

Scaling Question Examples

1. The Miracle Question

“Suppose that one night there is a miracle, and, while you are sleeping, the problem you have are solved. How would you know? What would be different?” Then ask the young person on a scale of 0-10 (0 being nowhere near the miracle occurring and 10 the miracle has occurred) where would they put themselves on the scale? What would they need to do to move up one point? What is stopping them moving down one point?

2. The Mountain

Use a visual of a mountain with the young person and ask “If reaching the top of this mountain means that you have achieved what you want from our work together, where are you on the mountain now?” You could give the young person pens, stickers, counters or other markers to place on the drawing.

3. The Ladder

Use a visual of a ladder and say “The top rung means you have got to where you want to be. The bottom rung means you are far away from reaching what you want. Zero out of 10 is below the first rung on the ladder where are you?”

4. Perfect day

Number 10 is the day when things go exactly as you wish them to. Zero on the scale means that things are not as you wish them to be at all and maybe things are going worse than they are now. If 10 couldn't happen all the time, what number on the scale represents where you would be happy to be, where you would feel that this work had been useful?

5. Scaling with Physical Objects (younger children or Learning Difficulties)

To bring the scale to life, you could use physical objects that appeal to them, such as:

- Ten balloons
- Wooden blocks or Lego (stacking or building stairs; you could use a toy or figure to represent the child)
- A row of toy cars
- A jar or bottle, marked with a scale; the child fills the bottle with water or sand up to the correct mark
- A row of 10 buttons (these could be ordered according to size or attractiveness)

To avoid confusion, it is best if you stick with a scale of 0-10 (e.g. choose 10 objects) although scaling does not have to involve numbers – it could be a range of faces from happy to sad, or 10 coloured blocks.