

Signs of Safety how to guide: Scaling



What is Scaling?

Scaling is used to make a judgement about the **impact of a situation on a child/ young person**. The scale goes from 0-10.

When scaling, make sure you define what 0 and 10 mean, and always present 10 (what we are working towards) first. The scale would usually be based on the worry/danger statement.



Serious impact on the child/young person

No issues – confident that the child/ young person is safe and well

How is it used?

Each individual says where they are on the scale, and **why**. If you are in a multi-agency meeting this will go around the room, and each person's scale and reason should be recorded.

Questions about where people have scaled can be used to recognise the good things that are happening ('what makes it a 3 and not 0'), explore ideas for what should happen next ('what would you need to see happen to make it one point higher') and explore what we need to see to be sure the problems are sorted out ('what would a 10 look like?').

What is it for?

Scaling is used to help everyone understand each person's viewpoint. It helps to make professionals' thinking clear to the family (and to the other professionals), and it helps professionals understand where different members of the family are at.

The scale is a starting point for exploring what is currently working in the family and what needs to change to go higher up the scale towards achieving our goal for the child/ young person.

It provides a measurement process that everyone can understand, so everybody involved – including family members, support people and professionals – can keep assessing the situation and how much progress is being made.

Scaling is also a good tool for supporting reflection, and therefore is good to use within supervision. An example of a scaling question that might be used in supervision is:

"On a scale of zero to ten, where would you rate your relationship with this father (mother, child etc.), where 10 is you can talk openly with them about the problems and what is good in their life and are talking together about what can be done about the problems, but zero is you have no working relationship with that person at all and they won't even engage with you, where would you rate your relationship with them?"

Where would they rate their working relationship with you?"



Scaling is especially powerful for supporting people to reflect on a situation where they were absolute in their judgement.

How do I scale?

Based on the concerns, *and* the strengths and safety within the family, you pick where you are on the scale of 0-10, considering the **impact on the child/young person**.

There is no right and wrong answer, but you will need to say why you have chosen that number, and what you would need to see to increase the scale by one point.

People **will differ** on their assessment of the situation. It is not important that everyone agrees, but it is important that everyone understands **why** people's views differ. It is also an opportunity to reveal if there is any information that hasn't been shared, or if we all have the same understanding of the information that's been shared.

Example questions that could be asked about scaling to explore the situation are:

- What are the parents doing that brings your rating of them up to 3 points above 0?
- What's better between now than when the situation was previously at a 1?
- For me, your rating of 3 is lower than I expected, given what we've written on the danger side. Is there anything we've missed on that side or am I missing something?

Please share your practice examples with SignsofSafety@northumberland.gov.uk