

## WHY SIS? TALKING POINTS ON THE SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE

See a sample SIS interview form and case study at  
<http://www.siswebsite.org/site/pdf/SISInterform&casestudy.pdf>

- **SIS looks at needs, not deficits.** Unlike traditional assessments, SIS does not look at what a person lacks, but what daily supports an individual needs to live a successful life in society. The assessment process is positive, progressive, and fulfilling for consumers, families, and professionals.
- **SIS provides direct and valid results.** The assessment of support needs using SIS is done *directly* by talking with the consumer and the persons who know him or her the best. By measuring individual support needs directly, SIS avoids the error in inferring support needs statistically and analyzing historical data, or using expert judgment only.
- **SIS is engaging.** Due to its interview format with family, friends, the person with a disability and the case manager, SIS typically sparks discussion and ideas on how an individual might grow and flourish in ways not considered in a typical assessment.
- **SIS is transparent.** The SIS provides a straightforward basis for making decisions on needed supports. The Scale directly measures the type of support (for example, monitoring to full physical assistance), frequency of support (none to hourly, for example) and intensity of supports (say, no time to more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period) required by an individual to participate in 57 distinct aspects of life in their communities. Twenty-three major behavioral and medical support needs are also considered. The SIS fosters a more open platform for all stakeholders to make decisions about personal goals, levels of care, or resource allocation.
- **SIS is reliable.** A recent study showed that when administered with proper training, SIS has a .87 inter-rater reliability coefficient, which puts the tool in an “excellent range” of reliability in assessment instruments. This means that professionals can have the confidence that the assessment results are accurate and can be used to make critical decisions about the individuals they serve.
- **SIS has been adopted by U.S. states and Canadian provinces.** The states of Utah, Georgia, Washington, Louisiana, Colorado, Oregon, and Virginia have adopted SIS and the AAIDD is in discussion with other states as well. The SIS is also being used in Ontario, Canada and a French version of SIS will soon be in use in the French-speaking parts of Canada. These states are using SIS because they believe that it is a fair, accurate, and reliable planning instrument.
- **SIS training offers in-depth product training.** The AAIDD SIS training program is comprehensive and makes it easy for users of the tool to understand how it was developed and transition to a positive, supports-based assessment process. Read customer testimonials at [www.siswebsite.org/Training](http://www.siswebsite.org/Training).
- **SIS is available in print and electronic formats.** The SIS is available in print, CD-ROM, and web-based formats. An additional stand-alone module recently introduced

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allows users to work offline and upload assessment data when connection to the Internet is available. In the print format, SIS consists of an 8-page interview form and comes along with a *User's Manual* that tells you how to administer the Scale. The SIS is one of the first planning tools to be made available entirely through the web through a sophisticated system called SISOnline, which comes with advanced reporting and data aggregation and analyses capacities.

- **SIS scores are useful for program planning.** Providers and agencies across the country are using SIS scores creatively in creating individualized service plans for consumers as well as identifying staffing patterns within service organizations. The SIS scores are based on the needs and goals of the consumers and hence service decisions can be based on realistic and practical information.
- **SIS has international acclaim.** Not only is SIS in use in the United States, but other countries have recognized the potential in SIS and have translated the instrument into their native languages. The SIS is available in Dutch through NGBZ, in Spanish through TEA Ediciones, in Italian through Vannini Editrice, and in complex Chinese through Ho-Chi Publishing company. AAIDD will also publish by the end of year 2007, a French version of SIS.
- **SIS for transition planning purposes.** A relatively new use for SIS is in the area of transition planning in post-secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. The SIS meets the requirements of the Statement of Performance (SOP), a relatively new addition to the IDEA that requires every child in special education to be provided with a summary of the child's academic and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting postsecondary goals.
- **SIS is fully endorsed by AAIDD.** The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the world's oldest organization of intellectual disability professionals, is the publisher of SIS. The instrument was developed by 10 members of the association who are experts in special education and disabilities, over a period of five years. Always on the forefront of such progressive issues as abolishing the death penalty for persons with mental retardation and advocating a supports-based definition of mental retardation, SIS is the latest initiative of the AAIDD.

*See next page for quick facts on SIS*

## QUICK FACTS ON SIS

**Instrument:** Supports Intensity Scale

**Formats:** (1) Print paper and pencil format (2) Electronic Scoring Program on CD-ROM (3) SISOnline, a web-based application for large organizations and states (4) SIS Stand alone module that works on Tablet PCs, laptops, and desktops

**Website:** [www.siswebsite.org](http://www.siswebsite.org)

**Publication date:** January 2004

**Publisher:** American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (formerly AAMR), Washington, DC

**Purpose:** To measure practical support requirements of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 85 daily living and medical and behavioral areas.

**Ages:** Adults ages 16 - 72

**Administration:** To be administered by a professional in the human services field with a 4-year degree. Under exceptional circumstances others with experience conducting individual assessments and possess extensive knowledge of behavior rating or psychological testing principles may be acceptable. Refer to User's Manual for more details.

**Components:** 128-page manual and 8-page pre-printed interview and profile forms.

**Supplemental resources:** *Guidelines for Including People with Disabilities: Supports Intensity Scale*; SIS Frequently Asked Questions and Scoring Clarifications; SIS Expanded Item Descriptions (available at [www.siswebsite.org](http://www.siswebsite.org)). Free quarterly newsletter sign up at [www.siswebsite.org/Newsletter/](http://www.siswebsite.org/Newsletter/)

**Standardization:** Normed nationally on 1,306 adults with developmental disabilities.

**Reliability:** Tests to-date show the SIS to have acceptable test-retest reliability and to be highly reliable over time with a .87 inter-rater reliability co-efficient.

**Who can use SIS:** Professionals providing services to adults with developmental disabilities. These include psychologists, case managers, transition coordinators, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, support brokers, teachers, trainers, special educators, doctors, and more.

**Authors:** James R. Thompson, Brian R. Bryant, Edward M. Campbell, Ellis M. Craig, Carolyn Hughes, David R. Rotholz, Wayne P. Silverman, Marc J. Tasse, Michael L. Wehmeyer.

**Organization:** 8-page interview form divided into 3 sections:

**Section 1:** The Supports Needs Scale Includes 49 life activities 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 Includes 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 Contains 15 medical conditions and 13

problem behaviors commonly associated with intellectual disabilities.

### **How to buy SIS**

SIS is sold as a test kit of 25 or 100 forms, and a 128-page *User's Manual*. The Scale is also available in CD-ROM format and as a web-based application on an annual subscription basis.

\*If you are interested in purchasing the SIS Electronic Scoring Program or SISOnline, AAIDD recommends as a best practice that face-to-face interviews be conducted using a paper interview form and scores be transferred later into an electronic form.\*

Online: <http://bookstore.aaid.org>

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### **SIS contacts**

General queries on product availability, information, formats, etc.: [books@aaid.org](mailto:books@aaid.org)

SISOnline queries: [help@sis-online.org](mailto:help@sis-online.org)

SIS Training queries: [jula@aaid.org](mailto:jula@aaid.org)