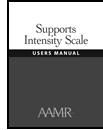




## Support Intensity Scale: A Tool to Help in Person-Centered Supports Planning

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August 10, 2004 – Philadelphia, PA



## Supports Intensity Scale

James R. Thompson, PhD  
Brian Bryant, PhD  
Edward M. Campbell, PhD  
Ellis M. (Pat) Craig, PhD  
Carolyn Hughes, PhD  
David A. Rotholz, PhD  
Robert Schalock, PhD  
Wayne Silverman, PhD  
Marc J. Tassé, PhD  
Michael L. Wehmeyer, PhD

American Association on Mental Retardation  
2004

## Food for thought

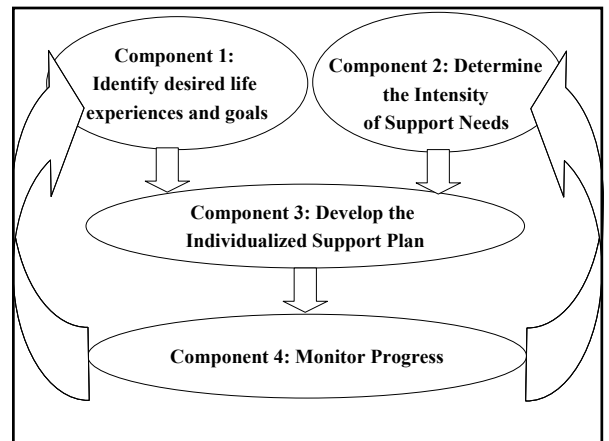
- Supports are needed and used by everyone.
- Planning of supports must start with the individual's needs and wants.
- Intensity of support needs will fluctuate over time, settings, situations.
- Supports help mitigate the “handicapping” effects a disability.
- Outcome measures must objectively document the effectiveness of supports in place.

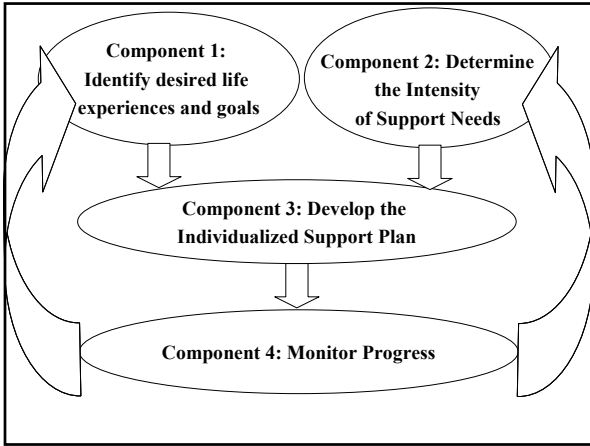
## Defining “Supports”

...resources and strategies that promote the interests and welfare of individuals and that result in enhanced personal independence and productivity, greater participation in an interdependent society, increased community integration, and/or improved quality of life.

- Thompson et al., 2004

## SIS – Support Needs and Assessment Planning Process



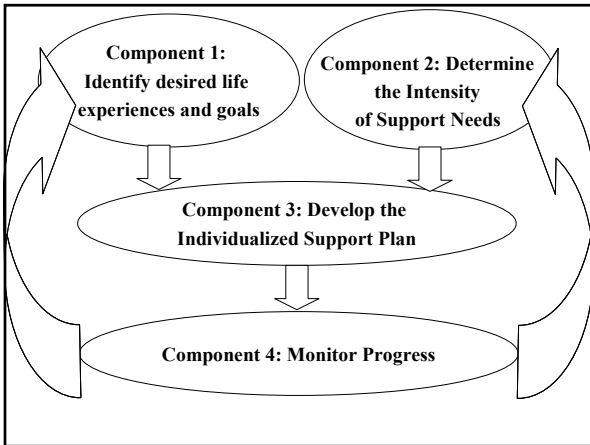


## Component 1: Identifying Desired Life Experiences and Goals

- Choose a Person- Centered Planning Process (MAPs, ELP, etc.)

This process should strive to ensure:

- Respect for the individual to assure that he/she remains in control of the process;
- Participation of a team (circle) of friends and supporters that recognizes the dreams and goals of the individual;
- A role for “people” in addition to professionals and a primary emphasis on community resources;
- The creation of and strategies for achieving life experiences desired by the person being supported.



## Component 2: Determining the Intensity of Support Needs

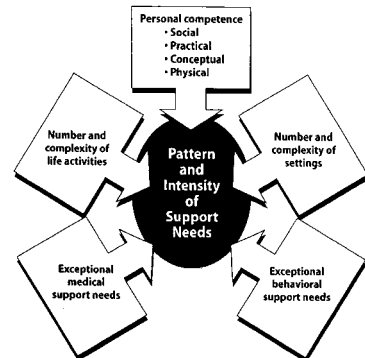
### What is it?

