



Scoring the GAIN Short Screener

The GAIN-SS is comprised of four subscreeners that cover four different behavioral health domains:

- IDScr (Internalizing Disorder Screener, 1a-1f)
- EDScr (Externalizing Disorder Screener, 2a-2g)
- SDScr (Substance Disorder Screener, 3a-3e)
- CVScr (Crime and Violence Screener, 4a-4e)

The items in these subscreeners are problems or symptoms the participant could have experienced during their lifetime. Response choices let the participant report whether they had each problem more than a year ago, 4 to 12 months ago, 2 to 3 months ago, during the past month, or never.

Each subscreener contains between five and seven items. Taken together, these subscreeners are referred to as the Total Disorder Screener (TDSr).

Scoring

To score the GAIN-SS, count the number of problems or symptoms in each subscreener that the participant reported experiencing during the last year. This means counting the problems they had in the past month ("4") or 2 to 3 months ago ("3") or 4 to 12 months ago ("2"). Do not include problems they reported experiencing more than a year ago ("1").

To get the Total Disorder Screener score, add the four past-year subscreener scores together. These four scores can be documented in the Scoring chart in the Staff Use Box on p. 2.

In the example below, the participant reports having had three problems related to substance use disorders within the past month and one 4 to 12 months ago.

| SDScr 3. When was the last time that... | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. you used alcohol or other drugs weekly or more often? | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b. you spent a lot of time either getting alcohol or other drugs, using alcohol or other drugs, or recovering from the effects of alcohol or other drugs (e.g., feeling sick)? | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c. you kept using alcohol or other drugs even though it was causing social problems, leading to fights, or getting you into trouble with other people? | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d. your use of alcohol or other drugs caused you to give up or reduce your involvement in activities at work, school, home, or social events? | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e. you had withdrawal problems from alcohol or other drugs like shaky hands, throwing up, having trouble sitting still or sleeping, or you used any alcohol or other drugs to stop being sick or avoid withdrawal problems? | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Counting the number of past-year problems (highlighted in yellow) gives an SDScr score of 4.

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Interpreting Scores

GAIN-SS scores can be divided into three levels of severity:

- **Low (0):** Unlikely to have a diagnosis or need services.
- **Moderate (1 to 2):** A possible diagnosis; the client is likely to benefit from a brief assessment and outpatient intervention.
- **High (3+ on the total screener; 3+ on the subscreeners):** High probabilities of a diagnosis; the client is likely to need more formal assessment and intervention, either directly or through referral.

Scores in the moderate range (1-2) or high range (3+) on the 4 sub-screeners should be used to identify the specific kinds of behavioral health services that are needed. Moderate/high scores suggest a need for treatment or services related to the following:

- **Internalizing Disorder Screener:** somatic complaints, depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, and suicide.
- **Externalizing Disorder Screener:** attention deficits, hyperactivity, impulsivity, conduct problems, and gambling.
- **Substance Disorder Screener:** substance use, abuse, and dependence.
- **Crime/Violence Screener:** interpersonal violence/crime, drug-related crime, and property crime.

For example, the participant from the previous page had a score of 4 (endorsed 4 past-year problems) on the Substance Disorder Screener. Since this score falls in the high severity range, it is likely that he or she needs additional assessment or treatment related to substance use disorder issues.

Note that a participant who reports having had significant problems with suicidal thoughts in item 1e may need services despite an overall low score. Interviewers should use sound judgment and follow any related organizational procedures if suicidal thoughts are reported.

Questions

Please visit our website at www.gaincc.org to find more information on the GAIN-SS.

For any questions about the GAIN-SS, including how to obtain a license, please contact us at gaininfo@chestnut.org or 309-451-7900.



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