aaidd information

Supports Intensity Scale
Scoring Clarifications
& Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of this document is to further clarify information on the administration of the *Supports Intensity Scale* (SIS). It complements—but does not replace—information in the *Supports Intensity Scale Users Manual*. SIS users need to consult the manual prior to administering SIS.

SIS Scoring Clarifications

> The following two points are essential to the proper administration of SIS.
>
> • Ratings should reflect the supports that <u>would be necessary</u> for this person <u>to be successful</u> in each activity.
>
> • Each item assumes that the person has the opportunity to participate at levels potentially requiring maximum frequency, time, and type of support. Therefore, respondents should remember that ratings can reflect this maximum level of potential activity.

I. Definition of "To Be Successful"

To be successful is defined as engagement in all aspects of an activity as judged against contemporary community standards and resulting in maximal involvement of the person in the activity. In other words, successful engagement entails a level of performance/involvement/participation in an activity that is comparable to that of typically functioning adults without disabilities.

II. Focus of the ratings across the three dimensions of support needs: Frequency, Daily Support Time, and Type of Support

   A. **RATING FREQUENCY:**

   The respondent should focus on the following when rating frequency: If the person were to engage in the activity on a regular basis over the next several months, how often would extraordinary support be needed to enable the individual to be successful in the activity? The intent of the

frequency scale is not to measure how frequently the person currently engages in the activity, but rather <u>how frequently the person would need support if they were to engage in the activity</u>.

Every person must be rated as if they were going to engage in the activity on a regular basis over the next several months. The frequency rating should reflect the nature of the intensity of support the person would need to be successful. That is, raters should consider the person fully engaged in the activity, and determine whether <u>they would need assistance that most typically functioning adults would not need.</u>

Rating options are: 4= hourly or more frequently; 3=at least once a day but not once an hour; 2=at least once a week, but not once a day; 1=at least once a month, but not once a week; or 0=none or less than monthly.

B. RATING DAILY SUPPORT TIME:

The respondent should focus on the following when rating daily support time: If a person were to engage in the activity on a regular basis over the next several months— during the course of a typical 24-hour day— <u>how much total daily time would be needed to provide extraordinary supports to enable the individual to be successful in the activity?</u> ("Extraordinary supports" means the types of assistance that most typically functioning adults would not need.)

This rating estimates the amount of time needed to provide these supports across a TYPICAL day when the support is provided. A day is defined as 24 hours. Thus, whether the support is needed everyday or once a year, on a typical day when the support is needed—during that 24-hour cycle—how much total, cumulative time needs to be devoted to providing the support?

Rating options are: 4=4 hours or more; 3=2 hours to less than 4 hours; 2=30 minutes to less than 2 hours; 1=less than 30 minutes; 0=none.

C. RATING TYPE OF SUPPORT:

The respondent should focus on the following when rating type of support: If a person were to engage in the activity on a regular basis over the next several months, <u>what would be the nature of the extraordinary support</u> (i.e., assistance that most typically functioning adults would not need) <u>that others would need to provide to enable the individual to be successful in the activity</u>.

This scale is concerned with identifying the kind of support provided by others. Although different types of support are needed for different activities (e.g., verbal prompting and partial physical assistance may both be involved), the respondent is asked to identify <u>which type of support best characterizes or most dominates the assistance that is provided.</u>

Rating options are: 4=full physical assistance; 3=partial physical assistance; 2=verbal/gestural prompting; 1=monitoring; 0=none.

III. Guidelines to Use When Determining Ratings:

A. CONSIDER MULTIPLE TASKS WITHIN AN ACTIVITY

If the activity contains multiple elements, then greater emphasis should be placed on the essential element(s) that are at the heart of the activity when determining ratings; *however, the secondary elements should not be disregarded.* The task for respondents is to provide a rating that reflects their perception of a valid composite rating of primary and secondary elements. For example, Item #2 (Taking care of clothes) of Part A (Home Living Activities) refers to maintaining clothes which "includes laundering, ironing, sewing, minor repairs, hanging clothes in closets and/or folding/placing clothes in chest of drawers." An example for applying these guidelines to the three ratings is provided below:

- If the person needs significant support on a weekly basis on the essential element of laundering (e.g., operating the washer and the dryer) as well as significant support on a daily basis (but not hourly) for several secondary elements such as hanging and folding clothes, then a frequency rating of "3" would best reflect the frequency of support in its composite (3=at least once a day but not once an hour). In this example, *several secondary elements require significant support on a daily basis,* and therefore the higher rating is justifiable.

