

This content was created by the Early Intervention Foundation before merging with What Works for Children's Social Care to become Foundations.

The content contains logos and branding of the former organisation.

# Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-32)

32-item self-report measure

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-32) is a 32-item measure designed to assess the relationship quality of intact (married or cohabiting) couples. This original version of the measure includes items and subscales aimed at assessing relationship satisfaction, intimacy, affective expression and the degree to which the couple agrees on matters of importance to the relationship.

	Internal consistency		Test-retest reliability	Validity	Sensitivity to change
Psychometric features	✓ (Scale)	✓ (Subscale)	✓	✓	?

	Brevity	Availability	Ease of Scoring	Used in the UK
Implementation features	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Please note that our assessment of this measure is based solely on the English version of the DAS-32. The other versions of this measure were not assessed here and therefore it should not be assumed that they would receive the same rating. The DAS-7 has been assessed separately and the full measurement report is available to download from the EIF website. See: <https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/measuring-parental-conflict-and-its-impact-on-child-outcomes>

## What is this document?

This assessment of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-32) has been produced by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) as part of guidance on selecting measures relating to parental conflict and its impact on children. To read the full guidance report and download assessments of other measures, visit: <https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/measuring-parental-conflict-and-its-impact-on-child-outcomes>



- It is unclear whether the DAS-32 is appropriate for use with separated couples. As far as we are aware, the measure was designed for cohabiting couples but has been tested by the developers with both married and divorced couples (Spanier, 1976).
- There is a shorter version of this measure (the DAS-7) with good psychometric values that you might want to consider.

## About the measure

 <p><b>Author(s)/ developer(s)</b></p> <p>Spanier, G.</p>	 <p><b>Publication year for the original version of the measure</b></p> <p>1976</p>	 <p><b>Type of measure</b></p> <p>Self-report.</p>
--	--	---

**Versions available** There are several different versions of the DAS available, including versions with 4, 6, 7, 10 and 14 items (Hunsley et al., 1995, 2001; Sharpley & Rogers, 1984). There is also a revised version of the DAS, known as the Revised DAS (RDAS), developed by Busby et al. (1995).

**Outcome(s) assessed** This measure has been designed to assess relationship quality.

**Subscales** There are four subscales: Dyadic Consensus (the degree to which the couple agrees on matters of importance to the relationship), Dyadic Satisfaction (the degree to which the couple is satisfied with their relationship), Dyadic Cohesion (the degree of closeness and shared activities experienced by the couple), and Affective Expression (the degree of demonstrations of affection and sexual relationships)..

**Purpose/primary use** The DAS-32 was developed for both research and clinical purposes.

**Mode of administration** This measure can be completed in person or used as a part of an interview.

**Example item** 'In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?'

**Target population** This measure was originally developed for couples in intact relationships (cohabiting or married).

<b>Response format</b>	<p>The DAS-32 is comprised of varying response scales, including ordinal, Likert and Dichotomous scales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items 1–15 use a 6-point ordinal scale (from ‘Always Agree’ to ‘Always Disagree’)</li> <li>• Items 16–22 use a different 6-point ordinal scale (from ‘All the Time’ to ‘Never’)</li> <li>• Item 23 uses a 5-point Likert scale (from ‘Every Day’ to ‘Never’)</li> <li>• Item 24 uses a 5-point Likert scale (from ‘All of Them’ to ‘None of Them’)</li> <li>• Items 25–28 use a 6-point ordinal scale (from ‘Never’ to ‘More Often’).</li> <li>• Items 29–30 use a Dichotomous (simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’) scale.</li> <li>• Item 31 is rated on a 7-point Likert scale (from ‘Extremely Unhappy’ to ‘Perfect’).</li> <li>• Item 32 asks respondents to choose the most relevant statement from a total of six options.</li> </ul>
------------------------	---

<b>Strengths &amp; limitations</b>	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DAS-32 is a valid and reliable measure.</li> <li>• The DAS-32 is free to access and easy to score, with scoring instructions available at <a href="https://drrebeccajorgensen.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/DAS-Scoring-Interpretation.pdf">https://drrebeccajorgensen.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/DAS-Scoring-Interpretation.pdf</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on our review, we found insufficient evidence to establish that the DAS-32 is sensitive to change in short interventions.</li> </ul>
------------------------------------	--

<b>Link</b>	N/A
-------------	-----

<b>Contact details</b>	N/A
------------------------	-----

<b>Copyright</b>	Based on our review of the evidence, it appears that the developer did not provide information on copyright. The key reference (included below) should be cited when using the measure.
------------------	---

