

Week 3: Scaling and Counters: Two new conversational tools

This week we'll explore two more tools, Scaling and Counters, designed for measuring progress and identifying what's working. Together they help us to focus on what's useful and what we might do more of.

The scale is a near-universal tool for measurement, used by doctors to ask patients to measure pain, teachers to rate achievement and on feedback questionnaires to show degrees of satisfaction. It's often used where 10/10 is the desired result and anything below that is not good enough. While perhaps lacking finesse as a motivational method, this introduces many to the basic idea. If you are doing particularly well, you might describe yourself as, "Off the scale!"

Scaling and counters are all around us in life and play a significant part in constructing positive conversations. We can use Scaling to engage individuals in reflection on their own strengths and coping strategies; provide a means of identifying personal goals; indicate steps towards achieving those goals.

Scaling is an accessible and effective tool for constructive conversations because

- It helps the individual and team focus on how they would like things to be
- Asking why people have placed themselves at a certain point helps to elaborate their strengths
- By measuring change it can encourage further change
- If repeated on several occasions it is a way of confirming progress
- It is a means of deciding priorities and next steps

This week we will also explore the Counters tool. A Counter in a constructive conversation is whatever we discuss that is helping us get towards our desired state of affairs. Whether strengths, skills, resources or previous examples of success, a Counter is anything that counts. They show up in many ways including:

- Where the solution (what is wanted) happens already
- Where parts of the solution happen already
- Something resembling what is wanted happens already