

NEEDS Plus & NEEDS 6

Reference Guide

Developed by
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Table of Contents

Overview of the NEEDS Assessment

[Criminal History and Risk Assessment](#)

[Recommendations and Supervision](#)

[Design Purpose](#)

NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus Comparison

[Availability](#)

[Assessment Chapters](#)

Assessment Chapter Descriptions

[Chapters Common to NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus](#)

[Circumstances](#)

[Comprehension](#)

[Education](#)

[Attitude and Behavior](#)

[Environment](#)

[Alcohol Use](#)

[Substance Use](#)

[Employment/Financial](#)

[Physical Health](#)

[Family and Relationships](#)

[Legal](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Additional Chapters in NEEDS Plus](#)

[Prescription Drug Use](#)

[Gambling](#)

[Anger Management](#)

Administration Options

[Written Administration \(NEEDS 6 Only\)](#)

[Mobile Administration](#)

[Kiosk Administration](#)

[Guided Administration](#)

Understanding the NEEDS Report

[Demographic Information](#)

[Items of Immediate Concern](#)

[Test Taking Attitude \(TTA\)](#)

[Criminogenic Risk Results](#)

[DSM-5 Conclusion](#)

[Blood Alcohol Content \(BAC\) Results](#)

[ASAM Conclusion](#)

[Results Summary](#)

[Conclusions and Recommendations](#)

[Detailed Areas of Concern](#)

[Complete List of Responses](#)

[Validation and Reliability](#)

[Agreement with Professional Assessment](#)

[Reliability Studies](#)

[MMPI-2 Validity](#)

[Concurrent Validity](#)

Overview of the NEEDS Assessment

The NEEDS Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation tool designed to examine a broad range of behaviors, attitudes, and life circumstances. It provides a structured, objective profile of an individual's functioning across key areas of life, serving as a foundation for diagnostic interviews, treatment plan development, and referral decisions.

At its core, the NEEDS evaluation seeks to answer a fundamental question: how likely is it that the individual can and will change their behavior? This question is addressed through four key dimensions:

1. **Attitude Evaluation** — How the individual's attitudes may contribute to inappropriate decisions and impact efforts toward behavioral change.
2. **Behavioral Patterns** — An examination of past behavior as a predictor of future behavior, identifying established and learned patterns.
3. **Acute Stress and Contributing Factors** — Whether behavior is driven by circumstances such as substance abuse, emotional or intellectual deficiencies, or unstable relationships and employment.
4. **Capacity for Change** — Whether the individual possesses the knowledge and willingness to make sacrifices and delay gratification for future rewards.

Criminal History and Risk Assessment

The NEEDS evaluation includes a thorough assessment of criminal history. This information helps determine the level of risk an individual may pose to themselves and to society. Repeated offenses and an unwillingness or inability to change behavior patterns indicate a need for increased supervision.

Risk assessment also extends to evaluating how need deficiencies—such as substance abuse problems and emotional vulnerability—may contribute to antisocial behavior. These deficiencies are evaluated both for their impact on behavioral change and for their influence on risk-taking behavior.

Recommendations and Supervision

The NEEDS report generates prioritized recommendations for addressing identified need deficiencies. Areas with the greatest influence on immediate behavioral change are listed first. Suggested levels of supervision are also provided, based on how existing deficiencies and past behavior patterns affect the individual's ability to self-regulate.

Design Purpose

The NEEDS Assessment is specifically designed to:

- Provide a standardized, objective, and consistent method of gathering information
- Deliver sufficient valid information about all relevant aspects of a respondent's life to determine the first level of appropriate intervention
- Provide valid direction for conducting the personal interview

NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus Comparison

The NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus are two variations of ADE's NEEDS Assessment, each tailored for different assessment needs. Both options provide extensive examination of substance use, recidivism risk, anger management, legal history, and life circumstances.

