A: OVERVIEW OF THE NEEDS

The NEEDS is an extension of the SUBSTANCE ABUSE LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE EVALUATION, known as the SALCE. The NEEDS utilizes the same questions as the SALCE and the same decision rules in arriving at its assessment outcome. Along with additional informational questions, such as employment and relationship issues, the NEEDS reports in greater detail, the information gathered and analyzed by the SALCE.

1. WHAT IS THE NEEDS DESIGNED TO DO?
   a. Provide a standardized, objective and consistent method of gathering information.
   b. Provide enough valid information about all relevant aspects of a respondent's life to determine the first level of appropriate intervention.
   c. Provide valid direction for conducting the personal interview.

2. HOW IS THE NEEDS USED?
   a. Based on the particular needs and philosophy of the user:
      ... NEEDS summary score results can be used to refer individuals directly to treatment.
      ... NEEDS test results are used as the basis for a personal interview.
      ... NEEDS provides the necessary elements for a psycho-social history.
      ... NEEDS provides the basis for development of treatment goals and objectives.
      ... NEEDS is sometimes used to reinforce or substantiate the personal interview results.
3. WHAT IS THE NEEDS MODEL?

The NEEDS addresses the same standard assessment issues on which any assessor would focus and report.

The method employed to analyze and measure these assessment issues follows the same format used in the personal interview process. The NEEDS program looks for patterns of a respondent's answers rather than looking at answers to single items to support its recommendations.

As in the personal interview, where the assessor must often rely on his/her overall impression of the total interview process, the computer uses all of the respondent's answers to arrive at its conclusions.

The decision rules for arriving at these recommendations have been evaluated and refined on a continuous basis for more than 22 years involving over 2,000,000 SALCE-NEEDS evaluations. As part of an ongoing process of research and user feed-back, the instruments continue to be refined and enhanced.

Each measure of the NEEDS report helps to define the respondent profile. The measures should support the final conclusions of the assessment.

It is expected that the results will be used as a tool to assist the assessor in the assessment process. Through this use, the NEEDS report will become an extension of his/her personal style and technique in conducting personal interviews.
B. GENERAL VALIDATION STUDIES

1. NEEDS is based on THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE EVALUATION, known as the SALCE. The SALCE and the NEEDS have a 96% general agreement with personal interviews.

   a. When the instrument's recommendations are compared with those of professional assessors, there is 96% general agreement. Both the instruments and the professional assessor may recommend treatment, but the level of intensity may differ.

   b. In 75% of comparisons, the SALCE recommendations and the personal interview results are in exact agreement.

   c. Reliability studies conducted at East Carolina University show no mean difference across time for SALCE SUMMARY SCORES, TEST TAKING ATTITUDE and LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE EVALUATION based on test retest results.

       A split half test of reliability, using a Pearson Product-Moment correlation co-efficient and the Spearman-Brown Formula for predicted reliability shows a co-efficient of 0.93.

       These test retest results indicate that the SALCE is a reliable instrument.

   d. Relationships among the MMPI-2 validity scales and SALCE were in the predicted directions. Summary Scores were positively related to the clinical scales, and a strong correlation was found with the MacAndrew Scale. TTA and LCE were positively related to L and K, and negatively related to the F scale.

   e. Concurrent validity for the NEEDS using the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSR) shows significant correlation with expected measures. The NEEDS Emotional Status Evaluation scale correlates with eight of the nine BSR scales at the.01 level of significance. It correlates with the ninth, Interpersonal Sensitivity at the.05 level of significance.
C. TECHNIQUES AND MECHANICS OF TEST ADMINISTRATION

1. READING LEVEL - The NEEDS Report is based on a 130-item self-report survey that addresses a broad range of behavior and attitudes. The survey is written at a fifth grade reading level. In addition, the NEEDS Program has scales for determining possible reading difficulties.

The average time to complete the survey is 26 minutes. The NEEDS Program also evaluates the length of time it takes the person to complete the survey. Often, if the person takes an unusually long or short time to complete the survey, it may indicate reading problems. Individuals who finish in times that are very short are sometimes demonstrating inappropriate or non-caring attitudes, which could also be an attempt to cover up reading problems.

2. Example of instructions:

"PLEASE READ AND ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ON THIS SURVEY. MAKE SURE THAT YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION AND THAT YOU GIVE ONLY ONE ANSWER TO A QUESTION.

