SDS

Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS)

The Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS) is a brief questionnaire designed to measure the degree of psychological dependence on a substance (such as alcohol, nicotine, or other drugs). It is widely used to assess the severity of dependence in a standardized and reliable way among substance users.

Number of questions	5 questions
Estimated duration	5 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Severity of Dependence Scale
Target audience	Adults, adolescents
Authors	Gavin, G., Ross, H.E., Skinner, H.A. (1995)
Category	Addictions

Preview of the 5 questions

Did you think your use of [named drug] was out of control?

Never or almost never | Sometimes | Often | Always

Did the prospect of missing a fix (or dose) make you anxious or worried?

Never or almost never | Sometimes | Often | Always

Did you worry about your use of [named drug]?

Never or almost never | Sometimes | Often | Always

Did you wish you could stop?

Never or almost never | Sometimes | Often | Always

How difficult would you find it to stop or go without [named drug]?

Not difficult | Quite difficult | Very difficult | Impossible

Scoring & interpretation

Each question is scored from 0 to 3, so the total score ranges from 0 to 15. A high score suggests greater severity of dependence. A specific cutoff may be used depending on the substance and the clinical context; for example, a total score ≥ 3 or 4 suggests significant dependence.