



CREATING BETTER LIVES FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MEMORY LOSS

Geriatric Depression Scale Short Form

The Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) Short Form is recommended for use in the Memory Keepers intake process to assess mood. A Memory Keepers facilitator or other qualified individual should go through the assessment with the person living with memory loss in-person or virtually. It is recommended that the assessment be completed prior to participation in the Memory Keepers program to gather baseline information (pre-test) and then repeated after each 15-week set (post-test) to track change in mood. Findings can be shared with the person living with dementia (PLWD) and the family. Memory Keepers program providers are encouraged to share findings with Memory Keepers, LLC following each post-test to help gather longitudinal data demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention.

Description and Instructions

The GDS Short Form is a brief, 15-item questionnaire in which participants are asked to respond by answering yes or no in reference to how they felt over the past week. The GDS Short Form is easily used by physically ill and mildly to moderately persons with dementia who may have short attention spans and/or feel easily fatigued. It takes about 5 to 7 minutes to complete. The GDS is not a substitute for a diagnostic interview by mental health professionals. It is a useful screening tool in the clinical setting to facilitate assessment of depression in older adults, especially when baseline measurements are compared to subsequent scores. It does not assess for suicidality. Any positive score above 5 on the GDS Short Form is an indicator of possible depression and should prompt an in-depth psychological assessment and evaluation for suicidality.

Source: <https://hign.org/consultgeri/try-this-series/geriatric-depression-scale-gds>

Geriatric Depression Scale (short form)

Instructions: Circle the answer that best describes how you felt over the past week.

1. Are you basically satisfied with your life? Yes No
2. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests? Yes No
3. Do you feel that your life is empty? Yes No
4. Do you often get bored? Yes No
5. Are you in good spirits most of the time? Yes No
6. Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you? Yes No
7. Do you feel happy most of the time? Yes No
8. Do you often feel helpless? Yes No
9. Do you prefer to stay at home, rather than going out and doing things? Yes No
10. Do you feel that you have more problems with memory than most? Yes No
11. Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now? Yes No
12. Do you feel worthless the way you are now? Yes No
13. Do you feel full of energy? Yes No
14. Do you feel that your situation is hopeless? Yes No
15. Do you think that most people are better off than you are? Yes No

Total Score _____

Score one point for each underlined answer - A score of 5 or more suggests depression.

Ref. Yes average: The use of Rating Depression Series in the Elderly, in Poon (ed.): Clinical Memory Assessment of Older Adults, American Psychological Association, 1986.

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