DO NOT SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WITH ANY ONE QUESTION. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT HOW TO ANSWER A PARTICULAR QUESTION, PLACE A MARK BY THE QUESTION NUMBER, SO THAT YOU CAN GO BACK TO IT AFTER COMPLETING THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS."
D: GUIDELINES FOR USING THE NEEDS REPORT

Background

The NEEDS report is based on a broad range of behavior and attitudes. It focuses on the stability of significant areas of a person's life, as well as examining patterns of past and current behavior. The NEEDS report provides a profile of the individual's functioning in these significant areas. This profile can be used as an outline for a diagnostic interview and treatment plan development, or for making immediate decisions for referral.

The underlying question that the NEEDS evaluation raises in examining respondent answers is "how likely is it that the person can and will change his/her behavior?" This question is addressed by:

(1) Evaluating the person's attitude: How it may contribute to the individual's inappropriate decisions and how it could impact on efforts to change behavior.

(2) Looking at the individual's patterns of past behavior as an indicator of future behavior. Are these established, learned behavior patterns?

(3) Does this behavior appear to be a function of acute stress arising out of life specific circumstances? Issues such as substance abuse, emotional, physical or intellectual deficiencies will make behavior change very unlikely without proper assistance. Unstable relationships and employment can also undermine attempts to bring about behavior change.

(4) Finally, does the person know how to change behavior, to make the sacrifices and delay gratification for future rewards?

The NEEDS evaluation also addresses a person's criminal history. This information is used in determining the amount of risk a person may be to him/herself and to society. If the person has chosen to act out in an asocial manner and/or does not seem able or willing to change this behavior as indicated by repeated offenses, there will be a need for increased supervision of this person's behavior.

The issue of risk is also a concern in evaluating a person's needs. For example, substance abuse problems and emotional vulnerability can also result in asocial behavior. Therefore, need deficiencies should not only be evaluated for their impact on behavior change, but their impact on the level of risk taking behavior, as well.
The NEEDS report makes recommendations for addressing need deficiencies. These recommendations attempt to list all areas requiring attention. Those, which appear to have the greatest influence on immediate behavior change, are listed first.

In addition, suggested levels of supervision are also provided. These are based on how existing need deficiencies and past patterns of behavior will prevent the person from supervising his/her own behavior and thus require external supervision.

The NEEDS Report

The areas addressed in the NEEDS evaluation are:

A: Respondent Attitude (Test Taking Attitude)
B: Basic Problem Solving and Reading Assessment
C: Emotional Stability Assessment
D: Substance Abuse Assessment
E: Employment Assessment
F: Personal Relationship and Support System Assessment
G: Physical Health Assessment
H: Educational Assessment
I: Criminal History Assessment
J: NEEDS Assessment
K: Summary
L: Specific Information

The NEEDS report lists each need area, assigns a score reflecting the level of instability, provides a narrative explaining the score, and lists examples of critical issues identified by the person.

These instability scores range from 0 to 25 and higher. Higher scores indicate more of a problem. The scores are grouped by relative level of severity.

Scores from 0 - 5 Would be considered non-problematic.
Scores from 6 - 10 Suggest beginning problems or the possibility for potential problems.
Scores from 11 - 15 Suggest a problem that will need attention. In the case of substance abuse, individuals involved in treatment and/or AA will score in this range, but will still need monitoring.
Scores from 16 - 20 Suggest a definite problem needing treatment.
Scores from 21 + Suggest a severe problem requiring treatment which, in the case of substance abuse, could require residential treatment.
Presented below is a brief discussion of the areas evaluated by the NEEDS program.

A: Respondent Attitude (Test Taking Attitude)

Since there is generally some concern as to the degree to which a respondent's attitude is impacting upon the test results, the NEEDS report provides an attitude measure. It is called Test Taking Attitude (TTA). This section reports TTA scores as an indication of the respondent's desire to appear in a favorable light, and/or degree of inappropriateness.

TTA scores fall on a continuum from 0 to 50. Scores at the low end of the scale suggest no desire to appear favorably even to the point of having a very poor self-concept.

Scores at the high end of the scale suggest an inappropriate desire to appear in a favorable light. This can be deliberate, but often it is an unconscious behavior.

TTA scores are very significant indicators of how appropriate the person is in making decisions and evaluating the outcome of them. Often it is the person's attitude that needs to be addressed rather than his/her behavior or life circumstances.

