

# The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) Project

## FAQ's

### January 2010

#### ***What is the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)?***

The SIS is a nationally recognized, standardized tool for individuals ages 16-72 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It measures the supports a person needs to successfully participate in 57 specific activities by rating:

- type of support (monitoring to full physical assistance)
- how frequently the support is needed (none to hourly)
- daily support time (no time to more than 4 hours per day)

The SIS also measures support needs in 29 exceptional medical and behavioral areas. More detailed information is available at <http://www.siswebsite.org>.

#### ***How is it completed?***

A trained interviewer completes the SIS in a face-to face interview with the person, if they want to participate, and at least 2 others who know the person well. The interviewer consolidates the information provided into the standardized form for scoring.

#### ***Is it reliable?***

The SIS was developed over a 5 year period under the auspices of American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD formerly known as AAMR). When administered by trained interviewers, the SIS has a .87 inter-rater reliability co-efficient. Since its release, 10 states and 4 Canadian provinces have adopted the use of the SIS as part of their service planning and/or funding allocation process. Studies by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), a nationally recognized human services best practices advisory group, have validated its reliability as a planning tool for individualized programs.

#### ***What have we done to date to evaluate whether the SIS is right for NH?***

2004 –a small pilot study in 4 regions when the SIS was newly released.

2008 – completion of the SIS for a representative sample of individuals with significant support needs. SIS scores appear to be consistent with the support characteristics of the study group. Analysis of the results is still underway.

2009 – successful completion of training by AAIDD trainers resulting in 7 NH interviewers who have met the interviewer reliability requirements established by AAIDD

#### ***What's next?***

CSNI and BDS will be using the SIS to assess services needs for a random representative sample of 400 individuals who are currently receiving funded services. Results will be analyzed to help determine how the SIS will be used in the future for service planning This information will also be used to develop a new, more individualized approach for allocating funding for individuals entering the adult service system in the future.

Additional AAIDD training is planned to develop a larger pool of NH SIS interviewers plus "Train the Trainer" training for a few of our NH SIS interviewers to become NH trainers. Having NH based trainers will help us ensure ongoing reliability and the ability to train new interviewers as needed.

***What will the SIS replace?***

The SIS will be used as part of the service planning process in the future but it is too early to tell if it will replace any existing tools or forms. It will not be the sole determinant for program planning or for funding allocations. .

## **The SIS 400 Person Sample FAQ's**

***Who will be chosen for the sample?***

The Bureau of Developmental Services will identify a representative random sample of individuals currently receiving funding by using statistics.

***How will I know if I am in the sample?***

The Area Agency that provides your services will notify you if your name has been chosen as part of the sample.

***Do I have to do the interview?***

It is expected that each individual selected to be part of the sample will complete an SIS interview.

***When will the interview be and where will it take place?***

Interviews will be scheduled between January and June 2010. You will be contacted to arrange a time and location that works for you and your respondent team.

***What will the interview be like?***

A trained interviewer will ask you and the people who support you (your team) about the type of support you would need to be successful at home, at work and in the community. They will also ask about any exceptional medical or behavioral needs. You may choose to participate in the entire interview along with the members of your team. If some items seem too personal, you should let the interviewer know. You and the team must answer all of the questions so that the results are reliable, even if the activity is something you don't normally do or don't choose to do at this time. For each activity, the interviewer will ask what type of support would be needed, how often you would need the support and how much time is needed for the support. Interviews take 2-3 hours to complete.

***Who will see the report?***

You, your legal guardian (if you have one) and your area agency will receive copies of the report. The results will be stored in a secure database and sent to the Bureau of Developmental Services for analysis. Other people may see the report with your signed permission.

***Will participation in the SIS interview and assessment process result in a reduction in budgets or funding for individuals currently receiving services?***

No. New Hampshire is conducting SIS interviews on 400 individuals during 2010 in order to collect information about the support needs of a wide variety of individuals. This information will be used to develop a new more individualized approach for allocating funding for individuals entering the adult service system in the future.

***Will I have to be interviewed again?***

Yes. Every person who requests or receives funded services through the Bureau of Developmental Services will complete the SIS interview every five years (or more frequently if there is a significant change in your support needs).