

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<i>What is the SIS-A?</i>	
What is the SIS-A?	<p>The Supports Intensity Scale for Adults (SIS-A) is a valid and reliable tool used as a member needs assessment. Developed and maintained by the Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the SIS-A is a comprehensive planning tool that measures support needs in the areas of home living, community living, lifelong learning, employment, health and safety, and social activities.</p> <p>The SIS-A typically takes 2-3 hours to gather the information needed and complete in full.</p>
What is the Lifespan Project and how does it connect to the SIS-A?	<p>One aspect of the project is a waiver being planned by OADS for 2025, which is intended to serve the member across the entire lifespan with services attuned to different needs. It will support self-direction, community inclusion and the implementation of innovations and innovative service options. The SIS-A will be required for participation in the Lifespan Waiver.</p> <p>To learn more about it, you can go to the OADS website: https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html </p>
Would an assessment done now for my family member be used to help determine services once the Lifespan Waiver is in place?	<p>The SIS-A does not determine services. Its purpose is to accurately reflect the supports needs of an individual with IDD or autism. Decisions on services are developed by the Person-Centered Planning team and process. The SIS-A is valid for three years, so an assessment now will be good for some time. There may need to be another assessment prior to accessing Lifespan Waiver services. The SIS-A should accurately reflect the needs of the person at the time it is used for the waiver.</p> <p>The design of the Lifespan Waiver is still under development. Go to: https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/about-us/initiatives/hcbs-lifespan-project to learn more about the progress of the Lifespan Waiver and some of the specific guidelines that are being developed.</p>
Is a SIS-A required?	<p>Participation is currently voluntary. The State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) plans to require the SIS Assessment at some future date, as part of a new waiver called the Lifespan Waiver. Individuals that participate in a SIS assessment now will contribute to the information gathered about what changes are needed to the current service system and will be helpful in creating the Lifespan Waiver. DHHS also encourages individuals to participate in a SIS assessment now, so that they understand the process for any future assessments.</p>
How does the SIS-A measure support needs?	<p>The SIS assesses the support needs of people with IDD or autism. It has been in use since 2004. The “Adult SIS” (SIS-A) for individuals aged 16 and older.</p> <p>The SIS focuses on what support a person needs to successfully live as independently as possible. Things like taking care of personal needs, working or volunteering, housekeeping, or maintaining relationships and connecting with their community. The SIS also asks about a person’s exceptional medical and/or behavioral support needs. The assessment is done as an interview. A trained interviewer does the interview with the person with IDD or autism and others who</p>

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	know them well.
How will SIS scores reflect a person's more complex needs? For example - episodic mental health crises?	<p>The SIS-A Second Edition asks respondents at the interview to consider the needs of a person. It requests thinking about all needs in the year prior to the interview. It also asks that respondents attempt to estimate the needs in the year after the interview. Notes are added at the interview to add context regarding episodic situations and additional needs. The Person-Centered Plan then takes data from many sources into account. The planning team uses the data to decide on services that meet overall needs. It also creates a plan for episodic needs.</p> <p>There is an intention that the Lifespan Waiver will include many factors. One of these is the recognition of exceptional or episodic needs. However, the Lifespan Waiver is in the design phases only at this time. When policy is created, there will be attention given to this area.</p> <p>Additional information about the SIS-A can be found in the FAQ for the SIS-A on the SIS-A web page. This is also located on the OADS website. It will be regularly updated.</p>
What Quality Process does Maximus and OADS have in place?	<p>All assessors are trained and certified by AAIDD, the authorizing body for the SIS-A. This confirms that assessors will consistently conduct the assessment under the criteria specified by AAIDD. Individual assessor performance is continually evaluated for quality.</p> <p>The Maximus team will review the SIS for quality before it is approved in SISOnline and shared with CCMs. During the review we ensure, among other things, that the assessment is written using person-first language and the scores were entered correctly. In addition, Maximus' Quality Team reviews a sampling of assessments each week to look for consistency and congruency throughout the SIS.</p> <p>OADS reviews the work of Maximus, manages concerns or issues that are raised, reviews satisfaction surveys and feedback, and works with Maximus to adjust program delivery accordingly.</p>
Contact Information and Resource Access	
Who is Maximus?	<p>Maximus is the vendor selected by the State of Maine and OADS to conduct assessments using the SIS-A statewide. Maximus has partnered with the SIS authors (AAIDD) and conducted the SIS across various states for over 15 years.</p> <p>We do also provide other clinical and assessment services in Maine and across the country. You can learn more about Maximus here: https://maximus.com/clinical-services.</p>
How do I contact Maximus with questions about SIS Assessments?	<p>Contact by phone: 833.771.4639</p> <p>Contact by email: Maine-SIS@maximus.com</p> <p>Additional resources: https://maximusclinicalservices.com/svcs/maine_sis</p>

