

## Supporting Individual Success

### For Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism

Office of Aging & Disability Services  
Maine Department of Health &  
Human Services

Jennifer Fales, SIS Manager

[Jennifer.Fales@Maine.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Fales@Maine.gov)

207-287-4227



### What is OADS trying to do & why?

OADS is committed to **people with intellectual disabilities and autism getting the services and supports they need to live, love, play, and reach for their goals just as others do in their community.**

We want to make sure that services are:

- Fair for everyone.
- Based on a person's needs and choices.
- Available when people need them (no wait lists for services).

To reach our goals, we must:

- Build on our successes.
- Be willing to change some of how and what we've been doing.
- Balance our goals with the best use of the dollars we have.



### Who will the change affect?

This will affect adults with intellectual disabilities and autism who currently live in group homes, foster or host homes, shared living, or get supports to live in their own home or family home (also called the Comprehensive Waiver, Section 21 of MaineCare). This will also be for people just starting these services like young adults graduating from school.

These changes do not affect people who are getting services through the Supports Waiver, Section 29 of MaineCare. If you don't know which waiver you are on, ask your case manager.

## How will it work?

There are five (5) steps in the process.



- 1) You will have a Supports Intensity Scale® interview to assess your support needs.
- 2) You will be assigned a supports level (1-5) based on your needs.
- 3) Based on your supports level, you will get a base budget for services you need. You will know your supports level and base budget before you plan for services.
- 4) You will meet with your case manager and providers that support you (if you have any) to get ready for your person-centered planning meeting. Then, you will have your person-centered planning meeting and plan for the life you want with the supports you need.
- 5) Your case manager will get everything ready for your services to start or continue.



## What is the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)?

The SIS was developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). It measures your support needs by focusing on the help you need to reach your goals.

You and others who know you well will answer questions about your support needs. A SIS Interviewer, who is trained by AAIDD, will do the interview.

There are **three sections** to the SIS.

**Section One** asks about home living, community living, lifelong learning, employment, health & safety, and social activities.

**Section Two** asks questions about speaking up for yourself and others (advocacy), managing money, making choices, and staying safe.

**Section Three** asks about medical needs and behavioral needs.

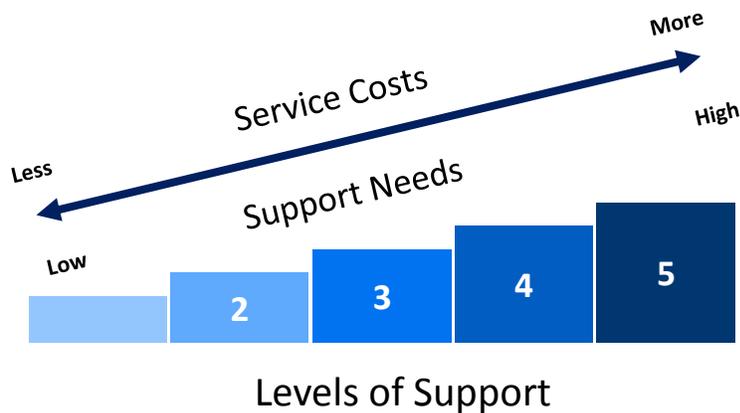
For each life area, you'll be asked **how often** you need support, **how much** support you need, and **what type** of support you need.



## What are the Levels?



Each person will be assigned a support level based on their support needs. People in Level 1 have the lowest level of support need and people in Level 5 have the highest. Level 4 takes care of people with special medical support needs and Level 5 takes care of people with really high behavioral support needs.



## What is a Base Budget?



A budget is an amount of money you have and how you plan to spend the money based on the services that you pick. Your *Base Budget* for services is made up of two parts: Where you live and what you do during the day. For example, a person living alone will get a different amount of money in their base budget than another person living in a group home.



You spend your base budget by picking the types of services you want and how many hours of those services you want to use in a week. People will have flexibility with the kinds of services they want to use within their base budget.

**For example, if your support needs fall into Level 2, you may have 12 hours of community support and 12 hours of work support a week available to you, but you can decide how much of each of those you want as long as you stay within your budget.**

Other services like therapies, career planning, employment specialist, and assistive technology are *added on* to your base budget if you need them.

## Who can help me if I don't understand my support level and budget?

Your case manager is the first person you should go to with questions about your support level. Just like you, your case manager is learning about support levels and base budgets. Very soon, if not already, your case manager will be able to help you understand your support level and what it means.

## I am in the lowest support level, will I have to move out of my home?

No one will be forced to move out of their current home. Everyone getting residential care before July 1, 2015 will still be able to get residential care after that. The changes will, however, affect people moving off the waitlists and into services. In the future, when new people start services and are assigned to the lowest support level, they will not have funding for 24/7 home support or residential care.

## What will I need to do?



Get ready for your person-centered planning meeting by thinking about the things below.

**Think about** what a good life means for you. Talk to people who care about you and support you about the life you want.

**Get out and give back.** There are many ways to be a part of your community. Spend time doing things you like to do in your community and meet people along the way.

**Think creatively.** Think about what else you enjoy doing. Think about how much it may cost to do the things you enjoy. Think about the possibility of getting paid for things you enjoy doing.

**Speak up.** If something doesn't seem right about your supports, tell someone.

**Make choices that are right for you.** Think about the life you want and choose the supports you need. With freedom and flexibility comes responsibility, make sure you are prepared.

## What if I don't think my support level matches my support needs?

After July 1, 2015, if you don't think your support level matches your support needs, you will have several options.

- 1) You can file a formal grievance through your case manager or using the grievance process that is under development. You and your case managers will be told about this process as soon as it is finalized.
- 2) You can make an "exceptional needs request" if you don't think your level includes enough support hours to cover your needs.
- 3) You can also ask for a Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) re-assessment if you have had a "major life change", such as if you get sick, hurt, or have behavioral, medical, or mental health issues that change your support needs for longer than six months.
- 4) After your planning process, if you feel your plan of support will not meet your needs, you can file an appeal. Your case manager can help you with this process or the Disability Rights Center.

## What is most important for you to know right now?

- **No changes** have been made to your services at this time.
- The change process will begin **next year**, starting in **July 2015**.
- After **review and public comment**, changes may be made to what has been proposed.
- Information is posted on the **OADS website**:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/disability/ds/sis/index.shtml>
- If you have questions or concerns about *Supporting Individual Success*, please email [OADS@maine.gov](mailto:OADS@maine.gov)