Attitude is a critical factor in evaluating an individual's behavior and determining levels of treatment intervention. The NEEDS program considers attitude, through its TTA scores, when processing all respondent answers and reporting its findings.

Since the TTA score is associated with a range of attitudes, the following are valuable guidelines in understanding how the respondent is presenting him/herself in the NEEDS survey and in the interview session.

0 - 7  Suggests a need to investigate the possibility of emotional vulnerability.

8 - 11  Suggests a self-critical attitude or low self-esteem. Unusual anger or a non-caring attitude could also be considered with these scores, although, this is not common.

12 - 17  Suggests a confident manner, little or minimal attempt to misrepresent the answers to the items.

18 – 23 Scores in this range suggest the respondent is making some attempt to "look good". This may be expected considering the circumstances; i.e., court ordered assessment or "job interview" type situation.
24 - 26  Scores in this range suggest a naive or inappropriate attempt to "look good".

27+   A very strong attempt to appear in a favorable light. Very naive or inappropriate response to the test situation.

B. Basic Problem Solving and Reading Assessment

The primary focus of this measure is to determine whether the person has the minimal skills necessary to make appropriate decisions and evaluate the consequences of them. This information is not only necessary in helping to understand past behavior, but also necessary in developing appropriate interventions and expectations for behavior change.

This measure addresses respondent reading skills. Although the survey items are written at the 5th grade level, the NEEDS program looks for reading or comprehension problems. In addition, the respondent's pattern of basic problem solving skills is evaluated, as reflected in responses to test items, which involve simple math, symbol identification, and logic.

The length of time it takes the respondent to complete the survey is also recorded. This information can indicate not only how much difficulty the person may be having answering the questions, but his/her attitude toward the survey and the circumstances surrounding it, as well.

C: Emotional Stability Assessment

This measure addresses respondent attitude in relationship to current and past behavior, the respondent's history of emotional problems, reported life stress issues along with the capability of coping with this stress. TTA is considered as a measure of emotional vulnerability and inappropriateness. Identified experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse and established patterns of violent or aggressive behavior are included. In addition, identified issues related to mental status evaluation are reported.

D: Substance Abuse Assessment

This measure evaluates the person's alcohol and other drug use and the behavior associated with this use. The report provides information on the problem level and if there have been current attempts to address it. Suggested DSM-IV classifications are provided along with the person's first and second drugs of choice. The types of drugs the person has used in his/her life are also reported, as well as, family history of drug use.
E: Employment Assessment

This measure evaluates the person's current or recent employment along with the past 3-year history of employment. Included is an evaluation of employment consistency: Does the person stay with one job or make many job changes? This employment evaluation takes into consideration employment status, homemaker, disabled, etc., as well as the person's age. Financial difficulties are also addressed.

F: Personal Relationship and Support System Assessment

This measure evaluates the stability of the respondent's personal relationships as to how they may provide support and assistance, and not interfere with the person's attempts to change his/her behavior. The type and length of relationships, whether there are any children, and if the family situation is positive or negative are also considered.

G: Physical Health Assessment

This measure evaluates if health issues may be interfering with the person's ability to adequately meet his/her needs. It is intended to report how the respondent perceives his/her physical condition and whether it interferes with his/her ability to provide for him/herself.

H: Educational Assessment

This measure evaluates the number of years of school completed and if there has been any special training. In addition, the person's basic problem solving skills and employment stability are evaluated to determine if the education level is an issue in the person meeting his/her other need requirements.

I: Criminal History Assessment

This section reports the person's history of criminal activity. Risk supervisions based on criminal behavior history and how likely it is that the person will be able to control his/her behavior in the future.
This section provides three recommendations:

1. A summary of the sections "A" through "H", along with a suggested recommendation. The priority for listing areas of deficiency does not necessarily indicate that one is more important than the others. But a particular deficiency may influence the intervention of the others.

   For example, substance abuse is most often listed first, because usually person's substance abuse must be addressed first before other areas can be effectively dealt with or even accurately diagnosed.

2. Suggested levels of supervision. Although supervision levels are most commonly associated with sentencing and probation issues, supervision is equally relevant to treatment plan implementation.

   Based on the overall need vulnerability and the overall criminal activity, four general levels of supervision are suggested: minimum (2), medium (3), high (4), and maximum (5). These four levels are typical for court applications.