A standardized assessment tool specifically designed to measure the pattern and the level of supports needed by an adult with developmental disabilities to be successful.

The SIS attempts to measure the relative intensity of an individuals support needs directly – other assessment instruments provide indirect measures.

**Pattern and intensity of support needs are driven by more than just IQ and adaptive skills**

Figure 1.1. Five major influences on needed supports.



Pattern and intensity of support needs are driven by more than just IQ and adaptive skills

Darlene

IQ = 55 ± 5  
 SIB R= 64 ± 2  
 Age = 35  
 Dx = MR

- Mild deficits in intellectual functioning
- Mild deficits in adaptive functioning

Melvin

IQ = 63 ± 5  
 SIB R= 58 ± 2  
 Age = 30  
 Dx = MR

- Mild deficits in intellectual functioning
- Mild deficits in adaptive functioning

Pattern and intensity of support needs are driven by more than just IQ and adaptive skills

Darlene

SUPPORT NEEDS???

Melvin

SUPPORT NEEDS???

Pattern and intensity of support needs are driven by more than just IQ and adaptive skills

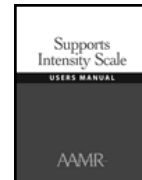
Darlene

Axis I: none  
 Axis II: Mild MR

Melvin

Axis I: Mood Dx  
 Self mutilation  
 Axis II: Mild MR  
 Borderline PD

## Supports Intensity Scale



## Supports Intensity Scale

(Thompson et al., 2004)

- SIS is part of a person centered supports assessment and planning process
- SIS- standardized measure of individual support needs => adults (16 – 72 years old)
- Extensive field testing
- National standardization (N = 1,300)
- Good psychometric properties
  - Reliability
  - Stability
  - Validity
  - Inter-rater consistency



## SIS Administration

SIS is administered as a semi-structured interview by a qualified interviewer with preferably two or more respondents that know the individual well.

**Respondents:** the individual himself/herself or someone who knows the person being evaluated for at least 3 months – recent opportunity to observe the person in one or more environments for substantial periods of time (parent, staff, job-coach, teacher).

## SIS Administration

A qualified interviewer (described later) completes the SIS by obtaining information about the person's support needs via a semi-structured interview with two or more respondents who know the person well (know for at least 3 months). The interviewer should consult as many respondents as necessary.

Interviewer: professional (case manager, QDDP, psychologist, social worker, etc.).

## SIS Interview

- The interviewer should always ask him/herself  
*“What support does the person need to engage successfully in this life activity?”*

## Critically Important Instructions

1. The SIS should be completed without regard to the services or supports currently provided.
2. Ratings should reflect supports that would be necessary for this person to be successful in the activity (*consider the individual's skills, health, behavior, etc. when completing items*).
3. If an individual uses assistive technology, the person should be rated with said technology in place.
4. Raters should complete ALL items, even if the person is not currently performing a listed activity.

## Support Intensity Scale

- Administration time: 30 – 45 minutes
- 3 Sections of the SIS:
  - Section 1. Support Needs Scale (49 items)
  - Section 2. Supplemental Protection and Advocacy Scale (8 items)
  - Section 3. Exceptional Medical (16 items) & Behavioral (13 items) Support Needs

## The 3 Sections of the SIS

### Section 1. Support Needs Scale

Lists an array of life activities against which an individual's support needs are rated in regard to frequency, duration, and time.

## Section 1. Support Needs Scale

### 6 Life Activity Areas (49 life activities):

1. Home Living Activities
2. Community Living Activities
3. Lifelong Learning Activities
4. Employment Activities
5. Health and Safety Activities
6. Social Activities

## Section 1. Support Needs Scale

### Ratings:

- Frequency (how often is the support needed)  
0 – 4 (< monthly... hourly)
- Daily Support Time (when needed, how much time is required for the support)  
0 – 4 (None ... > 4hours)
- Type of Support (what is the type of support needed)  
0 – 4 (None ... Full Physical Assistance)

## SIS Scoring Form & Profile

Activities Subscales	Total Raw Score	Standard Scores	Percentile
A. Home Living			
B. Community Living			
C. Lifelong Learning			
D. Employment			
E. Health & Safety			
F. Social			
SUM of Standard Scores:			
SIS SUPPORT NEEDS INDEX			

