How Big Is My Problem?

Find the size of the problem. Then pick a reaction that matches it.

	What it is, and examples	A matching reaction
5 Emergency	**Someone is hurt, sick or unsafe right now.** For example: Someone is badly hurt. Smoke or fire. A person in danger.	 **Get an adult right away. Adults call 911.**
4 Big	**Serious. Adults need to help, and it can take a long time.** For example: Being bullied. A very sick pet. A friend moving away.	 **Big feelings make sense. Tell a trusted adult.**
3 Medium	**I need some help. It may take an hour or a day to fix.** For example: Lost my coat. A fight with a friend. I feel sick at school.	 **Ask for help, take a break, talk it out.**
2 Small	**I can fix it myself in a few minutes.** For example: My pencil broke. I lost a game. Someone took my seat.	 **Calm voice, try a fix, keep going.**
1 Tiny	**Barely a problem. I can shake it off in a moment.** For example: Wrong color cup. Waiting a minute. A wrong turn in line.	 **Shrug, take a breath and move on.**

Three questions to size a problem

1. Is anyone hurt or unsafe? If yes, get an adult now.
2. Can I fix it myself, or do I need help?
3. How long will it take to fix: minutes, hours or days?

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Sort the Problem

Cut out the cards. Talk about each one, then sort it onto the scale or into piles.

Write the size (1 to 5) in the circle. Sizes can change with the details, so talk it through.

1
My pencil broke during a test.
Size:

2
I have to wait my turn for the swing.
Size:

3
Someone cut in front of me in line.
Size:

4
I lost a board game.
Size:

5
I forgot my homework at home.
Size:

6
My friend wants to play with someone else today.
Size:

7
I spilled milk at lunch.
Size:

8
I got a lower grade than I hoped.
Size:

9
Someone teases me every single day.
Size:

10
I feel sick at school.
Size:

11
My tablet battery died.
Size:

12
I lost my coat.
Size:

13
A classmate pushed me and I got hurt.
Size:

14
Someone fell and is not moving.
Size:

15
I smell smoke in the building.
Size:

16
My best friend is moving away.
Size:

17
It rained, so recess is inside.
Size:

18
I wore the wrong shoes for gym.
Size:

19
Our family pet is very sick.
Size:

20
I can't find my seat on the bus.
Size:

Write your own
Size:

Write your own
Size:

Write your own
Size:

Write your own
Size:

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Think It Through

Fill this in after you feel calm again. It is about learning, not getting in trouble.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What happened?

_____

_____

_____

2. How big was the problem?

Circle one. Ask: is anyone hurt or unsafe, can I fix it, how long will it take?



1 Tiny | 2 Small | 3 Medium | 4 Big | 5 Emergency

3. How big was my reaction?

Circle one. My reaction is what I said and did on the outside.



1 Tiny | 2 Small | 3 Medium | 4 Big | 5 Emergency

4. Did my reaction match the problem?

- ☐ It matched
- ☐ It was too big
- ☐ It was too small

5. Next time, I can try:

- ☐ Take three slow breaths
- ☐ Try a quick fix
- ☐ Take a short break
- ☐ Count to ten
- ☐ Use a calm voice
- ☐ Ask for help
- ☐ Tell a trusted adult
- ☐ Talk it out

My own idea: _____

6. My plan and my helpers

When this happens: _____

I can: _____

People who can help me: _____

_____

How do I feel now?



One thing I did well, or a drawing of my plan:

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