Availability

Feature	NEEDS 6	NEEDS Plus
Written Questionnaire	✓	—
Interactive Survey (Mobile)	✓	✓
Interactive Survey (Kiosk)	✓	✓
Interactive Survey (Guided)	✓	✓

Assessment Chapters

The following table compares the chapters included in each version of the assessment:

Chapter	NEEDS 6	NEEDS Plus
Circumstances	✓	✓
Comprehension	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓
Attitude and Behavior	✓	✓
Environment	✓	✓
Alcohol Use	✓	✓
Substance Use	✓	✓
Prescription Drug Use	—	✓
Employment/Financial	✓	✓
Physical Health	✓	✓
Family and Relationships	✓	✓
Legal	✓	✓
Gambling	—	✓
Anger Management	—	✓
Mental Health	✓	✓

The NEEDS Plus includes three additional chapters—Prescription Drug Use, Gambling, and Anger Management—providing a more comprehensive behavioral profile.

Assessment Chapter Descriptions

Each chapter of the NEEDS assessment examines a distinct area of the respondent's life and functioning. Chapters are scored on a scale of 1 to 10, with higher scores indicating greater instability. The following descriptions outline what each chapter is designed to measure.

Chapters Common to NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus

Circumstances

Evaluates the respondent's basic life logistics and immediate situational factors, including access to reliable transportation and other practical resources that affect the ability to meet daily obligations and participate in treatment or supervision programs.

Comprehension

Measures the respondent's reading comprehension and basic cognitive processing ability through embedded test questions with objectively correct and incorrect answers. This chapter helps identify individuals who may have difficulty understanding written instructions, program requirements, or treatment materials.

Education

Assesses educational history, academic achievement, and potential learning barriers. This includes highest level of education completed, history of school discipline (suspensions or expulsions), diagnosed learning disabilities, and basic literacy measures such as alphabetical ordering and word recognition tasks.

Attitude and Behavior

Examines the respondent's internal locus of control, risk-taking tendencies, and patterns of responding to conflict. Key indicators include feelings of loss of control over life events, perception of being treated unfairly, willingness to take risks, and typical responses to confrontational situations. These attitudes are significant predictors of the individual's capacity for behavioral change.

Environment

Evaluates the stability and safety of the respondent's living situation. This includes the frequency of residential moves, whether the respondent feels safe in their current residence, and other environmental factors that may support or undermine efforts toward behavioral change and program compliance.

Alcohol Use

Provides a detailed examination of the respondent's alcohol use history and current patterns. Areas assessed include self-reported consumption relative to average drinkers, periods of abstinence and their duration, concern about alcohol use, attendance or consideration of support programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, concealment of drinking behavior, and incidents of aggression while under the influence.

Substance Use

Examines the respondent's history with illegal and recreational drugs (excluding alcohol). This chapter assesses the types of substances used, age of onset for regular use, whether drug use has caused problems in personal or professional life, treatment history, longest periods of abstinence, and the degree to which substance use has interfered with daily functioning.

Employment/Financial

Assesses vocational and financial stability through multiple indicators, including job history and turnover, workplace drug or alcohol testing results and consequences, work attendance, housing stability (including eviction history), wage garnishment, and the respondent's self-reported perception of their financial situation. This chapter captures how substance use and behavioral issues directly impact economic functioning.

Physical Health

Evaluates the respondent's physical health status and health-related risk factors, including tobacco use, unexplained or significant weight changes, medical conditions, and the degree to which health issues impact day-to-day responsibilities and activities.

Family and Relationships

Examines the quality and stability of the respondent's interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. Areas assessed include satisfaction with romantic relationships, relationship with parents, satisfaction with living arrangements, the presence of antisocial or criminal behavior patterns within the respondent's social network, and the level of emotional and personal support available from family and friends.

Legal

Provides a comprehensive review of the respondent's criminal justice involvement. This includes juvenile and adult arrest history for both misdemeanors and felonies, incarceration history and in-custody behavior, probation and parole history including revocations and violations, failed drug or alcohol screenings while under supervision, and court-ordered treatment mandates. This chapter is a primary contributor to the Criminogenic Risk assessment.

