

**Emotion Thermometer**

**About the Emotion Thermometer**

It can be especially difficult for autistic people to define how we feel, particularly when we don’t relate to the standard questions asked by practitioners. Below is an example of a thermometer to show different feelings along with a definition to help explain how you are feeling. This can be adapted for different emotions.

**How to recognise where you are on the thermometer:**

**8 – Unable to Cope**

* Constantly changing negative mood, or consistent negative mood and I am unable to focus on anything else.
* I have stopped doing all my hobbies.
* I have noticed large changes to my usual sleep routine.

**7 – Panicked**

* Negative changes in mood which last for 2 weeks with no relief.
* I have stopped doing most of my hobbies as I have no interest in them.
* I have noticed several changes to my usual sleep pattern.

**6 – Exhausted**

* Negative changes in mood which last for 2 weeks.
* I am still engaging with my hobbies/interests but am having to force myself to do them.
* I have started to notice small changes to my usual sleep pattern.

**5 – Drained**

* Negative changes in mood which happen for more than 1 week and last a few days each time.
* I am struggling to do my daily activities and am starting to not enjoy my hobbies/interests.

**4 – Troubled**

* Some negative changes in mood which last a few hours but happen over a few days.
* I am struggling to do all the things I need to do as it takes a lot of effort to complete each task.

**3 – Low**

* Some negative changes in mood but this only last for a few hours.
* I am able to do most of the activities I need to, but it takes more effort than usual.

**2 – Calm**

* No negative changes in mood.
* I am able to do everything I need to do.
* I am aware of some of issues that may affect my mood but am able to manage them.
* Mostly positive moods and able to take part in some hobbies, not only daily tasks.

**1 – Happy**

* No negative changes in mood.
* I am able to do everything I need to do.
* Frequent positive moods and feeling able to engage with hobbies, not just daily tasks.

**Notes for practitioners on using the emotion thermometer:**

This emotions thermometer can support your conversation with autistic people. It might be helpful to provide concrete examples that match each of the emotions to help further support the use of this thermometer.

The aim of the thermometer is to help you to ascertain how your patient is feeling at the time of the appointment. Even with this thermometer being used, if they are feeling overwhelmed at the time of the appointment, it will be difficult for them to choose which emotion they are feeling at the time.

If this is the case, then the thermometer can be supported with the use of the symptom diary to either get an overall picture of how they are feeling over a given period of time or to help them explain their emotions in their own words when not feeling overwhelmed.

Also, please remember that some people may be experiencing emotions related to number 8 – ‘Unable to Cope’ on the thermometer and still engage in most of their daily tasks, as well as enjoy hobbies due to masking, compulsion, routine or hyper fixation.



**Emotion Thermometer**



4

Troubled

8

Unable to Cope

6

Exhausted

3

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1

Happy

2

Calm