

SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE (SIS): OVERVIEW

What is the SIS?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) is a unique, scientific assessment tool specifically designed to measure the level of practical supports required by people with intellectual disabilities (i.e., mental retardation) to lead normal, independent, and quality lives in society. The SIS will be completed annually for all individuals who are over age 16, participating in one of the Home and Community - Based Medicaid Waivers or who reside in a Habilitation Center.

The Supports Intensity Scale system has two components. A comprehensive manual explains how to administer, score, and interpret the scale as well as how to use the instrument to create individualized supports plans. The SIS is administered and scored via computer software in most situations. A report is generated that outlines the individual's support needs in all areas measured.

The Supports Intensity Scale was developed over a period of five years by a team of national experts endorsed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). Apart from being empirically based and field tested, SIS has excellent psychometric properties and the manual discusses these properties in detail.

What does SIS measure?

The Supports Intensity Scale is divided into 4 sections, each of which measures a particular area of supports needs of the respondent:

Section 1: The Supports Needs Scale

The Support Needs Scale and consists of 49 life activities that are grouped into six subscales: Home Living, Community Living, Life-long Learning, Employment, Health and Safety, and Social Activities.

Section II: Supplemental Protection and Advocacy Scale

The third Supplemental Protection and Advocacy Scale measures 8 activities, but the score from this section is not used in the determination of the total Support Intensity Score.

Section III: Exceptional Medical and Behavioral Support Needs

This section measures supports needs in 15 medical conditions and 13 problem behaviors commonly associated with intellectual disabilities. An underlying assumption is that certain medical conditions and challenging behaviors predict that a person will require increased support.

Supplemental Items: Exceptional Medical and Behavioral Support Needs

For individuals with significant medical or behavioral supports needs identified in Section III, additional items are administered to enhance support needs identification.