

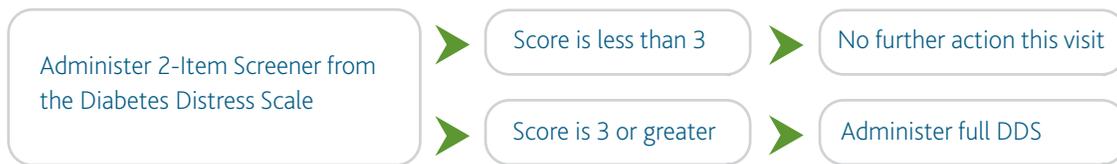
Using the Diabetes Distress Scale

Why Bother?

Diabetes distress focuses on the emotional distress linked directly to diabetes. It is much more common than symptoms of depression and much more directly related to diabetes management. Diabetes distress tends to cluster around diabetes itself (emotional burden and regimen distress) and people impacted by diabetes (providers as well as family and friends).

Your Role

Screening for diabetes distress does not mean that it becomes your job to reduce the distress. The person with diabetes will benefit if you establish a collaborative relationship, use reflections and empathy, and encourage self-management and empowerment.



Use these 4 easy steps:



The items of the scale can be seen as a template to an interview, or a form of guided discovery.



1. ASK Ask permission to explore sources of Diabetes Distress.

"Do you mind if we talk about (insert source of diabetes distress)?"



2. INTRODUCE Introduce each scale by name.

"I have a scale that I'd like to use to help me understand what you're experiencing. The first one is called *Feeling Overwhelmed by the Demands of Living with Diabetes*."



3. APPLY Use a digital or printed copy of the scale to show to your client. Ask if any of the items are a source of distress for him or her. This will help you understand his or her experience.

"Using this scale (show scale), pick a number that best reflects how much of a problem the following have been (read distress statement)."



4. INTERPRET Determine if the stress is diabetes-specific, due to a mental health disorder, or related to problems of living.

Diabetes-specific distress Distress management should occur through diabetes care, support, and management.

Mental health disorder distress Referral to a mental health professional is appropriate if distress is due to a mental health disorder or not related to diabetes.

Refer to CDA's "Steps to Stress Management" handout for more information on what to do next

Problems of living distress General stress management or other support (e.g. community-based services) can be used.