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Where can I find support materials online about SIS Assessment processes?	For questions about the assessment process, go to the Maximus – Maine SIS Assessments Tools & Resources page, which has a growing list of content that will eventually include a broad range of helpful content, including contact information, recent announcements, and relevant state links. You can find these resources at: https://maximusclinicalservices.com/svcs/maine_sis .
Where can I find more information about the SIS-A Project in the State of Maine?	For questions regarding the timeline, orientation presentations and announcements about the SIS-A implementation in the State of Maine, you can find project updates and resources on the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) website: https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/about-us/initiatives/needs-assessment-implementation-project .
Where can I learn more about the SIS assessment?	You can find more information about the SIS on the website for the developers of the SIS assessment, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD): https://www.aaidd.org/ .
Is the Help Desk service available on the weekends?	Help Desk staff are not available to return calls on the weekends, however all support resources are always available for review through the Maine SIS Assessments Tools and Resources page: https://maximusclinicalservices.com/svcs/maine_sis .
Understanding the SIS Assessment Process	
How often will the SIS-A need to be completed for a member?	The initial plan is that the SIS-A will be completed for each individual once every three years. If a significant life altering event occurs that may change the member's support needs, a decision to potentially perform a new SIS-A will be made by OADS.
Who should participate in the SIS-A assessment?	AAIDD requires 2 participants be present for each SIS. It is preferred to include the member, guardians, family, friends, direct support staff from residential, day or other providers. The member should also agree that everyone planning to attend are people they want to be there. All those participants should have known the person for at least 3 months. It is also strongly recommended that the case manager participate in the assessment, provided they have known the person for at least 90 days.
How should I prepare for the SIS?	All participants attending a SIS on behalf of the member being assessed must have known the person for at least 90 days and be familiar with their current support needs. There is no content preparation required prior to the SIS. Those attending will be able to respond to the questions based on their knowledge of the person. The SIS assessment averages between 2 – 2 ½ hours but may take up to 3 hours. During the assessment, it's fine for participants to request a short break. There are also supports and options available for a person who may not be able to attend the whole assessment.

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What are the qualifications for the interviewers/assessors who administer the SIS-A assessment?	In the 2nd edition of the SIS-A Manual, the AAIDD recommends that the SIS-A should be administered by persons who have completed at least a baccalaureate degree and are working in the field of human services for people with IDD. Assessors should have at least a year's experience working in the human services field with specific experience with individuals with IDD, including knowledge on how to request and verify information from respondents.
Are the assessors familiar with behavioral or mental health support needs?	SIS assessors have experience working with people with a variety of support needs. Assessors will work with the team and ask follow-up question to ensure a person's support needs are captured completely throughout the SIS assessment.
How does the SIS-A differ from SIS assessments performed several years ago in Maine?	AAIDD published an updated version of the SIS-A in January 2023, called the SIS-A 2nd edition. There are minimal changes from the original SIS-A version. Assessors will be trained and certified to complete the SIS-A 2nd addition.
How will a need or request for accommodations for the SIS-A be addressed?	When planning for a SIS assessment, the Maximus scheduler will ask if there is the need for accommodations.
Does AAIDD allow the viewing of SIS-A questions ahead of time?	No. However, there is a sample report available on the Maximus website for review. This sample is helpful in understanding the types of results generated from the assessment. They are examples of the kinds of questions can be reviewed in advance. They can orient you as to the nature of the questions that will be asked.
Will a real SIS-A report look different from the sample?	Yes, it will look slightly different. A SIS-A report about a real person will include all the questions and responses, as well as assessor notes. It will highlight those things that are important to and important for the person.
Where will the assessment occur?	The assessment should take place in a location that is private. It should be a location where the member and all team members are able to all fit and sit comfortably for 2-3 hours. This could include a room in a person's home, day program meeting room, CCM office, or other office setting. Some public libraries have private rooms that can be reserved.
When are SIS-A assessments scheduled to be face-to-face interviews and when are they scheduled as a virtual interview?	For valid interviews completed by a certified SIS-A assessor The assessment is scheduled as a face-to-face interview. If you would like the interview to be virtual using Zoom, you can make that request when scheduling.

