Supports Intensity Scale – Adult Version,® 2nd Edition

Respondent Handbook

SIS-A®

aaidd

American Association
on Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities

WHAT CAN THIS HANDBOOK DO FOR YOU?

This handbook provides essential information and resources about the Supports Intensity Scale - Adult Version,® 2nd Edition *(SIS-A®, 2nd Ed.),* referred to as the SIS-A. It aims to inform individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, loved ones, and other supporters about what to expect during a SIS-A interview, how to read the SIS-A report, and possible uses of SIS-A information.

MAKING THE MOST OF THIS HANDBOOK

1. **Review**: Each section of this guide may be used independently. Please scan page 3 of the handbook for content and resources that are most helpful to you.

2. **Discuss**: The information in the handbook may be helpful to share with your support coordinator, case manager, and support team members. You can also use the resources for planning and goal setting.

3. **Participate:** Use the handbook's content to gain awareness about the SIS-A interview and empower your team to determine supports that provide meaningful opportunities.

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SIS-A BASICS

What is the purpose of the SIS-A?

The Supports Intensity Scale - Adult Version,® 2nd Edition (SIS-A, 2nd Ed.) is a standardized assessment that measures the pattern and intensity of supports adults 16 years and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities require to be successful in adult community life. Its purpose is to assess support needs fairly using a uniform procedure.

How do I know that it is a valid assessment?

The SIS-A is valid as it measures what it sets out to, that is, *support need*. Originally released in 2004, refreshed in 2015, and updated in 2023, numerous studies conducted with the SIS-A have time after time determined it is a valid assessment. SIS-A is also reliable, in that, its results are consistent when administered correctly.

How is the SIS-A administered?

The SIS assessment uses a semi-structured interview process. This means that there is a facilitator, known as the Interviewer or Assessor who guides the discussion, explains the items and rating options, and helps determine scores to fit the person. Even if the individual is currently not participating in every activity, it is required to complete all questions in the assessment. This ensures a uniform process where each time the SIS-A is completed, every team consistently considers and rates all items.

Who participates in a SIS-A interview?

The people who attend the meeting are called Respondents and at least two must attend the entire interview. Respondents know the person being discussed very well (at least three months) and are comfortable sharing about the supports the person may need in a variety of settings like at home, at a store, at a job or when learning new things. Most importantly, the person that the SIS-A is for is encouraged to actively participate and help decide who speaks on their behalf. It is also helpful to share any accommodations needed or any sensitive or difficult topics prior to the interview.

Where does a SIS-A interview take place?

First and foremost, the setting should be comfortable for the person and respondents, free from distractions, and a safe environment to talk about confidential information.

How much time does the SIS-A interview take?

Conversations to determine accurate ratings may take time. Plan for around two to three hours. In some places, other required questions and information may add more time to the discussion. SIS-A is comprehensive and includes two sections with multiple items in each section. During the meeting, the team discusses a section about exceptional medical and behavioral supports, and a section with items across seven areas of adult life. Plan to bring snacks, drinks and any assistive devices for your comfort and best participation.

What can I expect to happen during the SIS-A Interview?

The Interviewer guides the respondent group through all sections of the assessment. Respondents share and discuss the person's support needs for all life activities. Plan for an open and honest discussion about support ratings that includes all team members and the person as much as possible.

Success is a term you will hear very often during the SIS-A interview. Success reflects a strengths-based approach that helps the team consider the person's potential, positive attributes, ways to provide meaningful supports and a safe environment to explore new pursuits.

When the Interviewer uses the term "*success*", they are asking you to consider what supports would look like for the person to be involved in the same life activities that other adults are involved in, at the same level of performance and participation. In other words, if provided the right combination of help, the person is an active participant in the same life activities that other adults of the same age are involved in within the community.

