

Feeling Thermometer

The Feeling Thermometer is a tool that can be used to create a shared language for children and adults to build awareness about a full range of interactions. It can help families assess, identify, discuss, and manage emotions, which in turn, can help build resilience and lead to more academic and social successes.

The Feeling Thermometer ranges from 0 to 25 (green), 25 to 50 (yellow), 50 to 75 (orange), and 75 to 100 (red), with 100 representing the most discomfort, 50 representing somewhat uncomfortable, and 0 representing the most comfortable. When using the Feeling Thermometer, family members become aware that comfort and discomfort are unique for everyone, and that it is normal for those feelings to shift throughout the day. Frustration, anxiety, worry, anger, and confusion are a few examples of feelings that may be uncomfortable whereas relaxed, content, happy, peaceful, and satisfied may be more comfortable feelings.

There are various ways to support families in understanding the Feeling Thermometer.

When using the Feeling thermometer in session, facilitators might ask family members:

- *Can anyone think of a situation when they felt very comfortable, 25 or less on the Feeling Thermometer?*
- *Can you name a time when you felt medium comfortable?*
- *What did you notice about your body in the green zone with the [calm, relaxed] feeling?*
- *What does this zone (green, yellow, orange, red) mean for you?*

For additional practice, facilitators ask family members to identify situations where they were in each of the four color zones of the Feeling Thermometer. Here are other examples:

- Facilitators can check in with family members about where they are on the Feeling Thermometer throughout the session.
- *Recalling that specific event, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer?*
- *Can you identify where you are on the Feeling Thermometer right now?*

In addition to naming the numbers/color zones on the Feeling Thermometer, a facilitator may ask, “What did you notice about your body in the green zone with the [calm, relaxed] feeling?” Using follow-up questions can support family members in identifying their body sensation(s). A few examples are:

- *Was your breathing easy?*
- *How was your heartrate?*
- *Did your body have any tension?*

Practicing “getting to green” strategies when someone is in the green, yellow, orange, or red zone can also be helpful. Once a family member has identified where they are on the Feeling Thermometer, have them try one of these strategies:

- Give yourself space and/or quiet time to cool down
- Do something active or enjoyable
- Take slow, deep breaths
- Try Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Think of a peaceful memory
- Go for a walk

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