<b>Key reference(s)</b>	Spanier, G.B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> , 38, 15–28.
-------------------------	---

# Psychometric features in detail

---

## Internal consistency

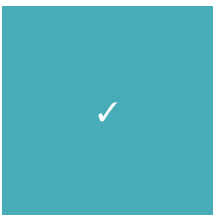


Spanier (1976) reported an appropriate level of internal consistency for the whole scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.96) and each of the individual subscales (Cronbach's alpha: Dyadic Consensus = 0.90, Dyadic Satisfaction = 0.94, Dyadic Cohesion = 0.86, Affective Expression = 0.73). This study was based on a sample of 218 white married participants and 94 divorced participants.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Graham et al. (2006) that included 128 samples represented by 25,035 participants, Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was 0.92 and the individual subscales ranged between 0.71 and 0.87.

---

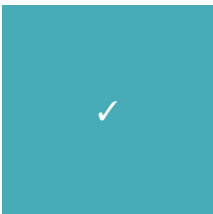
## Test-retest reliability



Based on a study by Carey et al. (1993) which assessed 158 men and women who completed the DAS twice two weeks apart, the stability coefficient varied between 0.75 (Affective Expression subscale) to 0.87 (Total score). The analysis was conducted using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Such high correlations are not surprising considering that 11 items of the DAS-32 were taken from the MAT (Spanier, 1976).

---

## Validity

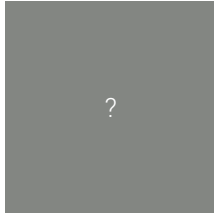


According to the developers, who examined the DAS-32 against the Marital Adjustment Scale (MAT), the DAS-32 showed a sufficient level of construct validity. The Pearson's correlation coefficient between these two measures was 0.86, ( $p < 0.001$ ) among married respondents and 0.88 ( $p < 0.001$ ) among divorced participants (Spanier, 1976). This study was based on a sample of 218 white married participants and 94 divorced participants.

The DAS-32 is often used as a gold standard to test the validity of new relationship quality measures.

---

## Sensitivity to change



From our review, we found partial evidence that the DAS-32 can detect changes after participation in short cognitive behavioural and couple interventions. Since the studies identified were conducted with small sample sizes, we did not find sufficient evidence to establish that the DAS-32 is sensitive to change in short interventions.

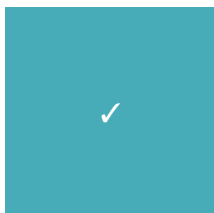
Kahn et al. (2019) reported that the DAS-32 detected changes between pre-test and a 12-week follow-up (DAS-32: Mean Score increased from 55 (SD = 30.3) at baseline to 78 (SD = 34.8) at post-test showing significant improvement ( $p < 0.01$ )). This study was a one group pre-post feasibility study of a CBT intervention for depressed British Pakistani mothers. The study was conducted with a sample of 10 mothers aged between 25–40 with a mean of 33 years old, the mean number of children was 3 ranging from 2–5. All except one was a homemaker, five were first-generation migrants and five were second-generation migrants.

Johnson and Greenberg (1985) also reported that the DAS-32 was sensitive to change over time from pre-test to an eight-week post-test (DAS-32: Mean Score increased from 93.9 pre-treatment to 103.9 post-treatment showing significant improvement ( $p < 0.01$ )). The design of this evaluation was a one-group pre/post-test conducted in Canada on the Emotionally Focused Therapy programme designed to increase couple's awareness of each other's needs and more articulately communicate them. This study was conducted with a sample of 14 couples in which at least one partner had to score in the distressed range on the DAS-32 (below 100). The mean age of the sample was 33 years old and each couple had, on average, one child and a mean family income of \$30,000 (Canadian).

---

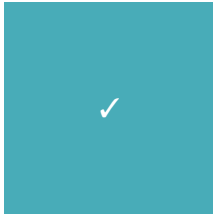
## Implementation features in detail

### Brevity



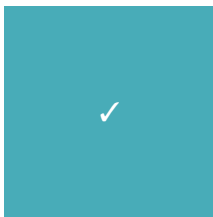
This measure has 32 items and according to the developer, it can be completed in 5–10 minutes (Spanier, 1989).

---

**Availability**

From the papers we have assessed it appears that this measure is free to use and does not require a clinical licence. The DAS-32 is available in the publication by Spanier (1976). The key reference (included above) should be cited when using the measure.

