

Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression (DASA)

Unit Reference Guide

1. Assessing the risk of aggression

Each item is scored for its presence (1), or absence (0), in the **previous 24 hours**. The items are then summed to produce a total score. The risk rating is determined based on the total score:

0 = Low risk, 1-3 = Moderate risk, and 4-7 = High risk.

2. Intervention to prevent aggression

After rating the items and calculating a total score to determine the risk rating (Low, Moderate or High), we recommend using the Aggression Prevention Protocol to ensure timely and appropriate intervention to prevent aggression.

DASA Items

1. Irritability

0 The patient has been calm, tolerant and relaxed. S/he is comfortable and relaxed in the company of other patients and with staff.

1 The patient is easily annoyed or angered and unable to tolerate the presence of others.

2. Impulsivity

0 The patient has been affectively and/or behaviourally stable and composed.

1 The patient has been impulsive and unpredictable in his/her affect or behaviour, or was quick to (over-) react to real and imagined slights, insults, and disappointments.

3. Unwillingness to follow directions

0 The patient in the last 24 hours has been compliant with any requests and directions.

1 The patient has become angry and/or aggressive s/he was asked to adhere to some aspect of her/his treatment or to the ward's routine in the last 24 hours.

4. Sensitive to perceived provocation

0 In the last 24 hours the patient has not become extraordinarily angry or seen everything that occurs around her/him as provocative. S/he is not 'overly sensitive' or 'provocative'.

1 The patient has tended to see others' actions as deliberate and harmful. S/he may misinterpret other people's behaviour or respond with anger in a disproportionate manner to the extent of provocation. S/he has been prickly, overly sensitive and quick to anger.

5. Easily angered when requests are denied

0 The patient has been calm and accepting when s/he is asked to wait whilst her/his request is attended to. S/he has been understanding and accepting that her/his request has been unable to be fulfilled at that time.

1 The patient has tended to become angry when her/his requests have not been granted immediately. S/he has been unwilling or incapable of accepting delay in gratification of her/his requests, may become surly, angry or aggressive.

6. Negative attitudes

0 No negative attitudes

1 Definite/serious negative or anti-social attitudes supportive of aggressive behaviour exhibited in the last 24 hours. This item does not refer to pessimism.

7. Verbal threats

0 The patient has not been verbally aggressive.

1 The patient was verbally aggressive or displayed a verbal outburst, which is more than just a raised voice, and where there is a definite attempt to intimidate or threaten another person.