- If approximately 45 minutes of time is required for the essential element of "laundering" on a typical day that the individual completes laundering and if consideration of the secondary elements indicates that only a small investment of time is required, then a daily support time rating of "2" (30 minutes to less than 2 hours) would be the correct rating that best reflects daily support time in its entirety. In this example, *there is not enough extra time required on a daily basis to complete the secondary tasks to justify a higher composite rating of "3" (2 hours to less than 4 hours or more per day).*

- If the person requires only verbal/gestural prompting to do the essential element of laundering, but needs partial assistance for folding/placing and hanging, and full physical assistance in ironing and repairing clothes, then a type of support rating of "3" (partial physical assistance) is justified. In this example, *enough physical assistance is needed to complete the activity of "taking care of clothes" on a regular basis to justify a composite rating of "3- partial physical assistance" for "type of support".*

B. ASSESS THE INDIVIDUAL'S SUPPORT NEEDS HOLISTICALLY

The individual's skill level, use of assistive technology, motivation, health, behavior, and

safety/vulnerability must all be considered when determining ratings. People should be rated in accordance with their current status and functioning.

If an individual uses assistive technology (AT), the person should be rated with that technology in place. That is, it is important to factor in the assistive technology that the person uses on a regular basis when making the ratings. However, ratings should <u>not</u> be based on the intensity of support a person might require if their use of assistive technology might change in the future.

If assistive technology is not yet used or is not yet available to the person, it should not be considered when completing SIS. For example, an individual might need less support in "accessing public buildings" if he had access to a motorized wheelchair. However, because this person does <u>not</u> have access to a motorized wheelchair, ratings on SIS should reflect the reality of his situation and the support he needs due to (a) his disabilities and (b) the lack of appropriate AT. In many cases, the intensity of an individual's support needs will decrease when provided with appropriate AT.

C. BASE RATINGS ON COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Ratings should be community-referenced. For example, ratings such as those related to employment should be based on competitive employment within the community.

D. DO NOT CONSIDER SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THE PERSON IS CURRENTLY RECEIVING

Ratings should be made for each activity without regard to the services or supports currently provided by staff in human service organizations or by other people. Moreover, ratings should not be altered because of the availability of natural supports. That is, in instances where a coworker, neighbor, or family member provides extraordinary support to an individual, the person should still be rated as needing the extraordinary support.

E. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE VERB USED IN THE ITEM STEM

The rating should consider the action verb that is used in the stem of the activity, since some verbs may reflect a greater level of activity and therefore more support. For example, *going* somewhere will include transportation, whereas *participating* assumes that one is already there; *shopping and purchasing* goods involves the use of money and potential vulnerability issues, whereas *accessing* services may require only a contact or phone call; and a person may require little support to *avoid* health and safety hazards, but more support to *obtain* health care services that involve not just making appointments but also communicating with the medical staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I interview more than one respondent at a time?

A. Yes. It is acceptable for an interviewer to interview respondents <u>individually</u> or separately OR to <u>in a group setting</u>, interviewing two or more respondents at the same time. Field-test data were collected in both conditions and the manual indicates that both practices are acceptable.

Interviewing respondents in a small group format seems to be more conducive to generating ideas and suggestions that can later be implemented in the person's Individualized Support Plan. Therefore, outside of needing at least 2 respondents, selection of the interview grouping is left up to the clinical judgment of the interviewer—as is reconciling contradictory information from respondents, whether interviewed as a group or separately. Consumer and setting characteristics require such flexibility.

