Make a Visual Scale

Function:

The function of a visual scale is to help a student better understand abstract concepts by breaking down those concepts into concrete parts (Buron & Curtis, 2012). A visual scale can be used to demonstrate that everything is not "black and white," but that there are often various levels of a behavior or concept. For example, what is "appropriate" vocal volume depends on the circumstances in which you are talking; you can be anxious about something but there can be different levels of anxiety.
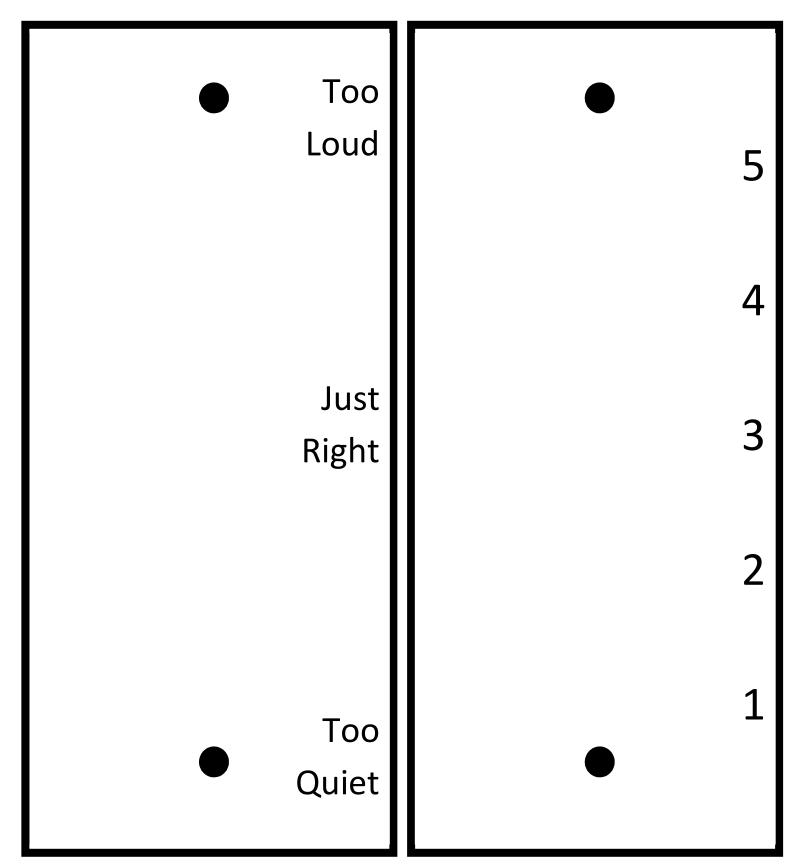
When/How to Use:

- A visual scale can be used any time an individual needs support in understanding the various levels of a behavior. It can be used in the home, at school, in community settings.

- Use it to communicate a desired change of behavior. For example, noise level can be a very difficult concept to communicate because it is often relative. For instance, the noise level that is acceptable on a walk outdoors is often different from the acceptable noise level walking through a museum. With a visual scale, the current behavior can be given a number ("Your noise level is at a 4 right now") and the desired level can be identified ("You need to be at a level 2").

- You can use a card with either words or numbers; the important thing is to have some way of indicating a high level versus a low level. The adult supporting the student reflects

the current level of the behavior by sliding the bead to the appropriate level ("Your voice is too loud right now") and indicates the desired level by pointing ("Your voice needs to be here – where it says 'Just Right'").

- As the behavior changes, move the bead accordingly to reflect the new level.

- Use the visual scale to promote self-monitoring. Individuals can use the visual scale to check in on their own behavior, emotions, and effects on their immediate environment (Jaime & Knowlton, 2007).

- Collect data to measure the effectiveness of the visual scale strategy. Depending on the behavior that is being targeted, use the data to determine whether the strategy is effectively increasing desired behavior or decreasing interfering behavior.

How to Make:

- Use a hole punch to make a hole in the template at the top dot and a hole at the bottom dot.

- String a bead on a pipe cleaner and thread one end through the top hole and the other end through the bottom hole. Bend the ends and add tape to hold the pipe cleaner in place.

● Too

Loud

● 5

4

Just

Right 3

2

● 1

Too ●

Quiet