

Visual Support: Feelings Thermometer

A feelings thermometer can be used to help a person become more aware of their emotions so they can learn how to manage them more effectively. Laminate this page for durability and ensure it is easily accessible for regular check ins.

How do I use the feelings thermometer?

Introduce the feelings thermometer

Show the thermometer and say, "This is a feelings thermometer. It helps you figure out how you're feeling. If you're feeling calm, like when you're playing with animals, you're down here (point to green). If you're feeling very upset or angry, like when you lost your favorite cup, you're up here (point to red)."

Explain each level

Briefly explain each level of the thermometer in simple terms (e.g., green means calm and happy; yellow means getting a little frustrated or worried). Relate each level to the person's experiences. For example, "When you're playing quietly, you're in the green. When something doesn't go your way, you might feel yellow or orange."

Teach how to use it

Show the person how to check their feelings. Point to the thermometer and say, "Let's think about how you feel. Are you calm, or are you feeling a little upset?" Ask them to point to or identify where they think they are on the thermometer. Help them if needed by saying, "It seems like you're in the yellow. Is that right?"

Incorporate the thermometer into daily routines

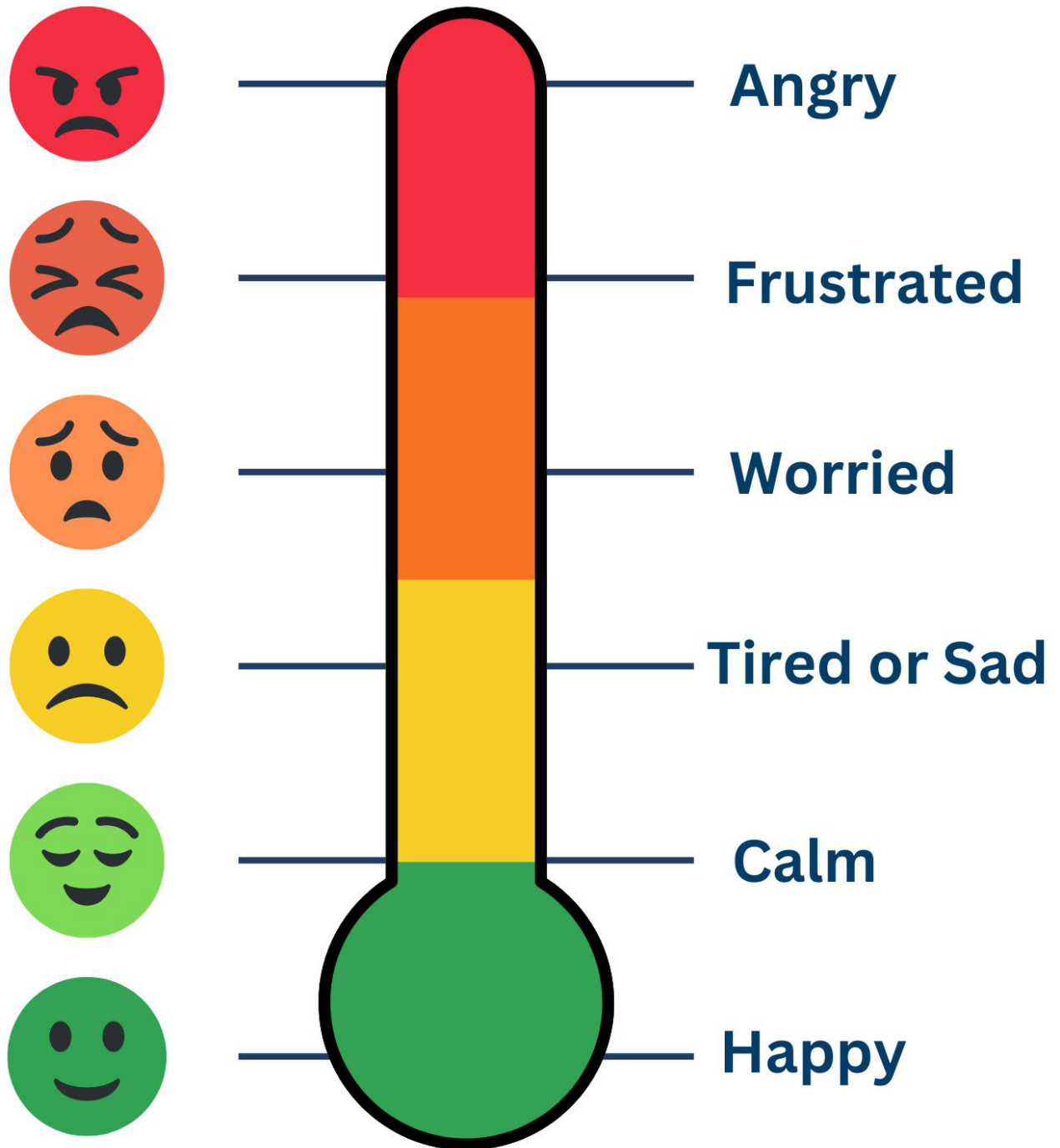
At different times during the day ask, "Where are you on the feelings thermometer right now?" If the person seems frustrated or upset, guide them to the thermometer and say, "Let's check where you are on the feelings thermometer. Are you in the yellow or red?"

Teach coping strategies

If they indicate they are in a higher level (yellow, orange, or red), offer calming strategies such as deep breathing, using a break card, or stepping away for a moment. If they accurately check their feelings and/or use coping strategies, offer positive reinforcement like, "Great job noticing you were in yellow!"

Fletcher, A., Mallory, S., Ambrosie, A., & CDS DNEA Team. (2024). *DNEA resource guide: Grab and go supports: Visual support: Feelings thermometer*. Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism
Additional resource guides at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.

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