

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-7)

7-item self-report measure

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-7), sometimes referred to as the Abbreviated Dyadic Adjustment Scale (ADAS, Hunsley et al., 2001), is a 7-item measure designed to assess the relationship quality of intact couples. This shortened version of the original DAS-32 includes items aimed at assessing relationship satisfaction and the degree to which the couple agrees on matters of importance to the relationship.

Psychometric features	Internal consistency	Test-retest reliability	Validity	Sensitivity to change
	✓	?	✓	✓
Implementation features	Brevity	Availability	Ease of Scoring	Used in the UK
	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Please note that our assessment of this measure is based solely on the English version of the DAS-7. The other versions of this measure were not assessed and therefore it should not be assumed that they would receive the same rating. The DAS-32 has been assessed separately and the full measurement report is available to download from the EIF website. <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-7) 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>



- Although the DAS-7 has been used with separated couples (Sharpley & Rogers, 1984), it is unclear whether it is appropriate for use in this context considering that the original DAS (on which this measure was based) was developed for intact couples.
- We did not find information on the test-retest reliability of the DAS-7.

# About the measure

 <p><b>Author(s)/ developer(s)</b></p> <p>Sharpley C., &amp; Cross D.</p>	 <p><b>Publication year for the original version of the measure</b></p> <p>1972</p>	 <p><b>Publication year for the version of the measure assessed</b></p> <p>1984</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, 10, 14 and 32 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 and colleagues (1995).

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

**Subscales** N/A

**Purpose/primary use** The DAS-7 was developed for both research and clinical purposes.

**Mode of administration** This measure can be completed in person.

**Example item** 'How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?'

- Have a stimulating exchange of ideas
- Calmly discuss something together
- Work together on a project

**Target population** This measure was originally developed for intact couples (cohabiting or married), but it has also been used with separated couples (Sharpley & Rogers, 1984).

---

<b>Response format</b>	<p>The DAS-7 is comprised of varying response scales, including both ordinal and Likert scales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Items 1–3 use a 6-point ordinal scale (from 5 = ‘Always Agree’ to 0 = ‘Always Disagree’).</li><li>• Items 4–6 also use a 6-point ordinal scale (from 0 = ‘Never’ to 5 = ‘More Often’).</li><li>• Item 7 is rated on a 7-point Likert scale (from 0 = ‘Extremely Unhappy’ to 6 = ‘Perfect’).</li></ul>
------------------------	---

---

<b>Strengths &amp; limitations</b>	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compared to the DAS-32, the DAS-7 is a shorter measure that is available for free, with established validity, internal consistency and sensitivity to change in short interventions.</li></ul> <p>Limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We did not find information on the test-retest reliability of the DAS-7. If possible, users should assess test-retest reliability in their sample, to improve the evidence-base of the measure.</li></ul>
------------------------------------	--

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

<b>Key reference(s)</b>	<p>Sharpley, C. F., &amp; Rogers, H. J. (1984). Preliminary validation of the Abbreviated Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Some psychometric data regarding a screening test of marital adjustment. <i>Educational and Psychological Measurement</i>, 44, 1045–1049.</p>
-------------------------	--

---

# Psychometric features in detail

---

## Internal consistency



We found a number of papers (Hunsley et al., 1995, 2001; Sharpley & Rogers, 1984) reporting good internal consistency for the DAS-7, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.76 to 0.84.

Sharpley & Rogers (1984) reported that the DAS-7 had an appropriate internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.76). This study was conducted with a sample of 545 Australian (453 married, 48 living together, 29 separated and 15 divorced).

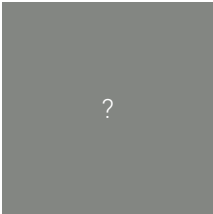
Hunsley et al. (1995) reported that the DAS-7 had an appropriate internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82).

The authors reported also that the internal consistency coefficient was 0.84 for female participants and 0.79 for male participants. This study was conducted in Canada with a sample of 196 participants married or cohabiting with a partner of the opposite sex for a minimum of six months (103 women, 93 men, mean age = 29.3 years, SD = 7.4).

Hunsley et al. (2001) reported that the DAS-7 had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78. This study was conducted in Canada with a sample of 162 participants married or cohabiting with a partner of the opposite sex for a minimum of six months (98 women, 64 men, mean age = 33.9 years, SD = 8.1).

---

## Test-retest reliability



From our review of the evidence, we did not find information on the test-retest reliability of the DAS-7.

---

## Validity



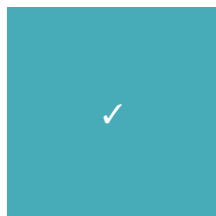
Hunsley et al. (1995), tested the validity of the DAS-7 against the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) and reported high correlations ( $r = 0.71, p < 0.01$  among the female participants and  $r = 0.73, p < 0.01$  among male participants). The authors also reported moderate correlations between the DAS-7 and the Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI) ( $r = -0.37, p < 0.01$  for female participants and  $r = -0.39, p < 0.01$  for male participants). Finally, the authors tested the validity of the DAS-7 against the Communication and Conflict Resolution subscales of Enriching and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication, and Happiness (ENRICH) and the Cohesion and Adaptability subscales from Marital Adaptability and Cohesion Scales III (MACES III), and reported correlations ranging from 0.39 and 0.76.

Hunsley et al. (2001) tested the validity of DAS-7 against the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS, a three-item measure that assesses marital satisfaction), and the Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale (ESDS, 40-item measure that assesses emotional disclosure). The authors reported a correlation ranging between 0.67 and 0.72 between the DAS-7 and the KMSS, and a correlation between 0.41 and 0.46 between the DAS-7 and the ESDS.

