

Project Status Report

SIS Administration FAQ - 02/21/2005

1. Interviewing Respondents

It is acceptable for an interviewer to interview respondents **separately** or interview two or more respondents at the same time (making it a **group interview**). 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 into the person's Individualized Support Plan. Therefore, outside of needing at least 2 respondents, selection of the interview approach is left up to the clinical judgment of the interviewer, as is reconciling contradictory information from respondents interviewed in a group format or separately. Consumer and setting characteristics require such flexibility.

2. Sequence of Administration of Items Domains

ALL items on the SIS must be rated for the individual's support needs. However, the order of interview/presentation of the subscales or domains will not affect the individual's score or performance. When interviewing self-advocates, some interviewers feel uncomfortable starting the SIS administration with Part A: Home Living Activities, because Item #1 concerns "Using the toilet." It is permitted to start and end with any subscale (e.g., start with Part B and end with Part A). Most self-advocates will have a milder reaction with respect to their sensitivity to Item #1 "Using the toilet" when administered at the end of the SIS administration.

3. Scoring of "Frequency"

Every person **must** have the potential opportunity to score the highest score on every item. That is, it has to be within realm of possibilities that each person who is rated could be scored at the maximum allowed. Therefore, on an item such as **"Using the toilet"** (see Part A: Home Living Activities, Item #1) one must rate the item as if the possibility existed for the person to receive support once an hour. For most people, receiving such a level of support on a regular basis would be highly unlikely because one doesn't need to use the toilet that frequently. However, the item requires the respondent/interviewer to imagine a day when there was a need for the individual to use the toilet hourly or more frequently. If a person needed extraordinary assistance every time he or she used the toilet, they would receive a rating a "4" under Frequency. This is applicable for all items on the SIS.

4. Scoring of "Daily Support Time"

This estimate of amount of time needed to provide the support 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, items need to be rated in regard to a typical day when support is provided. **"Daily Support Time"** is a dimension that is independent from **"Frequency"** in that respondents need to focus on how much time needs to be devoted to providing support during a 24-hour cycle.

5. Considering transportation support needs when completing Part B: Community Living Activities

If someone needs to be transported in the community this level of support is rated on Part B, Item 1 "Getting from place to place throughout the community (transportation)." Once an individual's transportation need is captured on Item #1 - it should not influence the assessment of the remaining items in the Community Living Activities domain.

The only exception to this rule is for Item 4: Going to visit friends and family. , the Type of Support entered would be "4 = Full Physical Assistance" because they need someone to physically assist them. Transportation is essential to successfully completing this activity. There are people with 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. Some people with developmental disabilities may not be able to drive or have access to public transportation. Thus, they rely on family, friends or paid staff to transport them. Of course, a person may need types of extraordinary support to "visit family and friends" beyond transportation supports. However, support needed for transportation is imbedded within the "going to visit family and friends" item.

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However, transportation is not imbedded within the other items on Part B. Support needed to get to and from places in the community such as grocery stores, banks, shopping centers, etc. should not be considered. Raters should only consider support needed to function successfully in the life activities once a person has arrived at a setting.

6. **Rating the support needs for activities that the person does not do, has never done, and has no intention of doing.**

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. When an individual is not currently performing an activity it is critical for the Interviewer to guide the Respondent in using his/her clinical judgment in estimating the support needs for that individual to be successful in participating in the said activity. In cases of individuals with significant limitations, this level of support could very well be maximal across all three ratings.

7. **Rating a support need when a Frequent and Intense support is needed for a short period of time and then less support is needed.**

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 concludes that the person may require less support in the future then the SIS should be repeated at that time and the individual's support needs re-assessed.

8. **Rating fluctuating support needs, such as cases where a person needs full physical some of the time , but most of the time only requires monitoring.**

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 rate the person in regard to the type of support the person typically requires.

In cases where there is, more or less, an "even split" in someone's intensity of support needs, the higher or more intense 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.)

9. **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.**

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 currently functioning. All medical and behavioral issues should be taken into consideration when completing the SIS. 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. No attempt should be made to "factor out" the additional support an individual needs due to behavioral or medical concerns. The Melvin Thurber case example in the SIS Users Manual illustrates this well.