Mental Health

Assesses the respondent's emotional and psychological well-being across a broad spectrum. Areas evaluated include history of treatment for depression, concerns about specific conditions (eating disorders, schizophrenia, panic disorder), history of physical or sexual abuse, suicidal ideation and attempts, anxiety levels and their impact on daily activities, ability to meet work or home responsibilities, and reliance on substances for emotional regulation. If responses indicate a need for further evaluation, the report will include a referral recommendation.

Additional Chapters in NEEDS Plus

The NEEDS Plus includes the following three additional chapters, providing a more comprehensive behavioral profile.

Prescription Drug Use

Provides a focused evaluation of prescription medication misuse and abuse. This chapter examines whether the respondent has taken medications in larger amounts or for longer periods than intended, efforts to reduce use, tolerance and withdrawal symptoms, and the impact of prescription drug use on work, social activities, and personal safety. It also identifies high-risk behaviors including obtaining medications through theft, criminal activity, or deception of healthcare providers.

Gambling

Assesses the presence and severity of gambling-related problems. This chapter evaluates whether the respondent acknowledges a gambling problem, whether family or friends have expressed concern, and whether gambling has created problems at home, school, or work. Gambling disorders can significantly compound substance use issues and financial instability, making this an important factor in comprehensive treatment planning.

Anger Management

Provides an extensive evaluation of anger patterns, triggers, and behavioral responses. This chapter examines a wide range of indicators including the impact of anger on family relationships, use of abusive language, irritability and recovery time, passive-aggressive behaviors, aggressive body language, self-destructive coping behaviors following anger episodes, physical symptoms associated with anger, difficulty with forgiveness and trust, need to win arguments, blame externalization, controlling or manipulative behaviors in relationships, use of threats, and destructive actions such as property damage. This chapter is particularly relevant for identifying domestic violence risk and determining appropriate intervention strategies.

Administration Options

Multiple administration methods provide flexibility for program staff based on the needs of both the program and the respondent.

Written Administration (NEEDS 6 Only)

The respondent completes a paper questionnaire and returns the completed document to program staff, who then transfer the responses into the Solutions software application.

Mobile Administration

Program staff send an invitation to complete the assessment via email or SMS text message. The respondent follows the included link to begin the survey and any other identified tasks, such as an intake form or data gathering process. Completed surveys are immediately available for staff to view, print, or save.

Kiosk Administration

The Kiosk method uses an internet-enabled device owned by the program, such as a PC, laptop, or tablet. The respondent accesses the survey portal on the device and enters a 4-digit kiosk code provided by program staff. This launches the assessment entry screen for electronic completion. Completed surveys are immediately available for staff review.

Guided Administration

The Guided method allows professional staff to verbally ask survey questions, record the respondent's answers, and make notes as appropriate. Staff notes can then be incorporated into the NEEDS Report.

Understanding the NEEDS Report

The NEEDS report is organized into three main sections. Users can elect to print all or part of the report as necessary, and the full report remains available in the Solutions software application.

Section	Description
NEEDS Results	Scores, classifications, and key findings from the assessment
Detailed Areas of Concern	Specific responses that contributed to chapter scoring and may require follow-up
Survey Responses	Complete list of all responses for reference during clinical interviews

Demographic Information

This section contains standard identifying data including name, date of birth, race, gender, and other relevant fields. The Solutions software application allows end users to add custom fields to meet specific program requirements.

Items of Immediate Concern

Both the NEEDS 6 and NEEDS Plus include questions designed to identify respondents in immediate need of intervention. These questions address issues related to self-harm or harm to others, active physical withdrawal from alcohol or drugs, and similar risk factors. Affirmative responses are prominently displayed in bold in this section of the report.

Test Taking Attitude (TTA)

The Test Taking Attitude measures the respondent's attempts to present themselves in the most favorable light. The TTA score falls on a continuum from 1 to 10, with higher scores indicating a stronger attempt to appear favorable.

Important: Because the respondent's attitude can significantly impact results, the TTA score is essential for providing proper context to the overall NEEDS Report. This score should always be considered when interpreting results.

Criminogenic Risk Results

The NEEDS assessments contain an extensive chapter evaluating recidivism risk. Using measures from standard probation, parole, and pre-trial assessment procedures—as well as measures unique to the NEEDS Assessment—this chapter identifies the likelihood that a respondent’s behavior may lead to criminal activity.

