

REFLECTING WITHOUT WRITING

Scales and Check-ins

Use simple scales and gestures

A practical guide with no written answers required.

START HERE

A way to reflect that fits you

A number, gesture or simple choice can make a check-in easier than finding a full explanation. It does not measure your worth or prove how you should feel. It is just one snapshot, in your own terms.

What this approach can offer

Scales can help when you want to compare how something feels now with how it felt earlier, or when a person supporting you needs a clear way to ask what you prefer. You can choose a number, show fingers, point to a position or use words such as "more", "less" and "not sure."

Set it up gently

Pick one scale and define it for yourself. For example, 0 might mean "very little" and 5 might mean "a lot". You can use a scale for comfort, energy, uncertainty or readiness, but avoid treating it as a clinical measurement.

When it may be useful

A scale can make a preference easier to communicate when a full explanation is hard. It can also help you notice whether something has shifted. A number is shorthand for your experience, not a score of how well you are coping.

A few reminders

- There is no right answer or correct way to take part.
- You can use a word, gesture, choice, image, AAC, pause or silence.
- You can skip, change or stop the activity at any point.

You are the person who decides what your response means.

TRY IT

A short guided practice

Move through these steps at your own pace. You can do one step and stop, or ask someone you trust to read each step aloud.

1. Choose a small focus

Think of one moment, feeling, preference or decision from today. Keep the focus small enough to approach without explaining everything.

2. Try the method

- Step 1. Choose one thing to check in about, such as how much quiet you want or whether you feel ready to decide.
- Step 2. Set the scale in plain language. Make sure both ends mean something clear to you.
- Step 3. Show your answer with fingers, a point, a number, a card, AAC or a spoken word. You do not have to explain the answer.
- Step 4. If useful, compare with an earlier moment: more, less, about the same or unsure. A changing answer is allowed.
- Step 5. Use the response to choose one practical next step, such as pause, ask for help, get more information or continue.

3. Let a question guide you

- How much space, time or support would help right now?
- Would I choose more, less, the same or not sure?
- What is one next step that fits this answer?

A short example

Someone asks if you are ready to decide. You show two fingers on a scale from zero to five. They understand you need more time and offer to check again later. You have communicated a boundary without a long explanation.

4. Choose how to finish

Notice whether you want to continue, pause, ask for support, take one practical step or leave the reflection unfinished. No written record is needed.

MAKE IT YOURS

Adapt the activity to your needs

The method should fit the person, not the other way around. Keep what helps and change anything that adds pressure.

Ways to adapt

- Use a three-choice scale rather than numbers: a little, a lot, not sure.
- Use a visual line, objects placed in a row, fingers, cards or AAC. Ensure the person can answer without needing to explain.
- Do not compare one person's number with another's or treat a score as a diagnosis. Repeat the check only if it feels useful.

Keep it workable

You can change what the scale means each time. If numbers feel abstract, use three choices such as "less, same, more" or "ready, not ready, unsure." Always include a way to pass.

When to pause

A scale cannot tell the whole story. If the choice is difficult, "pass" or "I need a different question" is a valid answer.

Take something with you

The number is a communication aid, not a verdict. Let it guide a question or choice rather than define the whole experience.

A gentle reminder

Reflection can be spoken, shown, felt, chosen, moved through or shared. You do not have to turn an experience into writing for it to matter.

For more support, you can speak with someone you trust or a qualified professional. Space to Breathe Therapy can be contacted to ask whether its support may be right for you.