

Background Information for the  
**Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire (NSSQ)**

All information related to the revised version of the NSSQ (1995) is available in downloadable files from <http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu>. The author no longer provides these materials via mail.

<u>These files include:</u>	<u>File Name</u>
Background information	NSSQ-Background.pdf
The NSSQ instrument	NSSQ-Instrument.pdf
Summary of psychometric data	NSSQ-Psychometric.pdf
Scoring Instructions	NSSQ-Scoring.pdf
SPSS coding statements ( <i>from scoring instructions in plain text format</i> )	NSSQ95a.sps NSSQ95b.sps NSSQafix.sps (for pre-1995 version only)
Spanish version	NSSQ-Spanish.pdf

Description of the Instrument: Respondents are asked to list first names or initials for each significant person in their lives who provides personal support to them. Then they indicate the kind of relationship (e.g., spouse or partner, family members or relatives, friends, work or school associates, neighbors, health care providers, counselor or therapist, minister/priest/rabbi, other) for each person on this network list. Finally respondents use a 5-point rating scale to describe the amount of support available from each person on their network list for questions 1-8. The item content of the NSSQ is reproduced on page 2 of this document.

Instrument Format: The content summary on page 2 does not reproduce the format of the instrument. The format of the NSSQ requires that the items for questions 1-8 are visually aligned with the network list that appears opposite page 5 of the instrument. The correctly formatted instrument can be downloaded and printed from the NSSQ-Instrument.pdf file.

Components Measured: The instrument measures multiple components of social support including functional properties of social support (e.g., emotional and tangible support) and network properties (e.g., stability of relationships, frequency of contact), as well as eliciting descriptive data about recent losses of supportive relationships. In addition, amount of support from specific sources (e.g., relatives, friends) can be calculated. The instrument generates a vast array of data, so access to statistical expertise is important for scoring and interpretation.

The Revised Version and Scoring Instructions: The instrument and Scoring Instructions were revised in late 1995 to conform to the Microsoft Windows version of SPSS for data entry and analysis. Neither the content nor scoring of the original NSSQ was changed. The previous version required some scoring corrections that are no longer necessary with the revised

version. The Scoring Instructions address frequently asked questions about NSSQ scores and contain the SPSS program statements for creating all variables and subscales of the instrument. Permission to use the NSSQ is included in the Scoring Instructions.

Psychometric Testing: The original psychometric testing of the NSSQ was published in two articles in *Nursing Research*. The conceptual base, content, and format of the NSSQ were described in 1981, along with initial reliability and validity testing. The 1983 article presented further testing of the instrument's stability and sensitivity; construct, concurrent, and predictive validity; and normative data with employed adults. A summary of these results is in the NSSQ-Psychometric.pdf file.

- Norbeck, J.S., Lindsey, A.M., Carrieri, V.L. (1981). The development of an instrument to measure social support. *Nursing Research*, 30, 264-269.
- Norbeck, J.S., Lindsey, A.M., & Carrieri, V.L. (1983). Further development of the Norbeck social support questionnaire: Normative data and validity testing. *Nursing Research*, 32, 4-9.

Spanish Version: The Spanish version of the NSSQ is being made available to investigators; however, it is not a fully validated translation. It has not been back-translated, nor has it been administered to bilingual individuals to test the agreement between the English and Spanish versions. A panel of Spanish-speaking individuals representing seven Central and South American countries reviewed the translated instrument. When idiomatic differences occurred, the decision rule was to select the wording most acceptable to Mexican speakers.

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Item Content of the NSSQ – the full instrument is available in the NSSQ-Instrument.pdf file

After listing the significant people in their lives, respondents are asked to rate these network members on 5-point rating scales for 8 questions that are presented in a series of half-pages aligned with the network list.

- Question 1: How much does this person make you feel liked or loved?
- Question 2: How much does this person make you feel respected or admired?
- Question 3: How much can you confide in this person?
- Question 4: How much does this person agree with or support your actions or thoughts?
- Question 5: If you needed to borrow \$10, a ride to the doctor, or some other immediate help, how much could this person usually help?
- Question 6: If you were confined to bed for several weeks, how much could this person help you?
- Question 7: How long have you known this person?
- Question 8: How frequently do you usually have contact with this person?  
(Phone calls, visits, or letters?)
- Question 9: During the past year, have you lost any important relationships due to moving, a job change, divorce or separation, death, or some other reason? [yes or no]

IF YES:

- Question 9a: Please indicate the number of persons from each category who are *no longer available* to you. [9 categories listed]
- Question 9b: Overall, how much of your support was provided by these people who are no longer available to you? [5-point rating scale]
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