

# News and Events

## An Update on Future Iterations of the Support Intensity Scale

May 15, 2012

AAIDD is currently involved in a process to generate the next iterations of the SIS, the first of which to be released will be called the SIS-A (or SIS for Adults), a second version, the SIS-C (or SIS for Children) is also under development and will be released after the SIS-A is launched in 2013.

In August 2011, AAIDD administered a survey to all SIS users on the perception of the SIS as a user-friendly instrument. Feedback concentrated mainly into 3 areas:

Streamline the SIS to allow for shorter administration time.

Capture additional SIS data by demographic information.

Reorder the the sections and subscale items on the paper form.

To address streamlining the SIS, AAIDD explored the possibility of eliminating the measure of frequency, which would result in a shorter administration time and not impact the construct. The initial analysis of the data suggested that elimination of the frequency could be done without impacting the standard score. However, subsequent and more detailed analysis reveals that eliminating the frequency impacts the standard score—in a manner that although small overall, is too large for comfort for the purposes of state users of the SIS. AAIDD's decision is to abandon this path and keep the frequency measure in the SIS-A.

The knowledge that state users use the standard scores for a number of very important purposes and that the standard scores of the SIS **have a meaning on their own**, underscore the significance of this decision. The standard scores of the SIS-A will be **identical** to the SIS, so that a person's support needs, whether measured by the SIS or the SIS-A, will result in the same standard score.

AAIDD also looked into the possibility of incorporating the Protection and Advocacy Subscale into the standard score. Further detailed analysis indicates that this path also affects the standard score, in what would overall be a small manner but still too large for the purposes of state users of the SIS. AAIDD's decision is to also abandon this path and will not include the Protection and Advocacy subscale in the standard score.

**The elements of the tool itself that contribute to the standard score will not change, and the standard score will not change:** Changes from the SIS to the SIS-A will essentially comprise of several "value added" changes and include:

Additional demographic items to the cover page which allow state users to easily pull reports on a variety of demographic variables.

A reorder of the sections and subscale items on the paper form and in the corresponding SISOnline to allow a more comfortable progression of sensitive topics during the interview.

An updated user's manual that incorporates new information and lessons learned since its original publication in 2004.

An updated image in terms of graphic design and color palette.

A reorder of the Rating Key to a more interactive order.

This refresh process has been an important process for AAIDD. With the opportunity to review a large dataset of SIS data, AAIDD remains firmly convinced of the validity of the tool in measuring the support needs construct, and the value of the assessment to those who are crucial in planning for supports that address the real needs of people with developmental disabilities.

This process with the SIS-A has also been extremely helpful in the planning for the SIS-C. At present, the children's version of the SIS is being field tested to establish norms, with close to 2,000 protocols collected. The goal is to collect 3,500 protocols in the United States. Data collection is also being carried out on the inter-rater reliability, with translation and collecting standardization data ongoing in

a few countries. The SIS-C will align structurally with the SIS-A, and this alignment between the SIS-A and the SIS-C will be intuitive for users of the suite of SIS tools.

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