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What if I'm not available for the SIS-A assessment interview during the day?	<p>The assessment can take place in the late afternoon or on the weekend, if needed to accommodate schedules. Maximus will ensure the time selected works for the member and family/guardians, CCM, and providers.</p>
Who covers the cost for any interpreters that are needed?	<p>The State of Maine (OADS) covers the cost of any interpreters required.</p>
There are some questions about employment in the SIS. If the person is not interested in working, why do we have to discuss employment during the SIS interview? Can we skip a question or a section?	<p>The SIS-A 2nd Edition is a standardized assessment. It's important that all questions and sections be asked for the results to be valid. We would ask the person and their team to consider the person's preferences and a job that may be of interest to them, if they were to choose employment.</p> <p>Sections or questions cannot be skipped when performing the assessment.</p>
What are the major steps in the SIS-A assessment process?	<p>Before the Assessment</p> <p>Maximus contacts the Community Case Manager (CCM) to decide who should be there for the member's assessment. If there is no response after three business days from the CCM, then the member and guardian will be contacted.</p> <p>Maximus contacts the member and any people who should attend the assessment interview. Those attending are called respondents. It is important that everyone understands the process. Maximus finds the best location and day/time that works best for the meeting.</p> <p>Maximus then contacts the person who will lead the assessment interview with the details.</p> <p>At the Assessment</p> <p>The interviewer explains the process and goes through some questions with everyone attending the assessment. This usually takes 2-3 hours. It's important that the member with IDD or autism attend, if only part of the time. If the member cannot attend, the interviewer will schedule a time to meet them in person prior to the assessment.</p> <p>After the Assessment</p> <p>The Case Management Agency will receive and share the assessment results with team members by email, mail or in person.</p> <p>The team may use the results to get ready to attend the Person-Centered Planning meeting.</p>

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How will the SIS-A be used with OADS Waiver Members?	<p>Information from SIS-A assessments will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the Person-Centered Plan annual review meeting. • Understand the support needs of waiver members and those who are on a wait list. • Help OADS design and develop the Lifespan Project and Waiver.
How does the assessor ensure that the SIS-A report shows an accurate picture of the person being assessed?	<p>The participants will all agree on the scores and will know the ratings as the assessment is being conducted. This ensures that the team will see that the report aligns with the assessment experience.</p> <p>As an example, a Community Case Manager for Maine recently saw a report of a SIS-A assessment. They said they were pleased to see that the report strongly matched their understanding of the person and their needs.</p>
Can I appeal the SIS-A results?	<p>No. The assessment is not currently related to any waiver, so there is no impact for members or families. It is quality data for planning and design. As such, there is no need currently for an appeal. The strong involvement and feedback of the participants throughout the assessment is key. It helps to ensure that an accurate picture of the person and their needs is reflected in the report.</p> <p>There will be a reassessment process in cases of significant life change. Examples include events that are a major life change that is not temporary in nature. Some common issues could include a major illness or a change in mobility that results in long-term support needs. There could also be a long-term improvement in support needs, such as a kidney transplant, which could eliminate the need for dialysis.</p> <p>If there are questions about SIS-A results, contact the Maximus Help Desk and someone will be happy to respond.</p>
<div>NEW</div> <p>Can the SIS-A be recorded?</p>	<p>Per AAIDD, “No recordings, including use of AI notetaking or recording tools or software are allowed during an in-person or virtual SIS assessment session.”</p>