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Section 1. Exceptional Medical and Behavioral Support Needs

RATING KEY

0 = No Support Needed
(condition or behavior is not an issue, or no exceptional support is needed to manage the medical condition or behavior)

1 = Some Support Needed
(continuously aware, monitoring, episodic active support, may not need in all environments)

2 = Extensive Support Needed
(intense, active support occurs frequently, may need active supports in all environments, active support takes significant time)

Section 1A: Exceptional Medical Support Needs (24 Items)

- Respiratory Care (4 Items)
- Feeding Assistance (4 Items)
- Skin Care (2 Items)
- Other Exceptional Medical Care (14 Items)

Section 1B: Exceptional Behavioral Support Needs (14 Items)

- Externally Directed Behavior (4 Items)
- Self-Directed Behavior (4 Items)
- Sexual Behavior (2 Items)
- Other (4 Items)

1. This scale should be completed without regard to the services or supports currently provided or available.
2. Scores should reflect the supports that would be necessary for this person to be successful.
3. If an individual uses assistive technology, the person should be rated with said technology in place.
4. Complete ALL items, even if the person is not currently performing a listed activity.

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQUENCY	DAILY SUPPORT TIME
WHAT EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT WOULD BE NEEDED FOR SUCCESS IN THE ACTIVITY?	HOW OFTEN WOULD EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT BE NEEDED FOR SUCCESS IN THE ACTIVITY?	HOW MUCH TOTAL EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT TIME WOULD BE NEEDED FOR SUCCESS IN THE ACTIVITY?
0 = none	0 = none or less than monthly	0 = none
1 = monitoring *(reminders)*	1 = monthly	1 = less than 30 minutes
2 = verbal/gestural prompting *(coaching)*	2 = weekly *(up to 6 days a week)*	2 = 30 minutes to less than 2 hours
3 = partial physical assistance *(doing some)*	3 = daily *(at least 7 days a week)*	3 = 2 hours to less than 4 hours
4 = full physical assistance *(doing for required)*	4 = hourly or more frequently	4 = 4 hours or more

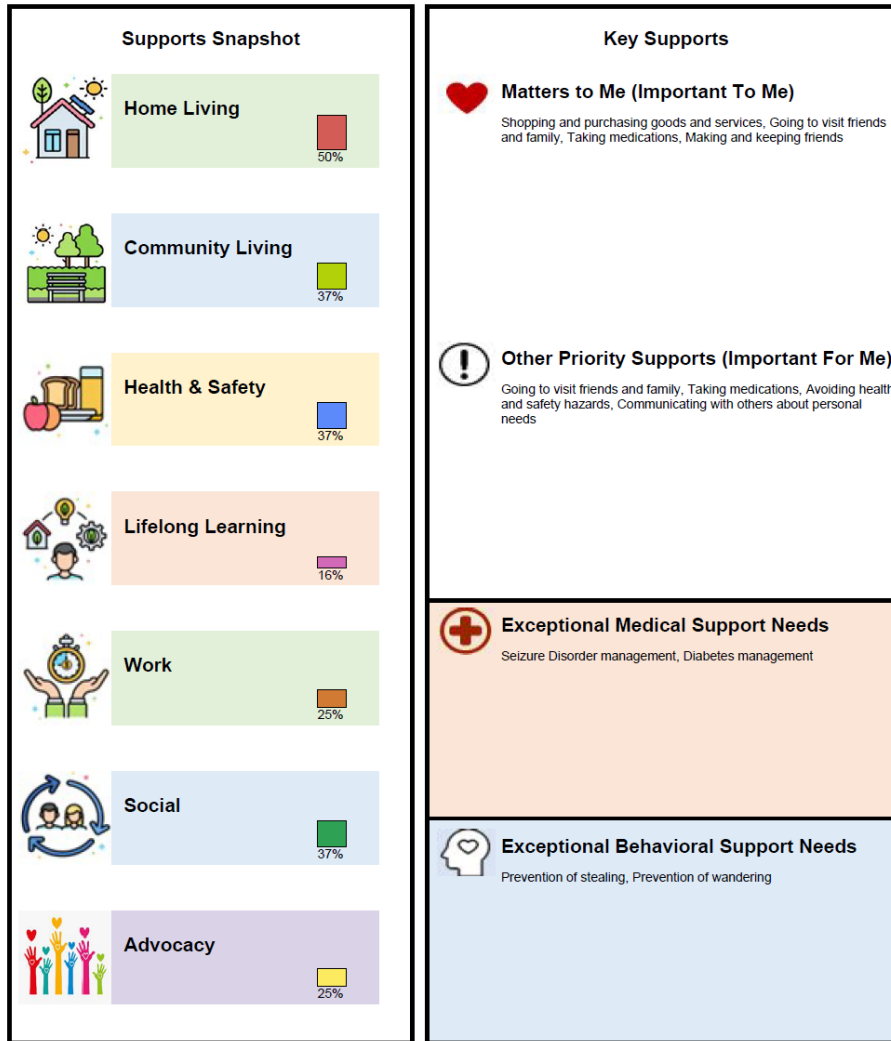### Section 2. Support Needs for Life Activities

