

Depression, anxiety and stress scale

The DASS presented in this pack is a short version, the DASS21, which has 7 items per scale and a total of 21 questions.

There are 3 scales:

- > The depression scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia, and inertia.
- > The anxiety scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect.
- > The stress scale is sensitive to levels of chronic non-specific arousal. It assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/agitated, irritable/over-reactive and impatient.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN PEOPLE HAVE A DIAGNOSIS OF DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY. It is not a categorical measure of clinical diagnoses, but helps to explore how people may be functioning on a day to day basis.

The DASS is a pencil and paper, self-report questionnaire that takes approximately 5 minutes to complete. Participants are asked to use a 4 point severity/frequency scale to rate the extent to which they have experienced each state over the past week.

The DASS should be checked after completion to ensure that all items have been answered and only one response has been marked.

A scale such as the DASS can lead to a useful assessment of disturbance, for example individuals who may fall short of a clinical cut-off for a specific diagnosis can be correctly recognised as experiencing considerable symptoms and as being at high risk of further problems.

The following cut-off scores have been developed for defining mild/moderate/severe/extremely severe scores for each DASS scale.

	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0 - 4	0 - 3	0 - 7
Mild	5 - 6	4 - 5	8 - 9
Moderate	7 - 10	6 - 7	10 - 12
Severe	11 - 13	8 - 9	13 - 16
Extremely Severe	14 +	10 +	17 +

Reference: Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). Manual for the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales. (2nd. Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation. For more information on the DASS go to the following website: www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass/