

The Supports Intensity Scale-Adult®

Frequently Asked Questions



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

What it is and why it matters

The Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A®) is an assessment tool that measures the type and amount of support a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) needs to successfully participate in life at home and in the community.

The SIS-A measures support needs in the areas of home living, community living, lifelong learning, employment, health and safety, and social activities. It also addresses how a person's medical and behavioral needs affect their support needs.

Who attends the SIS-A Interview?

The assessment involves a face-to-face interview conducted by an assessor. All the assessors have been specially-trained by AAIDD. Adults with I/DD are always invited and encouraged to take part in the interview. However, if someone doesn't want to participate, they don't have to.

At least two people who know the adult with I/DD well and understand his or her support needs are required to be present for the entire interview. It is the adult's choice who takes part in the SIS interview. Sometimes this means it is just the adult and one other person, other times four or more people take part. The interview can take about three hours.

Adults with I/DD often invite:

- Parents, guardians, spouse, or other family members
- Direct support workers
- Service Coordinator or Support Broker
- Friends

WHY DOES IDAHO USE THE SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE-ADULT?

Because of the *K.W. v. Armstrong* lawsuit, Medicaid is making changes to the Adult Developmental Disability Program. One change adults in the program made clear was to stop using the SIB-R assessment. Medicaid still needed a way to help find out what supports adults need to live in the community, so they began to look for another tool.

After looking at the tools available, Medicaid, with help from other stakeholders, picked The Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A®).

The SIS-A was developed by a team of experts from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). It focuses on finding out what kind of help people need to live independently in the community. It also makes sure that adults with I/DD get to take part in explaining what support they need.

Adults in the program are still getting the SIB-R until all the changes Medicaid is making are finalized. Once that happens everyone will start getting the SIS-A instead of the SIB-R.

Types of supports covered in the SIS interview



Home Living



Community Living



Lifelong Learning



Employment



Health & Safety



Social



Protection & Self Advocacy



Medical & Behavioral

What types of questions will the assessor ask?

The SIS-A assessment is designed to be a conversation about the type and amount of support the adult with I/DD needs to successfully participate in various life activities. The assessor's job is to facilitate this conversation. For each item on the SIS-A, the assessor will ask:

- *What type of support is needed?*
- *How often is support needed?*
- *How much time is needed?*

There are no right or wrong answers. It's important that all the questions are asked and answered even if some questions do not seem to apply to the person. The assessor will help everyone think about what they know about the person and find the most accurate answers to the questions.

During the assessment, the adult with I/DD may be asked to imagine doing things they haven't done before. For example, for someone who hasn't had a job, this is a chance to think about what supports they would need to work in their community.

How will SIS-A information be used?

People's wants, needs, and life goals differ. It's important to understand what each person wants and needs to live a good life in their community. The SIS-A information can help with this discovery process. It identifies the types and amount of support each person needs to be successful. In the future, SIS-A information will be used to assign participants to a support level.

These levels group people together with similar support needs. Based on an adult's support level and where they live, each person will get a supports budget that will help guide the types and amounts of services they choose during the planning process.

There are no right or wrong answers. It's important that all the questions are asked and responded to even if certain questions do not seem to apply to the person.

