

GAD-7

What is it?

Brief Description

- Self-administered 7 item instrument that uses some of the DSM-V criteria for GAD (General Anxiety Disorder) to identify probable cases of GAD along with measuring anxiety symptom severity. It can also be used as a screening measure of panic, social anxiety, and PTSD. It was modeled after the PHQ9 to be used quickly and effectively within a primary care setting.
- When considering a diagnosis, the clinician will still need to use clinical interviewing skills to determine whether the symptoms are causing clinically significant distress or impairment and those symptoms are not better explained or attributed to other conditions (i.e. substance use, medical conditions, bereavement, etc.)

Why should I use it?

Clinical Utility

- Measurement based care emphasizes the use of standardized assessments, and other “tests” to help personalize care and guide treatment decisions.
 - Just as a primary care provider would routinely check glucose levels to better inform their treatment plan for a patient’s diabetes, routinely administering rating scales to monitor improvement or a change in mental health symptoms is considered best practice in providing optimal care.
- Routinely using these tools to measure longitudinal changes and track treatment progress are associated with superior client outcomes when compared to usual care
 - Assessments alert clinicians to lack of progress, guides treatment decisions, identifies potential intervention targets, and assists in differential diagnosis
 - Assessments prompt changes in interventions if needed when things are not working or can prompt stepdown in care after a patient’s functioning has improved
- The data can be used by the clinician to engage the client in therapeutic process, overall validating them as an active partner in their health care and mental wellness
- It can improve communication between providers and facilitate collaboration among different services

How easy is it to do?

Administration

- How is it administered?
 - Self-administered by the patient (preferred)
 - By interviewer in person or via telephone
- How long does it take?
 - 2-5 minutes to complete
- Where can it be done?
 - Waiting area prior to session
 - Close of session
 - At home prior to appointment
- How is data collected?
 - Paper and pencil
 - BHL Software
 - Tablets or other electronic device



GAD-7

How do I use this?

Scoring and Interpretation

Responders are asked to rate the frequency of anxiety symptoms in the last 2 weeks on a Likert scale ranging from 0-3. Items are summed to provide a total score.

- 0 = not at all
- 1 = several days
- 2 = more than half the days
- 3 = nearly every day

Diagnostic Aid:

- At a cut-off point of 10 or greater, sensitivity and specificity exceed 0.80, and sensitivity is nearly maximized. Most patients (sensitivity of 89%) with GAD had GAD-7 scores of 10 or greater, whereas most patients (specificity of 82%) without GAD had scores less than 10
- Using the threshold score of 10, the GAD7 is moderately good at screening for three other common anxiety disorders – panic disorder (sensitivity of 74%, specificity of 81%), social anxiety disorder (sensitivity of 72%, specificity of 80%), and post-traumatic stress disorder (sensitivity of 66%, specificity of 81%).

For tracking change over time:

- Severity can be determined by examining the total score. A meaningful change is 5 or more points.
- Interpretation of total score:

<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Anxiety Severity</i>
1-4	minimal symptoms
5-9	mild symptoms
10-14	moderate symptoms
15-21	severe symptoms

How can this help me with my patients?

Treatment Planning

Potential Treatment Interventions for individual items

This measure was created to be used in its entirety to assist in capturing the overall clinical picture and to guide treatment planning. However, some suggestions on possible techniques, useful interventions, and referral ideas to consider based on elevated responses on specific items are included below.

1) Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge

Diaphragmatic breathing
Thought monitoring
Challenging maladaptive thoughts/feelings

2) Not being able to stop or control worrying

Identifying maladaptive thoughts/feelings
Challenging maladaptive thoughts/feelings
Relaxation techniques

3) Worrying too much about different things

Thought monitoring
Solvable vs. Unsolvable worries

Identify possible solutions

4) Trouble relaxing

Diaphragmatic breathing
Autogenic Relaxation
Guided Imagery

5) Being so restless that it is hard to sit still

Diaphragmatic breathing
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Guided imagery



GAD-7

6) **Becoming easily annoyed or irritable**

Challenging maladaptive thoughts/feelings
Breathing techniques
Identify consequences to actions

7) **Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen**

Thought monitoring
Solvable vs. Unsolvable worries
Challenging maladaptive thoughts/feelings

Measuring Change

Standard definition: Good clinical care requires that clinicians monitor patient progress . Scores of less than 5 twice in a row, at least 2 weeks apart, can serve as an indication that maintenance treatment may be appropriate.

Can I trust it?

Psychometric Properties

- Reliability: good procedural reliability, excellent internal consistency
- Validity: good criterion validity, factorial validity, and procedural validity

References

- Roy-Byrne, P., Veitengruber, J.P., Bystritsky, A., Edlund, M.J., Sullivan, G., Craske, M., Shaw, S., & Rose, R., Stein, M.B. (2009). Brief intervention for anxiety in primary care patients. *Journal of The American Board of Family Medicine*, 22(2), 175-186 doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2009.02.080078
- Spitzer, R.L., Kroenke, K., Williams, J.B., & Lowe, B. (2006). A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 166(10), 1092-1097. DOI: 10.1001/archinte.166.10.1092
- Valenstein, M., Adler, D.A., Berlant, J., Dixon, L.B., Dulit, R.A., Goldman, B., ... Sonis, W.A. (2009). Implementing standardized assessments in clinical care: Now's the time. *Psychiatric Services*, 60(10), 1372-1375. DOI: 10.1176/appi.ps.60.10.1372



Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Over the last 2 weeks, have you felt bothered by any of these things?	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the days	Nearly Every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge?	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying?	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things?	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing?	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still?	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable?	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen?	0	1	2	3

Total _____

If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of the things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult
at all

Somewhat
difficult

Very
difficult

Extremely
difficult