

## Using a “Stress Scale”

It’s hard for kids to understand what’s happening inside themselves when they’re feeling stressed and know how to get back to being calm. Creating and using a stress scale with your child is a great way to help everyone understand what’s going on and choose safe and effective ways to cope. This is a life-long challenge and skill to develop. This handout shows one way to make a stress scale, modelled after Kari Dunn Buron’s Incredible 5-Point Scale (<https://www.5pointscale.com/>).

<p>1. Start by printing off or making a 3-point scale.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>My Stress Scale</b></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Looks and feels like</th> <th style="text-align: center;">My strategies</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><b>3</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><b>2</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><b>1</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Looks and feels like	My strategies	<b>3</b>			<b>2</b>			<b>1</b>		
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<b>2</b>													
<b>1</b>													
<p>2. In the first box beside #1 (in the “Looks and feels like” column), describe what it feels like to be calm.</p> <p>In the first box beside #2, describe how it feels to have a medium amount of stress.</p> <p>In the first box beside #3, describe how it feels to have a lot of stress.</p> <p>... What do you feel inside your body, and how do you act?</p>	<p><b>Questions to ask yourself:</b></p> <p>How does your heart feel? Fast or slow? Is your breathing fast or slow? What does your face look like? Are your eyebrows furrowed? Is your jaw clenched? Are you hot or cold? Are you sweating? Do you feel like moving around or hiding somewhere? What are you thinking about? Can you control your feelings, thoughts, and actions?</p>												

<p>3. In the second box beside #1 (in the “My strategies” column), list what your child can do to stay calm.</p> <p>In the second box beside #2, list the strategies your child can use to calm down from a medium amount of stress.</p> <p>In the second box beside #3, list the strategies that your child can use to stay safe and calm down from a lot of stress.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Ideas for strategies</u></b></p> <p><b><u>To stay calm when you’re at a 1:</u></b></p> <p>Eat and sleep regularly  Practice yoga and meditation daily  Practice daily gratitudes  Get and give hugs to your loved ones  Take breaks</p> <p><b><u>To get calm when you’re at a 2:</u></b></p> <p>Take a break and play  Do some yoga or stretching (Storyhive yoga for kids on your tube)  Take belly breaths  Eat a snack  Do some exercise like running or biking</p> <p><b><u>To get calm when you’re at a 3:</u></b></p> <p>Go to my quiet corner  Take belly breaths  Squeeze my hands together</p> <p><b>**Once you’re at a #2, use those strategies to get back to #1</b></p>
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\*\*On the next page is an example of a completed stress scale that we made to show what one can look like. The strategies suggested are merely suggestions, as everyone has their own strategies. For more ideas on how to reduce stress, look at the handout, *Strategies to Reduce Stress*.

# My Stress Scale

## Looks and feels like

## My strategies

<p style="font-size: 48pt; color: red; text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>My body's moving</p> <p>I'm doing thing that aren't safe</p> <p>I can't control my body or my feelings</p>	<p>Go to my quiet corner</p> <p>Squeeze a stress ball</p> <p>Take belly breaths</p>
<p style="font-size: 48pt; color: yellow; text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Can't focus, wiggly body</p> <p>Talking too much</p> <p>Thinking about too much at the same time</p> <p>Tummy feels upset and hands are sweaty</p>	<p>Ask for help</p> <p>Take belly breaths</p> <p>Take a break or go to my quiet corner</p> <p>Drink water and have a healthy snack</p>
<p style="font-size: 48pt; color: green; text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>I'm getting my work done</p> <p>Smiling and happy</p> <p>Proud of myself</p>	<p>Take breaks</p> <p>Ask for help when I need it</p> <p>Congratulate myself: "Way to go!"</p>