Section 2A: Home Living Activities (8 Items)

Section 2B: Community Living Activities (8 Items)

Section 2C: Health and Safety Activities (8 Items)

Section 2D: Lifelong Learning Activities (9 Items)

Section 2E: Work Activities (8 Items)

Section 2F: Social Activities (8 Items)

Section 2G: Advocacy Activities (8 Items)

SIS-A REPORT

The SIS-A Summary Report offers an overview of an individual's support needs, followed by the SIS-A interview results.

Support Needs Summary

Supports Snapshot

Domain	Percent
Home Living	50%
Community Living	37%
Health & Safety	37%
Lifelong Learning	16%
Work	25%
Social	37%
Advocacy	25%

Key Supports

♥ Matters to Me (Important To Me)

Shopping and purchasing goods and services, Going to visit friends and family, Taking medications, Making and keeping friends

⊘ Other Priority Supports (Important For Me)

Going to visit friends and family, Taking medications, Avoiding health and safety hazards, Communicating with others about personal needs

✚ Exceptional Medical Support Needs

Seizure Disorder management, Diabetes management

⊘ Exceptional Behavioral Support Needs

Prevention of stealing, Prevention of wandering

The front page provides valuable information.
- Supports Snapshot for seven adult life domains:
  - Home Living
  - Community Living
  - Health & Safety
  - Lifelong Learning
  - Work
  - Social
  - Advocacy
- Key Supports
  - Matters to Me
  - Priority Supports
- Exceptional Medical & Behavioral Supports

My Primary Supports

♥ - Matters to Me (Important To Me)   ⊘ - Other Priority Supports (Important For Me)

Supports that are a Priority and Matter to Me

Activity		How to Help	How Often	How Much Time
Shopping and purchasing goods and services	♥	Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)
Going to visit friends and family	♥ ⊘	Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)

This section of the report gives a snapshot of the items identified as significant by the team.

SIS-A Report

My Exceptional Medical & Behavioral Support Needs

Medical Condition	Support Need	Notes
Seizure Disorder management	Some Support (1)	
Diabetes management	Some Support (1)	
TOTAL	**2**	

Behavior	Support Need	Notes
Prevention of stealing	Some Support (1)	
Prevention of wandering	Some Support (1)	
TOTAL	**2**	

This section includes exceptional medical and behavioral support needs and relevant notes.

Support Needs for Life Activities

Home Living Activities

Type of Support	Frequency of Support	Daily Support Time
1. Bathing and taking care of personal hygiene and grooming needs		
Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)
Notes:		

This is the central section of the report. It includes every item, rating, and notes for the seven adult life domains.

Support Needs Profile

The Support Needs Profile provides the final scores and a graph to view an individual's support needs for every Section 2 subscale.
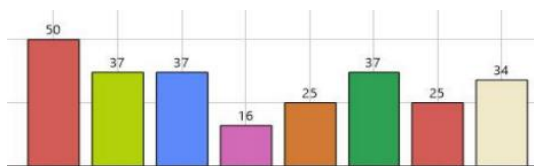
The Support Needs Profile - Graph also includes the Support Needs Index score (shown on the far right). It is the overall intensity of support needs for Section 2.