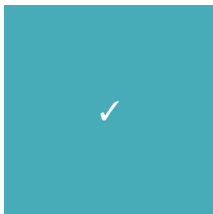
---

**Ease of scoring**

The measure has simple scoring instructions involving basic calculations. It does not need to be scored by someone with specific training.

According to the developers, the scores for individual subscales are obtained by summing the items that make up each subscale, with some items requiring reverse scoring. The DAS Total Score is obtained by summing all the individual subscale scores. The resultant score ranges from 0 to 151, with higher scores indicating a more positive dyadic adjustment and a lower level of distress (Spanier et al., 1976).

---

**Used in the UK**

The DAS-32 is a common measure that has been used in several UK studies, including studies assessing the impact of cognitive behavioural therapy (Khan et al., 2019), a brief psycho-educational intervention for postnatal depression (Honey et al., 2002), the London Depression Intervention (Leff et al., 2000), ACORN: a brief intervention to reduce maternal anxiety during pregnancy (Wilkinson et al., 2016), and Mum4Mum: a telephone peer-support intervention for women experiencing postnatal depression (Caramlau et al., 2011).

---

**Language(s)**

The DAS-32 is available in English. According to a meta-analysis conducted by Graham et al. (2006), the measure has also been translated into several languages including Chinese, Korean, French, Italian and Turkish. However, it is unclear whether these translations have been approved by the developer.

---

# References

- Busby, D.M., Christensen, C., Crane, D.R., & Larson, J.H. (1995). A revision of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for use with distressed and nondistressed couples: Construct hierarchy and multidimensional scales. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 21(3), 289–308.
- Caramlau, I., Barlow, J., Sembi, S., McKenzie-McHarg, K., & McCabe, C. (2011). Mums 4 Mums: Structured telephone peer-support for women experiencing postnatal depression. Pilot and exploratory RCT of its clinical and cost effectiveness. *Trials*, 12(1), 88.
- Carey, M.P., Spector, I.P., Lantinga, L.J., & Krauss, D.J. (1993). Reliability of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. *Psychological Assessment*, 5, 238–240.
- Crane, D.R., Allgood, S.M., Larson, J.H., & Griffin, W. (1990). Assessing marital quality with distressed and nondistressed couples: A comparison and equivalency table for three frequently used measures. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 87–93.
- Graham, J.M., Liu, Y.J., & Jeziorski, J.L. (2006). The dyadic adjustment scale: A reliability generalization meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(3), 701–717.
- Honey, K.L., Bennett, P., & Morgan, M. (2002). A brief psycho-educational group intervention for postnatal depression. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 41(4), 405–409.
- Johnson, S.M., & Greenberg, L.S. (1985). Emotionally focused couples therapy: An outcome study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 11(3), 313–317.
- Khan, S., Lovell, K., Lunat, F., Masood, Y., Shah, S., Tomenson, B., & Husain, N. (2019). Culturally-adapted cognitive behavioural therapy based intervention for maternal depression: A mixed-methods feasibility study. *BMC Women's Health*, 19(1), 21.
- Langley, E., Totsika, V., & Hastings, R. P. (2017). Parental relationship satisfaction in families of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD): A multilevel analysis. *Autism Research*, 10(7), 1259–1268.
- Leff, J., Vearnals, S., Brewin, C.R., Wolff, G., Alexander, B., Asen, E., & Everitt, B. (2000). The London Depression Intervention Trial: Randomised controlled trial of antidepressants v. couple therapy in the treatment and maintenance of people with depression living with a partner: clinical outcome and costs. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 177(2), 95–100.
- Prouty, A.M., Markowski, E.M., & Barnes, H.L. (2000). Using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in marital therapy: An exploratory study. *The Family Journal*, 8(3), 250–257.
- Sabourin, S., Valois, P., & Lussier, Y. (2005). Development and validation of a brief version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale with a nonparametric item analysis model. *Psychological Assessment*, 17, 15–27.
- Spanier, G.B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 15–28.
- Spanier, G.B., & Thompson, L. (1982). A Confirmatory Analysis of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 731–738.
- Wilkinson, E.L., O'Mahen, H.A., Fearon, P., Halligan, S., King, D.X., Greenfield, G., & Ramchandani, P.G. (2016). Adapting and testing a brief intervention to reduce maternal anxiety during pregnancy (ACORN): Study protocol for a randomised controlled trial. *Trials*, 17(1), 156.