Moreover, the developers reported that the DAS-7 correlates well with the DAS-32 (Sharpley & Cross, 1982; Sharpley & Rogers, 1984), and that the DAS-7 is able to distinguish between 'distressed' and 'non-distressed' relationships (Sharpley & Rogers, 1984).

---

## Sensitivity to change



There is evidence that the DAS-7 can detect changes after participation in short parenting and relationship interventions (Halford et al., 2012; Ireland et al., 2003; Zubrick et al., 2005).

Spielhofer et al. (2014) reported that the DAS-7 was sensitive to change between pre-test and a 10/12-week follow-up (DAS-7: Mean score change over time = 1.60.  $d = 0.32, p < 0.001$ . DAS-7: Mean score change over time = 2.59.  $d = 0.40, p < 0.001$ ). This study ran a series of one-group pre/post tests on three types of UK relationship interventions, finding statistically significant findings in two of them. For the 'Relate couple counselling' intervention the sample consisted of 60% female participants with an average age of 42, 85% were White British and 62% said they had a child with their current partner. This was similar to the sample in the other intervention (Marriage Care couple counselling), where 67% were female with a mean age of 41 years and 69% said they had at least one child with their current partner.

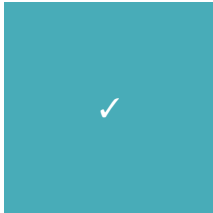
Ireland et al. (2003) reported that the DAS-7 detected change over time between pre-test and an eight-week follow-up (DAS-7: mothers,  $F(2,60) = 3.88, p > .05$ ; fathers,  $F(2,60) = 7.53, p > .001$ ). This study was a pre/post test design with two treatment groups, conducted in Australia to evaluate change over time for two versions of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program (a standard version and an enhanced version), designed to assist parents in developing positive and effective strategies for managing child behavioural issues. This study was conducted with a sample of 37 couples with a child between the ages of 2–5. The mean of children in the study was around 3.65 and 65% were male, the mean age of mothers and fathers was 34 years and 37 years, respectively.

# Implementation features in detail

---

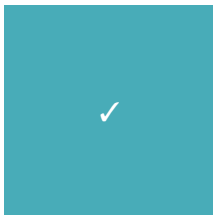
## Brevity

This measure has 7 items.



## 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-7 is available in the publication by Hunsley et al. (2001).

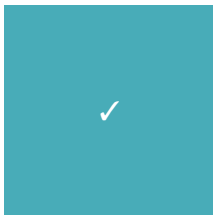


## Ease of scoring

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

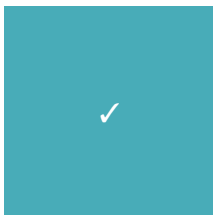
The total score for the DAS-7 is the sum of the responses to the seven items.

The resultant score ranges from 0 to 36, with a higher score indicating more positive relationship quality. Scores less than 21 are considered to indicate a relationship in distress (Hunsley et al., 2001).



## Used in the UK

The measure has been used in several UK studies including impact evaluations (Langley, Totsika, & Hastings 2017, Spielhofe et al., 2014).



## Language(s)

The DAS-7 is available in English. The measure has also been translated into other languages, including French and Italian, by people other than the developers (Favez, 2014; Gentili et al., 2002).

---

# References

- Favez, N. (2014) *L'examen clinique du couple: théories et instruments d'évaluation*. Primento.
- Gentili, P., Contreras, L., Cassaniti, M., & D'arista, F. (2002). La Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Una misura dell'adattamento di coppia. *Minerva Psichiatrica*.
- Halford, W.K., Chen, R., Wilson, K.L., Larson, J., Busby, D., & Holman, T. (2012). Does therapist guidance enhance assessment-based feedback as couple relationship education?. *Behaviour Change*, 29(4), 199–212.
- Hansen, G.L. (1985). Perceived threats and marital jealousy. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48(3), 262–268.
- Hunsley, J., Pinsent, C., Lefebvre, M., James-Tanner, S., & Vito, D. (1995). Construct validity of the short forms of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. *Family Relations*, 231–237.
- Hunsley, J., Best, M., Lefebvre, M., & Vito, D. (2001). The seven-item short form of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Further evidence for construct validity. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 29(4), 325–335.
- Ireland, J.L., Sanders, M.R., & Markie-Dodds, C. (2003). The impact of parent training on marital functioning: A comparison of two group versions of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program for parents of children with early-onset conduct problems. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 31(2), 127–142.
- 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.
- Martin, M.W. (1985). Satisfaction with intimate exchange: Gender-role differences and the impact of equity, equality, and rewards. *Sex Roles*, 13(11–12), 597–605.
- Sharpley, C.F., & Rogers, H.J. (1984). Preliminary validation of the Abbreviated Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Some psychometric data regarding a screening test of marital adjustment. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 44(4), 1045–1049.
- Sharpley, C.F., & Cross, D.G. (1982). A psychometric evaluation of the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 44(3), 739–747.
- Spielhofer, T., Corlyon, J., Durbin, B., Smith, M., Stock, L. & Gieve, M. (2014). *Relationship Support Interventions Evaluation*. Department for Education.
- Zubrick, S.R., Ward, K.A., Silburn, S.R., Lawrence, D., Williams, A.A., Blair, E., & Sanders, M.R. (2005). Prevention of child behavior problems through universal implementation of a group behavioral family intervention. *Prevention Science*, 6(4), 287.

