

# Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (SADS)

## Description

This is a 28 item true/false scale that measures distress in social situations and the avoidance of social interactions. It also measures aspects of social anxiety including distress, discomfort and fear. Social avoidance was defined as "being with, talking to, or escaping from others for any reason . . . both actual avoidance and the desire for avoidance were included" (Watson & Friend, 1969, p. 449). Individuals who score high in the SADS are those who experience anxiety or distress with social interaction or anticipations of social interactions. Geist and Borecki (1982) found that persons high on the SAD had significantly lower levels of self-esteem. High SADS scores indicated significantly lower values of self-confidence, need for affiliation, need for change, and need for dominance (Geist and Borecki 1982).

## Validity

Watson & Friend (1969) studies 205 college students (145 females and 60 males). The distribution of scores was skewed, with high scores being rare; the modal score was 0. Mean scores differed by sex: males had a mean of 11.2 and females had a mean score of 8.24. Geist and Borecki (1982) also conducted a validation study with a similar college group, finding similar results. Discriminant and convergent validity from the scale was established through a correlation self-confidence, need for affiliation, need for change, and need for dominance.

## Interpretation

Scores consist of total raw score (from 0 to 28) and a percentile rank based on Watson and Friend's validation sample. The overall mean for this sample was 9.11 and the standard deviation 8.01, although it should be noted that there was a strong positive skew in results. This, combined with the fact that the sample were university students, means that percentiles should be interpreted with caution. Watson & Friend divided their sample into high, average and low scorers as follows:

Low 0 or 1.

Average 2 to 11.

High 12 and up.

Generally the lower scores on the SAD are considered to be most adaptive because they are associated with self-esteem and social engagement, however, individuals who score very low on the SAD have been shown to have a higher need for social control and dominance (Geist & Borecki, 1982). Thus, very low scorers maybe resistant to prosocial activities. Higher scorers on the SADS have lower self confidence, lower need for social affiliation, low need for dominance and a high need for deference.

## Developer

Watson, D., & Friend, R. (1969). Measurement of social-evaluative anxiety. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*; *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 33(4), 448.

## References

Geist and Hamrick, (1983) *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, September. 1983, Vol. 39, No. 5

## Instructions to Client

This questionnaire consists of a number of statements. We want you to decide for each one if it is TRUE or FALSE, as applied to you. If the statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE as applied to you, tap the true button. If the statements is FALSE or MOSTLY FALSE as applied to you, tap the false button. Remember to give your own opinion of yourself.