

Mental Health Screening Tools: PHQ-9, GAD-7, NIDA

Public-domain validated instruments. Document raw score and action taken — not severity labels.

PHQ-9 — DEPRESSION (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
3. Trouble falling/staying asleep, or sleeping too much
4. Feeling tired or having little energy
5. Poor appetite or overeating
6. Feeling bad about yourself — or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down
7. Trouble concentrating on things
8. Moving/speaking so slowly that others noticed — or the opposite, being so fidgety or restless
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way

Each item: 0 = Not at all | 1 = Several days | 2 = More than half | 3 = Nearly every day

TOTAL SCORE INTERPRETATION

- 0–4: Minimal or no symptoms
- 5–9: Mild
- 10–14: Moderate
- 15–19: Moderately severe
- 20–27: Severe

GAD-7 — ANXIETY (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying
3. Worrying too much about different things
4. Trouble relaxing
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen

Same 0–3 scoring scale as PHQ-9.

TOTAL SCORE INTERPRETATION

- 0–4: Minimal anxiety
- 5–9: Mild
- 10–14: Moderate
- 15–21: Severe

NIDA QUICK SCREEN — SUBSTANCE USE

"In the past year, how many times have you used [alcohol / an illegal drug / a prescription medication for nonmedical reasons] more than you meant to?"

Any response of 1 or more warrants further evaluation or referral.

SCOPE-APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION RULE

DOCUMENT: raw score, date administered, patient-reported symptoms in their own words, action taken (referral, follow-up, resource). For PHQ-9 Q9 (suicidality), document the response and immediate action separately.

DO NOT DOCUMENT: severity labels ("moderate," "severe"), diagnostic conclusions ("patient is depressed"), or speculation about psychotropic medication efficacy. Out of chiropractic scope.