SAD PERSONS Scale

Patient's name: _____ Date: _____ dd / mm / yyyy

Medical record no.: _____ Setting: _____

Assessed by: _____ Time: _____

HOW TO USE THIS SCALE

SAD PERSONS is a ten-item mnemonic that structures a record of suicide risk factors. Each item present scores one point, giving a total from 0 to 10.

Read this before you score

SAD PERSONS is a prompt for a conversation, not a prediction. Studies have found it performs poorly at identifying who will go on to attempt suicide, and a low score never overrides clinical concern. Use it to make sure nothing was missed, then act on your judgement and your local risk protocol.

ITEMS

1 — S — Sex - male: _____ 2 — A — Age under 19 or over 45: _____

3 — D — Depression or hopelessness: _____

4 — P — Previous suicide attempt or psychiatric care:

5 — E — Excessive alcohol or drug use: _____

6 — R — Rational thinking lost (psychosis, organic brain syndrome):

7 — S — Separated, divorced or widowed: _____

8 — O — Organised plan or serious attempt:

9 — N — No social support: _____

10 — S — Stated future intent to repeat or ambivalence about help:

Total score (0-10): _____ Scored by: _____

Time scored: _____ Supervisor notified: _____

SUGGESTED ACTION

Score: 0 to 4 | Band: Low | Original guidance: May be suitable for discharge with follow-up arranged Score: 5 to 6 | Band: Medium | Original guidance: Consider hospital admission; arrange close follow-up if discharged Score: 7 to 10 | Band: High | Original guidance: Hospital admission usually indicated

The score is a floor, not a ceiling

Escalate on clinical concern whatever the number. Stated intent, access to lethal means, a recent attempt, or a sudden calm after agitation all warrant action regardless of the total.

SAFETY STEPS TAKEN

Safety steps taken

- [ ] Means restriction discussed
- [ ] Crisis line number given
- [ ] Safety plan completed with the patient
- [ ] Family or carer involved with consent
- [ ] Same-day mental health review arranged
- [ ] Follow-up appointment booked
- [ ] Handover documented

Clinical impression, protective factors, and disposition

Clinician signature

Reviewed by

Sources: Patterson WM, Dohn HH, Bird J, Patterson GA. Evaluation of suicidal patients: the SAD PERSONS scale. Psychosomatics. 1983;24(4):343-349. · Bolton JM, Spiwak R, Sareen J. Predicting suicide attempts with the SAD PERSONS scale. J Clin Psychiatry. 2012;73(6):e735–e741. · If you are in the United States and in crisis, call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.