Q. Do I have to ask about the activity items in the sequence in which they are listed?

A. No. <u>ALL</u> items on SIS must be rated for the individual's support needs. However, the order of interview/presentation of the items or domains will not affect the individual's score. Some individuals feel uncomfortable starting the SIS administration with Part A, Item #1 "Using the toilet." It is permissible to start with Part B and end with Part A. Most respondents will be less sensitive to Item #1 "Using the toilet" when it is administered at the end of SIS. Actually, the interviewer could choose to start and end with any of the subscales or parts.

Q. Where is transportation in the Activity Domains?

A. Supports needed for transportation within a community are embedded within three items on SIS: <u>Part B, Item 1</u> – *Getting from place to place throughout the community (transportation)*; <u>Part B, Item 4</u> – *Going to visit friends and family*; and <u>Part C, Item 5</u> – *Accessing training educational settings*. Once an individual's transportation support needs are captured on these three items, transportation support needs should not influence the assessment of the remaining items in SIS.

There are people with intellectual and closely related developmental disabilities who have a driver's license and own their own car or have access to a friend's car. Others may use public transportation. Such individuals may have no extraordinary transportation support needs. Other people with developmental disabilities may not be able to drive and may not have access to public transportation. Thus, they rely on family, friends, or paid staff to transport them.

When support needed for transportation is imbedded within an item, the rating of "*4 - Full physical assistance*" would apply to any individual who could not drive themselves and could not access public transportation independently. A person who used public transportation on a regular basis but simply needed to be monitored, would receive a rating of

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"1 = Monitoring."

Q. What about rating the support needs for activities that the person does not do, has never done, and has no intention of doing?

A. It is important to remember the following instruction: *"All items should be completed, even if the person is not currently performing a listed activity."* This is especially true for certain items like: Section 2 – Protection and Advocacy Scale - Item #3. *Protecting self from exploitation,* or Item #6, *Obtaining legal services*. The biggest concern is ensuring that the interviewers remember this instruction throughout the administration of SIS. When an individual is not currently performing an activity, it is critical for the interviewer, using his/her clinical judgment, to guide the respondent in estimating the support needed for that individual to be successful in participating in the activity. In cases of individuals with significant limitations, this level of support could very well be maximal across all three ratings.

Q. How do I rate a support need when a frequent and intense support is needed temporarily or for a short period of time, and then less support will be needed later?

A. The interviewer/respondent should rate the individual's support needs as the person is currently functioning. It does not matter whether the person's functioning might improve because of skill acquisition, assistive technology, etc., The SIS should be filled out based on the person's current status and condition. What support does he or she need at this current time? If one believes that a person may require less support in the future, then the SIS should be repeated at that future time and the individual's support needs re-assessed.

Q. How do I rate varying support needs—sometimes it's full physical, but most of the time only monitoring is needed?

A. The instructions call for rating the individual in regard to *the typical intensity of support* that is needed. The interviewer and respondent must fully consider the life activity as it is described, and come up with a composite rating that best reflects the person's support needs. In the case where someone's intensity of support need seems to be right on the borderline between a lower and a higher rating, the higher rating should be selected. For example, Part E, Item #1 "Taking medications": an individual needs to take insulin medication for his diabetes and a psychotropic medication for his thought disorder. Generally, this individual needs only "1 = Monitoring" (type of Support) to take insulin medication; however, he is resistive to taking his psychotropic medication and needs "2 = Verbal/gestural prompting" to take this medication. In this case, the interviewer/respondent should rate the highest of the two types of support (i.e., 2 = Verbal/gestural prompting).

Q. To what extent should the individual's exceptional medical and behavioral needs be weighed in responding to the amount of supervision and support needed in the items

in Parts A-F?

A. The individual's support needs across all SIS items/activities in Parts A through F should be completed based upon the individual as he or she is. Thus, a person who has extensive support needs to prevent physical aggression towards others will require more supports across the SIS items/activities in Part A through F than another person who does not have any exceptional behavioral support needs. The Melvin Thurber case example in the *SIS Users Manual* illustrates this well.