   These suggested levels of supervision are based on the position that intensity of supervision is inversely related to the individual's ability to supervise his/her own behavior. The more the person is able and willing to control his/her own behavior, the less intense or involved the supervision required from the agency or department. A person may be able to supervise his/her own behavior, but not willing, and equally important, the person may be willing to supervise his/her own behavior, but not able.

   The NEEDS program looks at several factors in making its decisions:

   Has the person demonstrated an ongoing pattern of responsible behavior in any area of his/her life?

   Has there been goal directed behavior where the person has had to sacrifice and delay gratification in order to reach the goal?

   Has the person demonstrated the ability to learn from his/her experiences?

   Do the individual's personal relationships act as a stabilizing force in his/her life, or do they appear to contribute to irresponsible behavior?

   Are there individual issues that will interfere with the person's ability to supervise his/her own behavior, regardless of the best intentions?

   Is there a substance abuse problem?
   Are there emotional problems?
   Are there intellectual or physical disabilities?
   Has the person learned how to discipline him/herself?
3. If a substance abuse problem warrants, a level of intervention is provided following American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) guidelines and suggested DSM-IV criteria. This referral is based on information available in the NEEDS survey and should be viewed as a benchmark for further clarification. The following identifies the types of substance abuse referrals provided:

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE REFERRAL STATEMENTS BASED ON ASAM**GU**I**D**E**LINES

**LEVEL IV**
Medical managed care is suggested because of this person's apparent cross addiction and his history of substance abuse treatment, and his current emotional and environmental vulnerability. (ASAM IV)

**LEVEL III**
Medical monitoring is suggested because of this person's apparent substance abuse addiction and his history of substance abuse treatment, and his current emotional and/or environmental vulnerability. (ASAM III.5-III.7)

**LEVEL IIa**
Although this person may not require medical monitoring beyond detoxification, his emotional and environmental circumstances may be too unstable for him to function without close monitoring. Some type of day care, halfway house or residential milieu may be needed. (ASAM III.3)

**LEVEL IIb**
Although this person's substance abuse may not appear to require medical monitoring, his emotional and environmental circumstances may be too unstable for him to function without close monitoring. Some type of day care, halfway house or residential milieu may be needed. (ASAM III.1)

**LEVEL IIc**
Referral to intensive outpatient treatment is recommended after the need for detoxification has been addressed. (ASAM II.5)

**LEVEL II**
Referral to intensive outpatient treatment is recommended. (ASAM II.1)

**LEVEL I**
Referral to outpatient treatment is recommended. (ASAM I)

**LEVEL I**
This person appears to have had a substance abuse problem at one time, but reports no use for at least one year. However, his current attitude and/or his high-risk behavior suggest further investigation may be needed. (ASAM I)
LEVEL I
Although this person's history of substance abuse indicates a more intensive intervention could be considered, his reported recent abstinence suggests outpatient treatment may be a possible starting point. Verification of this abstinence and the stability of his life should be substantiated. (ASAM I)

LEVEL 0
This person appears to have had a substance abuse problem at one time, but reports no use for at least one year. Further investigation may be needed depending upon his circumstances for taking this survey. (ASAM O.5)

LEVEL 0
This person appears to have had a substance abuse problem at one time, but reports no use for at least one year. However, his current emotional state suggests further investigation may be needed. (ASAM O.5)

LEVEL 0
This person reports behavior suggesting a potential alcohol use problem. Further investigation, and/or education, may be warranted depending upon the circumstances for this assessment. (ASAM O.5)

LEVEL 0
This person reports behavior suggesting a potential drug use problem. Further investigation, and/or education, may be warranted depending upon the circumstances for this assessment. (ASAM O.5)

LEVEL 0
If appropriate for this offender, referral to education should be considered. (ASAM O.5)
K: Summary

In addition to the summary section, discussed above, a graph of the NEEDS measures is presented. This visual profile allows for quick evaluation of the person's NEEDS status.

Numbers appearing in the parentheses to the left of the graph come from the rating items of question 130. They indicate how the respondent perceives the importance of the item and the need for intervention in this area. The lower the number, the more the item area is perceived to be a problem by the respondent. The higher the number, the less of a problem it is for the respondent. Respondents are asked to rate these areas at the end of the NEEDS survey.

These respondent ratings, in conjunction with the corresponding NEEDS scores and the outcome of the professional personal interview, can help form the basis for treatment goals and outcome measures of intervention effectiveness.

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L: Specific Information

This section provides detailed information on the types of drugs used, special customized question results and any other material requiring special attention.