

## DLA-20© Scoring Rules

- Assess needs, level of functioning, and impairments compared to the GENERAL POPULATION using anchors.
- Each Item on the DLA-20 is rated on a 7 point scale:
  - 1= extremely severe, totally dependent with pervasive need
  - 2= severe problem, concern for safety, danger to self/others
  - 3= serious problem, sometimes independent with extensive help
  - 4= moderate impairments, always needs supports
  - 5= mild impairments with independent strengths, often requires some help and routine support
  - 6= adequate independence with few supports
  - 7= optimal independence
- Scoring is based on an evaluation of the past 30 days. If functioning varied in the last 30 days, rate the lowest score on the more frequent pattern of behavioral responses to symptoms.
- Once you pick a score, look at the anchor score one lower to make sure a lower score is not more accurate. Continue this process until the most accurate score is found.
- If you cannot decide between two scores, always choose the lower score based on current data.
- Consider impairments in functioning due to physical limitations as well as those due to mental impairments that affect functioning (e.g. diabetes, TBI)
- Do not consider environmental/ community limitations (e.g. “no job/ no appropriate school or home placement available”)
- The score is not always correlated with the clients self-reported functioning- trust your own assessment using information provided by the client/ family, collateral information, and your observations. Use the anchors defining strengths & needs compared to the general population.
- The provider is asked to collaborate and review the score on each domain during the clinical interview and indicate the raw score for each item. The average score is the total sum of the ratings on the 20 items divided by the number of items rated. All domains are relevant.
- Must score at least 15 items\*

\*NOTE: If more than 25% (N=5) of the total items on the measure are missing the tool is not valid. Therefore, the provider and individual receiving care (or informant) should be encouraged to complete all 20 items on the measure.