student begins a behavioral escalation. Key ideas and concepts for developing the script is noted in the example script below. When used as a self-management system, identify what the student can do at each level in the escalation to reduce stress or anxiety such as taking a break. Document on the scale form.
- 3) Teach and implement the system. Staff and students can begin to think and respond in terms of ‘being at’ a level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 using the scale as a visual prompt.

POINTS to remember:

- The PURPOSE of a script is to consistently respond to students in such a way to reduce the probability of further escalation while continuing to teach students the expectations and how to respond to varying emotional states.
- Scripts should be nonverbal (or minimal verbal), non-emotional, & non-punitive. Since the example script below is to help staff understand the basic steps in the process, more words are listed than one should use. Make sure to create basic visuals for all the steps so staff can limit words and use more visuals.
- When using the script, ensure staff monitor their paraverbal communication (e.g. not what it said, but HOW it is said), so the response does not come across emotional or punitive.
- If the crisis plan requires physical intervention or seclusion, be sure staff are well aware and follow procedures set forth by the Michigan Department of Education for the Emergency Use of Seclusion & Restraint (http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/StandardsforSeclusion-Restraint_247533_7.pdf.)

Basic 5 Point Scale Script

Level of Escalation	What STUDENT says / does; How STUDENT feels	What STAFF says or does; What STUDENT can do (ex. Choices / Options)
Level 5--Aggression	Physical aggression toward self / others.	• CRISIS / EMERGENCY INTERVENTION PLAN
Level 4—Anger	Verbal aggression including threats of physical harm	• Forced break / time away
Level 3—Agitation	Noticeable increase or change in behavior	• BREAK to reduce stress; evaluate environment for potential stressors
Level 2—Anxiety	Slight change in behavior	• Strategies to alleviate anxiety
Level 1--GREEN	Appropriate behavior & following expectations	• Provide positive feedback / reinforcement

Example 5 Point Scale Script

Level of Escalation	What STUDENT says / does; How STUDENT feels	What STAFF says or does; What STUDENT can do (ex. Choices / Options)
Level 5-- Aggression	Student kicks and hits others, throws objects, or bangs head.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This level involves an immediate time away for the protection of the student, peers and staff; Staff will need to develop time away procedures including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the student is informed he/she must go to time away Where time away will be located: How the student will get to the time away location, especially if he/she won't go alone: How long time away will last before evaluating readiness to return to schedule (no greater than 5 minutes) and procedures for evaluating readiness Procedures for exiting time away and returning to the schedule / work Wayne RESA Behavioral Guidelines document may assist in developing time away procedures (http://www.resa.net/downloads/special_education_guidelines/behavior_intervention.pdf) At this level, often a crisis plan is needed. Crisis plans should be developed when it can be anticipated that the student may become a danger to himself or others. If a pattern of behavior which requires seclusion or restraint, the team will need to develop an Emergency Intervention Plan (EIP). The plan must align to the procedures set forth by the Michigan Department of Education for the Emergency Use of Seclusion & Restraint (http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/StandardsforSeclusion-Restraint_247533_7.pdf). EXAMPLE SCRIPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once student is in time away, staff sets timer for 5 minutes and says "When you are calm, we will go back to your schedule." Once the student knows this procedure, there is no need to say anything. REDUCE LANGUAGE, USE VISUALS, and say NOTHING MORE. At this level, staff should not engage or interact with the student at any level except when the timer goes off. When timer goes off, staff evaluates student's readiness to return to schedule. Basic readiness is that the student has a calm body and voice. If student is ready (e.g. has calm body and voice—do not ask the student if he/she is ready, just use the evaluation), staff says "It's time to return to the schedule." The schedule should include a task that allows the staff to evaluate the student's readiness to return to the schedule. This task should be short in nature, easy for the student to do, not non-preferred but not highly reinforcing. If student is not ready, set timer for 5 more minutes and follow the steps above until the student is ready to return to schedule, completes the evaluation activity and returns to schedule. Be sure to keep a log of this time out of the educational setting.
Level 4— Anger	Student screams, yells, swears; stomps feet, and threatens physical harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This level often involves removing the student from the setting to prevent escalation to level 5. Similar time away procedures as outlined in level 5 can be used, if needed. If not a time away, a forced break can also be used at this level. Similar break procedures as outlines in level 3 can be used at this level as well. EXAMPLE SCRIPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately prompt a break, "Johnny, you are at a level 4 (or orange level). It is time to take a break (or indicate the break activity to do). If student responds to the break, follow break

		procedures and move on; If student refuses to take a break, prompt time away: “It’s time away” and follow time away procedures.
Level 3— Agitation	Student gets louder and starts saying “This is stupid” or “This is f’n stupid”; Voice is loud and behaviors from Level 2 are more exaggerated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This level often involves teaching the student to take a break. Remember, break is a time-limited reduction of demand to allow the student the opportunity to regain emotional control without pushing him/her to a higher level of escalation. As such, the team should establish break procedures in advance. The following should be considered and added to the script: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What activity or activities serve to calm the student but are not highly reinforcing. Examples include simply staying seated but demands are reduced, taking a walk, getting a drink of water, going to a calming area, etc. How long should break be? Typically no longer than 5 minutes. How will the student request a break (ex. Break card, hall pass, verbal request, etc.) If the student has not yet learned to request a break, how will staff prompt a break so he/she can learn over time to pair internal emotional states with the break. EXAMPLE SCRIPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff says “Johnny, it looks like you are at a level 3 <or yellow level>; it’s time to take a break. If student refuses to go to a break, staff says, “You can either <indicated the expected work behavior> or take a break (provide a visual choice; which do you want to do?” If student chooses, provide positive feedback and move on. If he does not choose and clearly still escalated, staff says, “Gavin, either you will need to choose or I will choose for you.” If student chooses, provide positive feedback and move on. If he does not choose, staff should prompt a break (“Gavin, it’s time for a break <use visual>”) and follow developed break procedures.
Level 2— Anxiety	Student is off task, laughing or staring off into space; Whistling or clapping; Tone of voice may change; Puts head down and looks frustrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This level is intended to prevent the probability of further escalation and as such, removal from the learning environment. Strategies will vary significantly depending on the needs of the student. EXAMPLE SCRIPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When these behavior(s) occur, prompt student to the expectations: “Johnny, what does it mean to be respectful (or safe or responsible) in this environment?” or “It is respectful to <indicate the expectation>” (Point to the posted expectations). Once the expectations are pointed out, redirect to the current expected behavior: “It’s time to do your work quietly.” or “Your schedule says it’s time to go to group.” If student complies, provide positive feedback and move on. If student continues to engage in the behavior, but does not escalate to level 3, think in ABC / FBA to implement a strategy that will reduce the anxiety: What are the antecedents leading to the issue; What are the potential functions of behavior? Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make changes to potential antecedents causing the problem? Add visuals to clarify expectations. Add modifications to reduce the level of demand or increase motivation to engage. The team should decide a time frame or number of attempts staff will use to reduce the anxiety before prompting the student to a break. This will prevent over-prompting.

Level 1-- GREEN	Student follows instructions, is actively engaged in the learning / social environment, and is not presenting with behavioral challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this level, ensure staff are implementing Tier 1 interventions with fidelity Ensure staff give students frequent positive feedback for expected behaviors such as “Thumbs up for completing your work!” or “Give yourself a coin (or other reinforcement system) for staying seated during the activity.”
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Behavioral Response Script

Student Name (DOB):

School (ISD, District, Building):

Date:

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Level 5-- Aggression		
Level 4— Anger		
Level 3— Agitation		
Level 2— Anxiety		

Level 1-- GREEN		
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