Risk classifications include:

Risk Level	Description
No Risk	No identifiable risk indicators present
Low	Minimal risk indicators; routine monitoring appropriate
Moderate	Notable risk indicators warranting structured oversight
High	Significant risk indicators requiring enhanced supervision
Very High	Critical risk indicators; intensive supervision recommended

A related RISK Supervision Need score (1–5) is included in the Conclusions and Additional Recommendations section.

DSM-5 Conclusion

Based on criteria established by the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5), this section identifies potential Substance Use Disorder classifications when respondent answers meet the specified criteria. Each identified substance includes both a suggested DSM-5 Classification and the corresponding ICD-10 Code from the World Health Organization’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases.

This section also includes the Substance Use Severity Scale, with scores ranging from 1 (no problem or beginning problem) to 5 (significant or severe problem).

Note: *These suggested classifications should be confirmed through further clinical evaluation.*

Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) Results

This section reports the most recent Blood Alcohol Content results, if any, as provided by the respondent. Respondents are asked to confirm any past BAC tests and their most recent result. If a respondent has had a BAC test but does not know or remember the result, they can indicate this in the survey.

ASAM Conclusion

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) provides guidelines for establishing appropriate levels of treatment for substance use disorders. This section presents results across the six ASAM Dimensions, each rated from Mild to Severe, displayed graphically for easy review.

Based on the totality of information gathered, the NEEDS Report recommends one of the following levels of care:

Level	Recommended Care
Level 0.5	Education / Early Intervention
Level 1	Outpatient Treatment
Level 2	Intensive Outpatient Treatment
Level 3	Residential Treatment / Sober Living Environment
Level 4	Medically Monitored / Medically Managed Services

Note: *Recommendations are based on respondent-provided information. Additional data gathered through extended evaluation may result in a different conclusion.*

Results Summary

The Results Summary provides a graphic overview of each chapter score. Each chapter is scored on a scale of 1 to 10, with higher scores indicating greater instability in that area. This section is designed to serve as a quick-reference snapshot, while the Detailed Areas of Concern section provides the underlying specifics.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section contains two critical supervision measures, both scored on a scale of 1 to 5:

- NEEDS Substance Use Supervision Level — Based in part on the recommended ASAM Level of Care
- RISK Supervision Level — Based on the recidivism risk chapter of the assessment

Both measures can be used to determine appropriate treatment and criminal justice interventions. If responses indicate a need for further mental health evaluation, that recommendation is also included here.

Detailed Areas of Concern

This section itemizes the specific responses that contributed to chapter scoring, organized by chapter. It identifies responses that may require follow-up and is particularly valuable for guiding personal interviews and clinical evaluations.

Complete List of Responses

The full record of all survey responses is included as reference material. Like the Detailed Areas of Concern, this section supports clinical interviews and provides transparency into the scoring methodology.

Note: Program staff may print all, some, or none of the NEEDS Report sections as needed.

Validation and Reliability

The NEEDS Assessment and its variants are based on the Substance Abuse Life Circumstance Evaluation (SALCE). Extensive validation studies have demonstrated the reliability and accuracy of these instruments.

Agreement with Professional Assessment

- 96% general agreement when instrument recommendations are compared with those of professional assessors
- 75% exact agreement between SALCE recommendations and personal interview results
- In cases where general but not exact agreement exists, both the instrument and the professional assessor may recommend treatment, with differences only in the level of intensity

Reliability Studies

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 coefficient and the Spearman-Brown Formula for predicted reliability yielded a coefficient of 0.93, indicating the SALCE is a highly reliable instrument.

MMPI-2 Validity

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

Concurrent Validity

Concurrent validity for the NEEDS using the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) shows significant correlation with expected measures. The NEEDS Emotional Status Evaluation scale correlates with eight of the nine BSI scales at the .01 level of significance, and with the ninth scale (Interpersonal Sensitivity) at the .05 level of significance.

For additional information, contact ADE Incorporated