

Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS)

The Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS) is a clinical tool used to assess the severity of suicidal thoughts in people at risk. It is a clinician-administered instrument that detects the presence and intensity of suicidal ideation, as well as the attitudes, behaviors, and intentions associated with suicidal thinking, in order to support diagnosis and clinical decision-making.

Number of questions	21 questions
Estimated duration	10 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation
Target audience	Adults, adolescents
Authors	Aaron T. Beck, Robert A. Steer, Gregory K. Brown (1979)
Category	Depression

Preview of the 21 questions

Desire to live

- I have a moderate to strong desire to live.
- I have a weak desire to live.
- I have no desire to live.

Desire to die

- I have no desire to die.
- I have a weak desire to die.
- I have a moderate to strong desire to die.

Reasons for living / reasons for dying

- My reasons for living outweigh my reasons for dying.
- My reasons for living and for dying are roughly equal.
- My reasons for dying outweigh my reasons for living.

Desire to kill oneself

- I have no desire to kill myself.
- I have a weak desire to kill myself.
- I have a moderate to strong desire to kill myself.

Attitude toward a life-threatening situation

If I found myself in a situation where my life was in danger, I would try to save myself.

If I found myself in a situation where my life was in danger, I would let chance decide between life and death.

If I found myself in a situation where my life was in danger, I would not take the necessary measures to avoid death.

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is scored from 0 to 2, for a total score ranging from 0 to 38 (the first two items serve as screening items). A high score indicates more pronounced suicidal ideation. Only patients who endorsed one of the first two questions continue with the scale. Scores must be interpreted in light of the clinical context.

Usage

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