

Plain Text Summary

Memo on the Second Edition of the SIS-A

This is a plain text summary of the AAIDD June 2023 memo with the same name. The memo tells stakeholders that a second edition of the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version® (SIS-A®) was published in January 2023. The memo explains the differences between the first and second editions. There is also frequently asked questions (FAQs) document. The FAQs give more details about the second edition.

The SIS-A

The SIS-A is used to find out about the supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) need. The findings are used to create a high-quality person-centered plan to help a person achieve positive outcomes.

The SIS-A Update Project

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) is letting everyone know in advance about important changes to the second edition of the SIS-A.

AAIDD finished a project in 2022 that will make sure that the SIS-A stays high quality. The project took a few years and looked at many SIS-A assessment records from across the country.

The project had three main goals. The first goal was to make sure that the SIS-A still accurately measures support needs. The second goal was to find out if new norms were needed for the SIS-A. The third goal was to see if one extra part of the SIS-A should be included in the final score.

What did the project find?

The project showed that the SIS-A is still a good assessment. It also showed that the SIS-A is a good tool for even older adults.

The project showed that new norms were needed. This was expected. All norms need to be updated from time to time. New norms were created for the second edition of the SIS-A based on the people of today.

The project showed that one extra part of the assessment should be part of the final SIS-A score. This part of the SIS-A is about the support a person needs for advocacy. Norms were made for this part of the SIS-A.

The project showed that some new items should be added to the SIS-A. Adding new items will make sure that important support needs are not overlooked.

The SIS-A helps identify the areas where supports are most needed. This information is used to create high-quality person-centered plans of support.

Acronyms

AAIDD	American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
HCBS	Home and Community Based Services
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
P&A	Protection and Advocacy
SIS	Supports Intensity Scale
SIS-A	Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version
SIS-C	Supports Intensity Scale-Children's Version
SISOnline	SIS online scoring platform
SNI	Support Needs Index

What are norms?

Norms are created using math. Norms compare one person's score with the scores of a group of people who are like them. The SIS-A norms will say if one person's scores are higher, lower, or the same as those of other adults with IDD. Any assessment with norms must update its norms from time to time to make sure any comparison is to people of today instead of people from a long time ago. It was time to update the SIS-A norms.

What changes will be made to the second edition of the SIS-A?

The second edition of the SIS-A will have some new items. The order and names of some parts will be changed. The second edition of the SIS-A will have new norms that go up to age 84.

How will these changes benefit SIS-A users?

Most people who have done the SIS-A before will not see a big change in their standard scores with the new norms. A small number of people will see a big change in their standard scores even if their support needs are about the same. Having some big score changes for a small number of people is common when assessments get new norms.

There are some items in the SIS-A that are not part of the standard score. These items are about medical and behavioral support needs that some people have, but most people do not have. New items were added to this part to make sure that important support needs, like extra medical help, are not overlooked. It will be possible to have a higher score in this part because there are more items.

Service providers will find that the SIS-A assessment will continue to provide important information to inform person-centered support planning.

States have systems that are like a big puzzle. Some states use SIS-A scores as one piece of the puzzle when identifying resources for people with IDD. AAIDD asks that states that have been using the SIS-A look into how the new norms may change a person's scores at their next reassessment. States and stakeholders may also want to look into making changes in policies and service rates that would improve the service system for people with IDD.

When do these changes happen?

The changes will take place over a couple of years. This memo gives everyone time to plan out the best way to adjust to the new norms. The second edition of the SIS-A came out in January 2023. AAIDD will support both the first and second editions of the SIS-A for about 18 months to help states transition at their own pace. The first edition of the SIS-A will be retired sometime in the middle of 2024.
