

# Distress thermometer code N[N]

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## Identifying and definitional attributes

<b>Metadata item type:</b>	Value Domain
<b>METEOR identifier:</b>	573491
<b>Registration status:</b>	<a href="#">Health</a> , Standard 04/02/2015
<b>Definition:</b>	A code set representing the values on the distress thermometer.

## Representational attributes

<b>Representation class:</b>	Code
<b>Data type:</b>	Number
<b>Format:</b>	N[N]
<b>Maximum character length:</b>	2

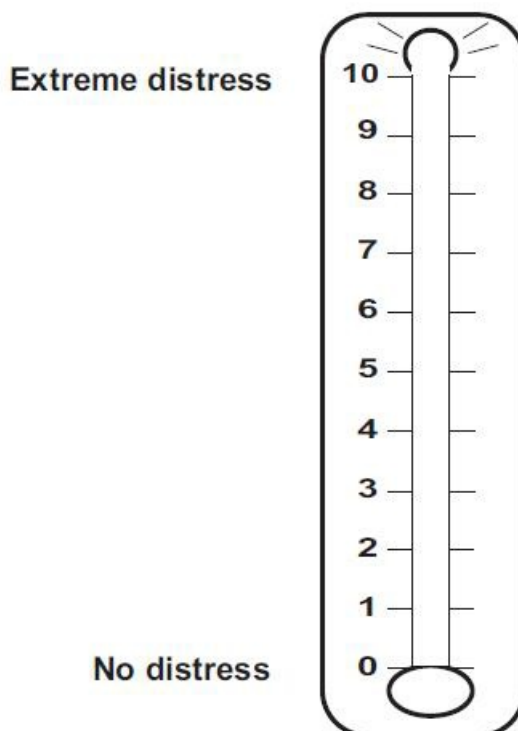
## Collection and usage attributes

<b>Guide for use:</b>	Using a visual distress thermometer (see the Collection methods section below for an example), ask the person to indicate the level of distress that they have experienced in the past week on a scale from 0-10, where 0 indicates 'No distress' and 10 indicates 'Extreme distress'.  Valid values are 0 to 10.
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**Collection Methods:**

Using the image below as a reference, patients are given the instruction "Circle the number (0-10) that best describes how much distress you have been experiencing in the past week including today" and are given the opportunity to circle a number on the paper or an electronic distress thermometer.

**Instructions: First please circle the number (0-10) that best describes how much distress you have been experiencing in the past week including today.**

**Comments:**

The distress thermometer has been found to have reasonable sensitivity and specificity for general distress, depression and anxiety (Mitchell, 2007) and to be comparable, as a screening tool, with longer measures of psychological symptoms (Mitchell, 2010). It should be noted that while the distress thermometer is valuable as a screening tool, it is not a replacement for careful clinical assessment and management.

Reproduced with permission from the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) for Distress Management (V.3.2012). © 2012 National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Inc. Available at: NCCN.org. Accessed [June 12, 2012]. To view the most recent and complete version of the NCCN Guidelines®, go on-line to NCCN.org.

**Source and reference attributes**

**Submitting organisation:** Cancer Australia

**Reference documents:**

Mitchell AJ (2007). Pooled results from 38 analyses of the accuracy of distress thermometer and other ultra-short methods of detecting cancer-related mood disorder. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*,25:4670-4681.

Mitchell AJ (2010). Short Screening Tools for Cancer-Related Distress: A Review and Diagnostic Validity Meta-Analysis. *Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network*,8:487-494.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network (2012). NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology: Distress Management. Retrieved from [http://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician\\_gls/f\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/f_guidelines.asp)

**Relational attributes**

**Data elements  
implementing this value  
domain:**

[Person—distress status in past week, distress thermometer code N\[N\]  
Health](#), Standard 04/02/2015