Understanding the SIS-A Summary Report

It acts as a glossary, providing an explanation of the rating options and scoring system used for the SIS-A.

Section 2: Support Needs for Life Activities
Rating Key

Type of support	Frequency of support	Daily support time
What kind of support should be provided? 0 = None. 1 = Monitoring. 2 = Verbal/gestural prompting. 3 = Partial physical assistance. 4 = Full physical assistance.	How frequently is support needed for this activity? 0 = None or less than monthly. 1 = Monthly. 2 = Weekly. 3 = Daily. 4 = Hourly or more frequently.	On a typical day when support in this area is needed, how much time should be devoted? 0 = None. 1 = Less than 30 minutes. 2 = 30 minutes to less than 2 hours. 3 = 2 hours to less than 4 hours. 4 = 4 hours or more.

The final pages of the report may also include supplemental information.

SIS-A Report Quick Guide

Interview Details

This feature of the report provides general information determined by each jurisdiction. For example, the report may include:

- Person Being Assessed Information
- Interviewer Data
- Assessment Date
- Respondent Data
- Person Who Entered the Information
- Other Pertinent Information

Person Being Assessed:
Last:
First:
Middle:
Language Spoken at Home:
Gender:
Address:
City:
State/Province:
Zip Code:
Phone:
D.O.B. (mm/dd/yyyy):
Age:
MCI:
Medicaid Number:
SSN:

Interviewer Data:
Interviewer:
Agency/Affiliation:
Interviewer Addr:
City:
State/Province:
Zip Code:
Position:
Phone:
Ext.:
Interviewer Email:

Assessment Data:
Interview Date (mm/dd/yyyy):
ISP Begin Date:
SIS ID:

Person who entered this information:
First Name:
Last Name:

Respondent Data - Information for the SIS ratings was provided by the following respondents:

First Name	Last Name	Relationship	Agency	Email	Language

Other Pertinent Information:

Section 2 Total Raw Scores

Community Living Activities

Type of Support	Frequency of Support	Daily Support Time
1. Getting from place to place throughout the community (transportation)		
Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)

Total Raw Score: 48

At the bottom of each subscale in Section 2, there is a **Total Raw Score** that provides a convenient summary of the ratings. This score is calculated by adding up the raw scores of three ratings: Type of Support, Frequency of Support, and Daily Support Time for each item. For instance, in the Community Living Activities domain, the rating numbers in parentheses are displayed in the example above. The Total Raw Score for this domain is 48, which is the sum of all ratings for each item in the domain.

# SIS-A Report Quick Guide

Standard Scores & Percentiles

Standard Score	Percentile
10	50
7	16
8	25
7	16
10	50
7	16
6	9

Standard Scores and Percentiles represent an individual's total rating scores compared to the group of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that originally answered the same questions when the SIS was developed.

What this means: Each person receives fair and consistent results.

Example: A Standard Score of 10 and a Percentile of 50 means an individual's support needs, in that Activity Subscale, represents an individual that may require 50% out of 100% of the possible support needs.
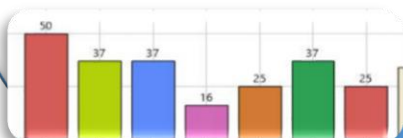
Support Needs Index (SNI)
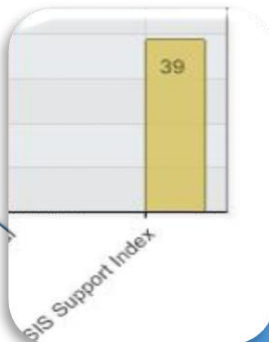
The **Support Needs Index (SNI)** is the overall intensity of support needs for the individual in all activity subscales in Section 2 of the SIS-A.

