

The Supports Intensity Scale Interview
Guidelines and Suggestions for Parents and Guardians
Developed by PAD-CO
(Parents of Adults and Older Children with Disabilities in Colorado).
<http://www.members.aol.com/padcoweb/current.htm>
Revised October 2007

All adults with developmental disabilities in Colorado who receive case management for Medicaid services through a Community Centered Board (CCB) - such as Developmental Pathways, Denver Options, Eastern, or Community Options and similar organizations - are currently undergoing a new assessment called the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS). Assessments for all individuals receiving HCB-DD Waiver (Comprehensive Services) are now being completed and assessments for individuals in the Supported Living Services (SLS) Waiver are due to begin in November 2007 and be completed by the end of October 2008.

These assessments are one factor in determining how much funding each individual will receive for programs in the future, including Comprehensive Services and SLS and will provide a trackable method of distributing funds based upon the needs of the individual.

For your son/daughter or individual for whom you are the guardian (guardee) to receive the most accurate assessment possible, it is important that parents/guardians become knowledgeable about and participate in this assessment process. At least two persons who know the individual being assessed should be present. Parents/guardians are to be invited; as is the person being assessed.

Each interviewer has received specialized training in administering the SIS. The assessment generally takes about two hours. It will cover broad areas of functioning of the person being evaluated, including sections addressing Home Living, Community Living, Lifelong Learning, Employment, Health and Safety, Protection and Advocacy, Medical Supports Needed and Behavioral Supports Needed.

The assessment is based upon what supports your adult child/guardee would need to do the activity successfully (the way a typical person in the community would successfully do that activity).

Here are some suggestions for enhancing the assessment:

- Learn about the SIS and the rating key prior to the interview. Information about the SIS process is available on the internet at <http://siswebsite.org>. A sample interview form and a sample rating key can be obtained there. If you do not have internet access, your CCB can provide this information.
- View the SIS interview as a potentially positive experience. The assessment will assist in identifying the supports needed for the person to be successful and will also be used in developing the Individual Service Plan.**
- The interviewer should introduce themselves and the SIS assessment.

- **Try to make the SIS interviewer comfortable and relaxed. This will make the interview more positive for all.**
- Take notes. You may find these notes useful for later discussion and individual planning.
- **Respond without regard to the supports and services your adult child currently receives. Imagine him/her without supports – what would s/he need? Consider any behavioral, medical or skill needs your adult child may have to be successful in each activity. If s/he uses assistive technology please rate with said technology in place**
- Each SIS subscale measures an area of life. The interviewer will ask clarifying or “probing” questions; such as “Can you describe that to me?” or “Tell me what that looks like.” or “Can you give me an example of what he can do for himself and what he needs help with?” Be prepared to give specific examples in your adult child’s life where supports were required, and how much support is needed to be successful.
- **The goal is to reach consensus on each rating. If you disagree about a rating make sure that everyone talks about it and comes to agreement during the meeting.**
- Stay focused on support needs. The SIS measures support needs, not skills. It is easy to get distracted by a person’s abilities when trying to understand what supports he/she may need.
- **There are three questions that deal directly with transportation needs. Therefore transportation needs don’t need to be factored into other items. The interviewer can tell you when transportation is to be considered.**
- If you or your adult child needs a rest or a break, please mention that to the interviewer.
- **Several questions are personal in nature – if you or your adult child would prefer to discuss those questions in private then you or your adult child should let the interviewer know. You and/or other respondents may need to leave the interview for a brief time to allow for privacy.**
- Remember, there is no such thing as “not applicable.” Just because your adult child doesn’t currently do an activity doesn’t mean that your adult child wouldn’t need support if s/he were to do it. Answer all questions as if your adult child were to do the activity. Use the SIS to open up possibilities for your adult child.
- **Let the interviewer or your case manager know if you want to receive a copy of the assessment. As the interviewer will need to complete the scoring after the meeting, it is easiest to have it sent shortly thereafter.**
- If you have concerns about the SIS interview, there is a process for filing a complaint regarding the SIS Interview. It can be found – along with other SIS information on the DDD website at <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ddd/UserGuidesManualsReferenceMaterial.htm> Scroll down to the SIS Section and click on SIS Complaint Procedure. Also the SIS interviewer will be able to provide you with a copy.