STANDARD SCORES: Mean = 100, Standard Deviation = 15

## Support Needs Profile

%tile	Home Living	Community Living	Life Long Learning	Employment	Health & Safety	Social	SIS Support Needs Index	%tile
99	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20	>131	99
	15-16	15-16	15-16	15-16	15-16	15-16	124-131	
90	14	14	14	14	14	14	120-123	90
	13	13	13	13	13	13	116-119	
80							115-115	80
	12	12	12	12	12	12	110-112	
70							108-109	70
							106-107	
60	11	11	11	11	11	11	105	60
							102-104	
50	10	10	10	10	10	10	100-101	50
							98-99	
40	9	9	9	9	9	9	97-97	40
							92-93	
30							90-92	30
	8	8	8	8	8	8	88-89	
20							85-87	20
	7	7	7	7	7	7	82-84	
10	6	6	6	6	6	6	75-81	10
	5	5	5	5	5	5	<74	
1	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4		1

## Support Intensity Scale

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## Section 2. Protection and Advocacy Scale (SUPPLEMENTAL)

- 8 Life activities:
  - Advocating for self
  - Exercising legal responsibilities
  - Making choices and decisions
  - Etc...
- Ratings:
  - Frequency (0 – 4)
  - Daily Support Time (0 – 4)
  - Type of Support (0 – 4)

## Support Intensity Scale

- Administration time: 30 – 45 minutes
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### Section 3. Exceptional Medical & Behavioral Support Needs

#### Exceptional Medical Supports Needed (16 items):

- Respiratory Care
- Feeding Assistance
- Lifting/transferring
- Other “Exceptional Medical Supports”

#### Ratings:

- 0 = No Support Needed
- 1 = Some Support Needed
- 2 = Extensive Support Needed

### Section 3. Exceptional Medical & Behavioral Support Needs

#### Exceptional Behavioral Supports Needed (13 items):

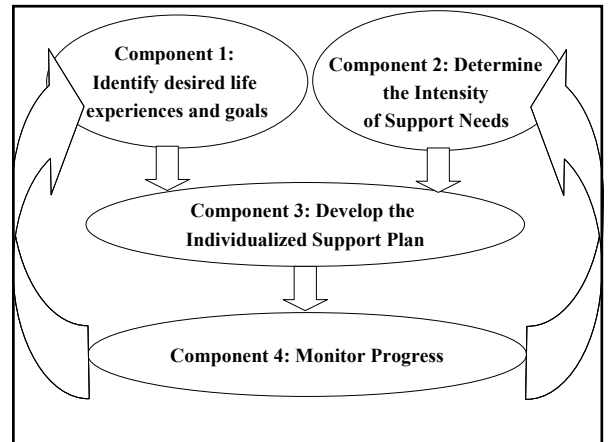
- Externally Directed Destructiveness
- Self Directed Destructiveness
- Wandering off
- Other “Exceptional Behavioral Supports”

#### Ratings:

- 0 = No Support Needed
- 1 = Some Support Needed
- 2 = Extensive Support Needed

### SIS Use at the Individual Level

- Profile of needed supports (Home Living, Community Living, Lifelong Learning, Employment, Health and Safety, Social)
- Standard scores are computed for each of the six activity subscales. Together the subscale standard scores provide a pattern of an individual's support needs.
- A SIS Support Needs Index (or composite standard score) is calculated from scores from the six subscales. It provides an over all indication of the intensity of an individual's supports needs.
- Support considerations based on Protection and Advocacy Scores
- Support consideration's based on exceptional medical and behavioral support needs
- Primary use: Basis for an Individualized Support Plan



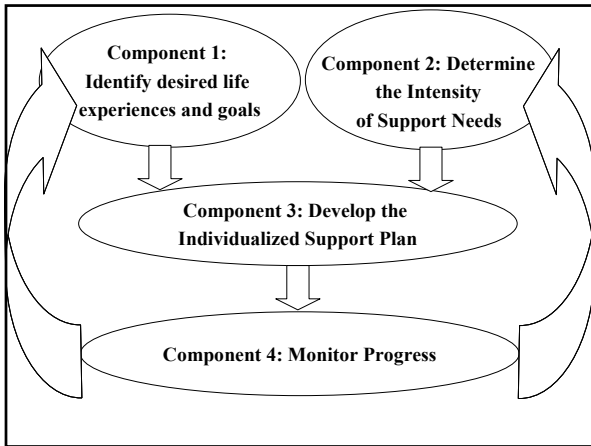
### Component 3: Developing the Individualized Support Plan

#### Elements:

- Current Daily Activities and Environments
- Interests, Preferences, and Desired Outcomes
- Needed Support Areas, Activities, and Settings
- Specific Support Functions and Natural Supports Available to Address Support Needs
- Identify measurable outcomes to later evaluate effectiveness and relevance of plan and its components
- Progress Evaluation Plan

### Words of Caution When Using SIS in Relation to Person-Centered Planning

- SIS data should not be viewed in isolation; rather, they are part of a four-component process that focuses on identifying desirable life experiences and goals, determining the intensity of support needs, developing individualized plans, and monitoring individual progress
- An over-reliance on scores and labels contradicts the primary philosophy of person-centered planning. Scores and classification terms facilitate communication, but they should never be used as the description of the individual.
- Although team members may perceive support needs in a given domain as being very important, the individual or family may not be interested in any significant change in how that is addressed.
- The prioritization of needs remains a subjective determination, based on the unique interests and goals of the person and his or her family.



