

Guidelines for Using the Family Intervention Specialist Screen for Mental Health, Substance Use, and Co-Occurring Issues

The FIS Screen was derived from two instruments, the Mental Health Screening Form-III (MHSF-III) and the Mentally Ill Drug and Alcohol Screening (MIDAS). The MHSF-III was developed by J.F.X. Carroll, Ph.D. and John J. McGinley, M.S., M.S.W., M.A., of Project Return Foundation, Inc., and was designed as a rough screening device for clients seeking admission to substance abuse treatment programs. The MIDAS was developed by Kenneth Minkhoff, M.D. of Acton, MA, and was designed for use with mentally ill substance users. The developers of the MHSF-III and the MIDAS kindly granted permission for their instruments to be modified and combined into a screening tool for co-occurring disorders.

Each question is answered either **“yes” or “no.”** All questions reflect the respondent’s **entire life history**, by asking **“have you ever…”** or other questions to inquire about **lifetime symptoms and problems**.

The **preferred** mode of administration is for staff members to read each item to the respondent and get their “yes” and “no” responses. Then, **after** completing all 18 questions (question 14 has two parts), the staff member should probe for details about any “yes” response by asking questions such as:

- “When** did this problem first develop?”
- “How long** did it last?”
- “Did the problem develop **before, during, or after** you started using substances?”
- “What** was happening in your life at that time?”

This information and other comments can be written on the back of the form, or on a separate page.

The FIS Screen can also be given directly to clients for them to complete, providing they have sufficient reading skills. If there is any doubt about someone’s reading ability, have the client read the instructions and question number one to the staff member monitoring this process. If the client cannot read and/or comprehend the questions, the questions must be read and/or explained to him/her.

Whether the FIS Screen is read to a client or s/he reads the questions and responds on his/her own, the completed FIS Screen **should be carefully reviewed** by a staff member to determine how best to use the information. It is strongly recommended that a **qualified mental health specialist** be consulted about any “yes” response to questions 8 through 17. The mental health specialist will determine whether or not a followup, face-to-face interview is needed for a diagnosis and/or treatment recommendation.

The FIS Screen features a **“Total Score”** line to reflect the total number of “yes” responses. The maximum score on the FIS Screen is 18 (question 14 has two parts).

The first 7 questions on the FIS Screen address addictive disorders: Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6, and Q7 address Substance Use Disorders; Q3 addresses Pathological Gambling. Questions 8 and 9 are not unique to any particular diagnosis, and serve as general screening questions. Questions **10 through 17 reflect symptoms associated with the following diagnoses/diagnostic categories**: Q10, Schizophrenia and Delusional Disorders; Q11, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; Q12 Eating Disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia); Q13 Manic Episode; Q14a and Q14b, Depressive Disorders; Q15, Intermittent Explosive Disorder; Q16, Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders; Q17 Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

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SCORING:

Any YES answer on questions 1 to 7 identifies a potential addiction issue to be further evaluated through a full assessment. Any YES answer on questions 8 to 17 indicates a potential mental health issue to be further evaluated through a full assessment. Any YES in questions (1-7) AND (8-17) indicates a potential co-occurring issue to be further evaluated through a full assessment. A "yes" response to any of questions does **not**, by itself, ensure that a mental health or addiction problem exists at this time. A "yes" response raises only the **possibility** of a **current** problem, which is why a consult with an addiction or mental health specialist is strongly recommended.

FIS Screen Instructions:

In this program, we help people with all their problems, not just their addictions. This commitment includes helping people with emotional problems. Our staff is ready to help you to deal with any emotional problems you may have, but we can do this only if we are aware of the problems. Any information you provide to us on this form will be kept in strict confidence. It will not be released to any outside person or agency without your permission. If you do not know how to answer these questions, ask the staff member giving you this form for guidance.

Please note: each item refers to your entire life history, not just your current situation.