What this means: The SNI is a way to compare an individual's support needs related to other individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The higher the SNI number the more support an individual requires for the activity subscales in Section 2 of the SIS-A.

Example: The SNI represents an individual's support needs in all Section 2 activity subscales. A SNI of 39 means an individual may require 39% out of the possible 100% of support needs.

Support Needs Graph

The **Support Needs Graph** provides a visual way to see an individual's percentiles for every activity subscale in Section 2 of the SIS-A.

What this means: The graph is a simple way to review an individual's support needs in seven life activity domains.

Example: This graph shows each bar and how it represents an individual's support needs in each activity subscale.

SIS-A Use: Steps

The SIS-A assessment information provides various roadmaps to help teams determine the pathway to fit a person's interests, strengths, and aspirations.

Three possible steps to use SIS-A information are described here. These ideas provide a jumping off point for discussion and planning for support teams to consider. Try these out and continue to build on the potential and practical support information the SIS-A report provides.

1

Prioritize & Select Items:

While reviewing the SIS-A Report, select items of importance and value to the person and team. Discuss which items stand out to help the team focus in on items to consider for planning or continuing to address in the person's life.

2

Break Down Items into Realistic Steps

Once important items are selected, determine which portions of the item have the potential to make a meaningful difference to the person's participation and involvement in adult life activities.

3

Align Supports to What is Needed for Success

Chart out how supporters will help the person engage in the selected portions of the items. Consider using the SIS-A rating descriptions to provide examples of needed supports.

SIS-A Use: Practices

Three ways to use SIS-A information is described in this part of the handbook. Samples from Jane's report and her team's actions are included to provide an example of how to make use of each method.

1

Link

What life areas should be considered to encourage purpose, develop action steps and track progress?

SIS-A Report

Use rating information from more than one SIS-A item to enhance planning and services.

Jane's SIS-A Report →

1. Learning and using problem-solving strategies

| Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2) | Weekly (2) |

Notes:

2. Learning functional academics (reading signs, counting change, etc.)

| Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2) | Weekly (2) |

Notes:

3. Learning health and physical education skills

| Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2) | Weekly (2) |

Notes:

4. Learning self-determination skills

| Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2) | Weekly (2) |

Notes:

5. Learning self-management strategies

| Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2) | Weekly (2) |

Notes:

During a review of the Lifelong Learning domain of Jane's SIS-A report, the team noticed a rating pattern among the informal learning items. They all were rated a weekly frequency or "2". The SIS-A report revealed that regular teaching and review is an effective way for Jane to learn new things. The team found ways to work together at including learning opportunities into Jane's daily routine by all using the same teaching strategies and focus areas.

2

Success — SIS-A Items Discussion

Are there life activities that provide new or meaningful opportunities for the person?

Review SIS-A items to consider how to plan for the individual's success. Discuss how supporters can build in necessary supports into daily activities.

Jane's SIS-A Report

8. Going to visit friends and family		
Partial Physical Assistance (3)	Weekly (2)	2 hours to less than 4 hours (3)

Jane's team decided to focus on this item because Jane is currently visiting friends and family on an irregular basis. The SIS-A report helped alert the team to the notion that Jane may enjoy and benefit from weekly visits. They identified the barriers keeping Jane from spending time with loved ones. They also scheduled regular visits to move closer to the SIS-A ratings.

3

Individualize — SIS-A Report

How can we ensure important information is included when planning?

Review and discuss Important To and Important For items. Prioritize items and plan for supports that fit the person.

Jane's SIS-A Report

Supports that are a Priority and Matter to Me

Activity		How to Help	How Often	How Much Time
Shopping and purchasing goods and services	♥	Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)
Going to visit friends and family	♥ ⓘ	Verbal/Gestural Prompting (2)	Weekly (2)	30 minutes to less than 2 hours (2)

During the SIS-A Interview, Jane and her team identified certain items as important. Based on these, the team decided to prioritize Jane's time with loved ones and engage in an activity she enjoys, such as shopping. To achieve this, they combined certain elements from the two items.