



Spiritual Distress & Struggle Assessment™

SDSA™ • Evidence-informed pastoral assessment for identifying religious, spiritual, and moral struggles and informing appropriate pathways of care.

26 ITEMS • 6 DOMAINS

Instructions

Circle the response that best represents the degree to which each statement describes your current experience.

Pastoral-use notice: SDSA™ identifies areas for further pastoral conversation and care planning. It is not a psychiatric diagnostic instrument and does not determine whether a spiritual interpretation is objectively true or false.

0 Not at all	1 A little	2 Somewhat	3 Quite a bit	4 Extremely
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Church Member / Client Name _____	Date _____
Pastor / Ministry Leader _____	Church / Organization _____

1. Divine / Spiritual Relationship Struggle

1. I feel abandoned or unsupported by God or the Divine.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I struggle with anger toward God or the Divine.	0	1	2	3	4
3. I wonder whether I am being punished spiritually.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I feel disconnected from a spiritual relationship that once gave me comfort.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I struggle to understand why God or the Divine has allowed certain things to happen.	0	1	2	3	4

2. Faith & Doubt Struggle

6. I question beliefs that once felt certain to me.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I am unsure what I believe about my faith or spirituality.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Changes in my beliefs have caused me distress.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I struggle with losing or letting go of beliefs that once shaped my life.	0	1	2	3	4

10. I feel unsettled by religious or spiritual questions I cannot resolve.	0	1	2	3	4
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3. Moral & Values Struggle

11. I experience spiritual or religious guilt about choices I have made.	0	1	2	3	4
12. I struggle with shame connected to my moral or religious beliefs.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I feel conflicted between my actions and my deeply held values.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I struggle to determine what is right or wrong within my current belief system.	0	1	2	3	4

4. Religious / Interpersonal Struggle

15. I have been hurt or disappointed by religious leaders or communities.	0	1	2	3	4
16. I feel rejected, judged, or misunderstood because of my religious or spiritual experiences.	0	1	2	3	4
17. Conflict with people in my faith community has affected me spiritually.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I struggle to trust religious leaders or communities because of past experiences.	0	1	2	3	4

5. Meaning & Purpose Struggle

19. I struggle to make sense of what is happening in my life.	0	1	2	3	4
20. I feel that I have lost a sense of spiritual purpose or direction.	0	1	2	3	4
21. My religious or spiritual identity no longer feels as clear as it once did.	0	1	2	3	4
22. I question whether my life or experiences have spiritual meaning.	0	1	2	3	4

6. Demonic / Spiritual Influence Struggle

23. I am concerned that a demon, evil spirit, or harmful spiritual force may be affecting me.	0	1	2	3	4
24. I believe some of my distress may be connected to demonic or harmful spiritual influence.	0	1	2	3	4
25. I feel frightened or distressed by experiences I interpret as spiritual attack, oppression, or possession.	0	1	2	3	4
26. Concerns about demonic or harmful spiritual influence are affecting my daily life, relationships, faith, or sense of safety.	0	1	2	3	4

Spiritual Distress & Struggle Profile



Transfer the item ratings into the domain totals below. Higher scores indicate greater reported struggle within that domain.

Domain	Items	Score	Maximum
Divine / Spiritual Relationship Struggle	1–5	_____	20
Faith & Doubt Struggle	6–10	_____	20
Moral & Values Struggle	11–14	_____	16
Religious / Interpersonal Struggle	15–18	_____	16
Meaning & Purpose Struggle	19–22	_____	16
Demonic / Spiritual Influence Struggle	23–26	_____	16

Understanding this profile: Higher scores indicate greater reported struggle within that domain. The domain profile is intended to identify areas for further pastoral conversation and assessment. SDSA™ does not provide a psychiatric diagnosis, and these scores are not validated diagnostic or severity cutoffs.

Legal Notice & Terms of Use

Spiritual Distress & Struggle Assessment™ (SDSA™) is a proprietary, evidence-informed pastoral assessment developed for pastoral-care and ministry settings. It is intended to support structured conversation about reported religious, spiritual, and moral struggles.

Not a Mental-Health Diagnosis

SDSA™ is not a psychiatric, psychological, or medical diagnostic instrument and is not a substitute for evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, or advice from a licensed mental-health or medical professional. Results should not be used to diagnose a mental disorder or to determine that a reported spiritual explanation is objectively true or false.

Pastoral Scope & Professional Judgment

Use of SDSA™ does not expand the legal or professional scope of practice of any pastor, ministry leader, chaplain, organization, or other user. Users remain responsible for exercising appropriate judgment, following applicable laws and organizational policies, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and seeking consultation, collaboration, referral, or emergency assistance when circumstances exceed their role, training, or competence.

Safety & Emergencies

SDSA™ is not an emergency, crisis, suicide-risk, violence-risk, abuse, or safeguarding assessment. If immediate safety concerns are present, follow applicable emergency procedures, safeguarding requirements, mandatory-reporting duties, organizational policy, and local law.

Confidentiality & Information Handling

Organizations and users are responsible for obtaining any appropriate consent and for protecting assessment responses and related pastoral-care information in accordance with applicable law, denominational or organizational requirements, and their own privacy, confidentiality, documentation, storage, access, retention, release, and disposal policies.

Interpretation & Outcomes

Scores reflect the respondent's self-reported experience at the time of completion. Higher domain scores indicate greater reported struggle within that domain; they do not establish a diagnosis, prove the cause of an experience, establish the objective truth or falsity of a spiritual interpretation, or guarantee a particular pastoral-care outcome.

Developmental & Evidence-Informed Status

SDSA™ is currently an evidence-informed development instrument. Unless and until empirical validation establishes otherwise, its scores should not be represented as validated clinical cutoffs, diagnostic thresholds, or measures of clinical severity.

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No Guarantee of Outcome

Use of SDSA™ does not guarantee prevention, identification, resolution, or improvement of any religious, spiritual, moral, psychological, relational, medical, safety, or other concern. The assessment is one source of information within a broader pastoral-care process.

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ASSESSMENT COMPLETION & REVIEW

Completed / Administered By: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Reviewed By (if required): _____