Brief Negative Symptom Scale (BNSS)

BNSS

The BNSS is a brief clinician-rated scale, administered as a semi-structured interview, designed to assess the negative symptoms of schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorders. It explores the five domains now considered central to this symptomatology, namely anhedonia, asociality, avolition, blunted affect, and alogia, with an additional item on the lack of normal distress. The tool was designed to be more attuned to contemporary conceptions of negative symptoms than older scales, while remaining short enough for clinical practice and research. It is particularly useful for objectively measuring overall severity, distinguishing the motivation-pleasure and emotional expression dimensions, monitoring changes during treatment, and documenting a patient's symptom profile in detail.

Number of questions	13 questions
Estimated duration	12 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Brief Negative Symptom Scale
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Brian Kirkpatrick, Gregory P. Strauss, Linh Nguyen, Bernard A. Fischer, David G. Daniel, Angel Cienfuegos, Stephen R. Marder (2010)
Category	Psychotic disorders

Preview of the 13 questions

Intensity of pleasure during activities

Subscale: Anhedonia

0 - Absent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 - Severe

Frequency of pleasure during activities

Subscale: Anhedonia

0 - Absent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 - Severe

Intensity of expected pleasure from future activities

Subscale: Anhedonia

0 - Absent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 - Severe

Distress

Subscale: Distress (lack of normal distress)

0 - Absent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 - Severe

Asociality: behavior

Subscale: Asociality

0 - Absent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 - Severe

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is rated from 0 to 6 based on the interview, observed behavior, and information mainly covering the past 7 days. The total score is the sum of the 13 items, ranging from 0 to 78. Subscores can be calculated for anhedonia, asociality, avolition, blunted affect, alogia, and lack of distress. A higher score indicates more severe negative symptomatology. The distress item is interpreted in terms of a reduction in normal distress. There is no universally accepted diagnostic cutoff, so interpretation relies on overall severity, the profile across subdimensions, and the clinical context.

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