## Component 4: Monitor Progress

### ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD GUIDE MONITORING OF PROGRESS

- Extent to which desired life experiences and goals are being realized.
- Extent to which desired life experiences and goals remain relevant.
- Extent to which the Individualized Support Plan was implemented.

### Monitor Progress



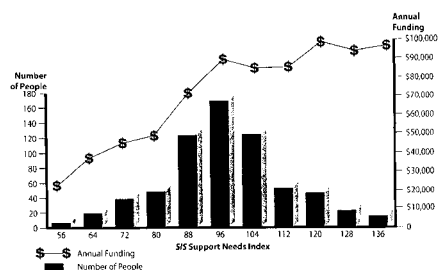
- revise plan as needed (e.g., 90 days);
- PCP => meet as often as needed;
- evaluate discrepancies between envisioned outcomes contained in ISP and actual/realized outcomes;
- take steps to address obstacles/barriers to realizing desired outcomes;
- evaluate relevance of desired experiences and goals;
- return to STEPS 1 & 2 – as needed.

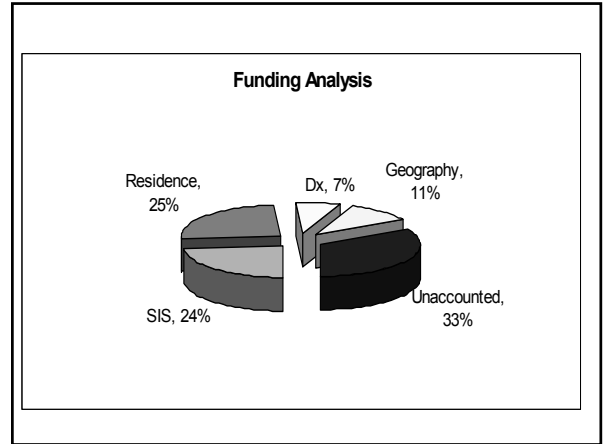
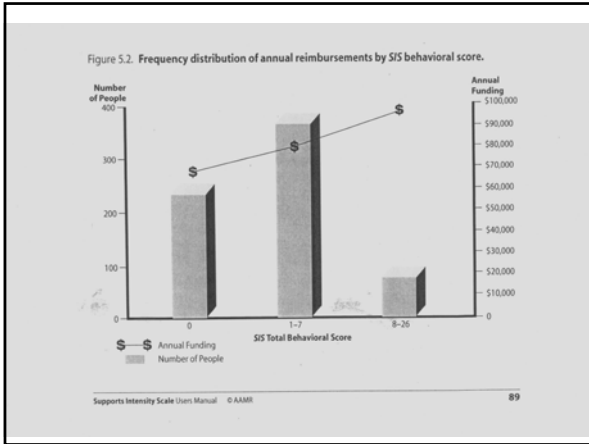
### Another Possible Application of the SIS Individualized Resource Allocation

## Individualized Resource Allocation

Although the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) was developed primarily as a tool for individualized supports planning, it does provide a direct measure of support needs that can be aggregated across comparable groups and agencies.

Figure 5.1. Frequency distribution and annual reimbursements by SIS Support Needs Index.





### Words of Caution

- The primary purpose of the SIS is to provide a measure of individual support needs.
- The SIS is not a diagnostic test; it is a planning tool. That is, the SIS is intended to be used after a diagnosis to inform planning teams regarding individual support needs.
- One needs to appreciate the complexity of cause-effect relationships among support needs, funding levels, and outcomes. In this regard, SIS data will provide only one "piece of the puzzle."
- Individual profiles of needed support vary widely. One should expect that the intensity of needed supports may well be domain-specific and not necessarily based on simply summing across the six subscales of Section 1.
- The impact on the intensity of needed supports of the Exceptional Medical and Behavioral Support Needs (Section 3) cannot be overlooked.

## Summary and Concluding remarks

### What does the SIS offer in relation to Person-centered Supports Planning?

- Direct, reliable, and valid measurement of supports needed across life areas.
- Helps in making decisions about *types* and *intensities* of supports needed.
- Useful process for person driven support plans.
- Evaluates the impact of significant medical and behavioral conditions.
- Presents the individual's support needs in comparison to a national sample of adults with developmental disabilities.
- Assists in individualized planning of funding / resource allocation.

## THANK YOU

### Supports Intensity Scale

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Association on Mental Retardation

Website: [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org)  
Email: [aamr@pmds.com](mailto:aamr@pmds.com)

**AAMR**  
American Association on Mental Retardation