



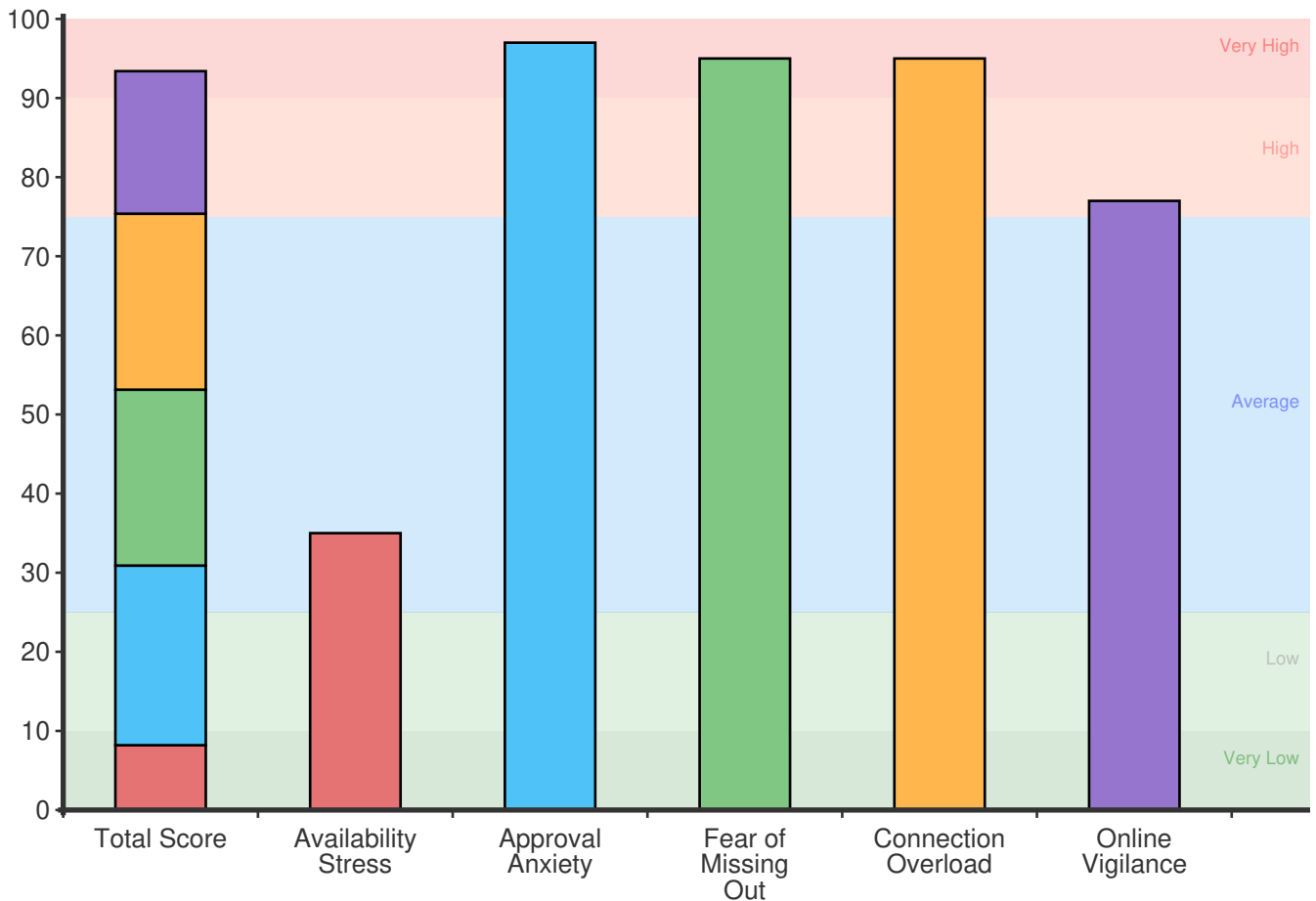
Digital Stress Scale (DSS)

<i>Client Name</i>	Generic Client	<i>Date administered</i>	11 Apr 2025
<i>Date of birth (age)</i>	14 Dec 1975 (49)	<i>Time taken</i>	1 min 24s
<i>Assessor</i>	Dr David Hegarty		

Results

	Average Score (1-5)	Percentile	Descriptor
Total Score	3.96	93.4	Very High
Availability Stress	2.25	35	Average
Approval Anxiety	4.83	97	Very High
Fear of Missing Out	4.25	95	Very High
Connection Overload	4	95	Very High
Online Vigilance	4	77	High

Digital Stress Scale (DSS) Percentiles





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Interpretation

The client's total Digital Stress Scale (DSS) average score is 3.96 (on 1-5 scale), which falls at the 93.4rd percentile and this indicates the client experiences significantly elevated levels of digital stress. Individuals with very high digital stress often experience significant psychological burden related to their digital technology use. This high level of distress may contribute to or exacerbate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and reduced well-being.

Subscale Pattern Analysis:

The client's digital stress profile shows the highest levels in Approval Anxiety (percentile: 97) and Fear of Missing Out (percentile: 95), with the lowest levels in Availability Stress (percentile: 35). Elevated Approval Anxiety suggests the client experiences significant distress related to how others perceive and respond to their social media posts and digital footprint. This dimension is characterised by nervousness about others' evaluations and heightened attention to creating content that will receive positive feedback. Approval anxiety is associated with negative psychosocial outcomes including depressive symptoms and lower social satisfaction. The client may benefit from interventions that address perfectionistic tendencies and social comparison behaviours in digital environments.

Specific Item Endorsement:

Within the Approval Anxiety dimension, the client most strongly endorsed the following items:

- 3. *I am nervous about how people will respond to my posts and photos (Always)*
- 9. *I feel anxious about how others will respond when I share a new photo on social media (Always)*
- 17. *I feel nervous after I share a post or photo to see how others responded to it (Always)*
- 20. *I put a lot of effort into composing messages and posts I share online (Always)*
- 22. *I put a lot of effort into finding or creating a photo that others will approve of when I post it online (Always)*
- 24. *I feel nervous about how others will respond when I post new updates on social media (Often)*

Scoring and Interpretation Information

For comprehensive information on the Digital Stress Scale (DSS), [see here](#).

The Digital Stress Scale (DSS) items are typically averaged to provide subscale scores and a total score, with higher average scores (1-5) indicating greater digital stress. The Total Score provides an overall indication of the level of digital distress experienced by the client but the subscales of the DSS provide clinically useful information about the dimensions of digital stress:

1. Availability Stress (Items 1, 8, 16, 18): Availability Stress measures the distress, guilt, and anxiety resulting from perceived expectations to be constantly accessible and responsive via digital means. Unlike other dimensions of digital stress, availability stress shows a more complex relationship with social outcomes, as it can be associated with both greater social connectedness and increased subjective distress.
2. Approval Anxiety (Items 3, 9, 17, 20, 22, 24): Approval Anxiety measures the nervousness and anxiety about how others perceive and respond to one's digital self-presentation, particularly on social media. High scores on this subscale suggest that concerns about digital



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Scoring and Interpretation Information (cont.)

self-presentation may be a significant source of psychological distress.

3. Fear of Missing Out (Items 5, 10, 13, 21): Fear of Missing Out measures the anxiety, worry, and distress resulting from concerns about being excluded from rewarding social experiences. High scores on this subscale suggest that fear of social exclusion may be driving problematic patterns of technology use.

4. Connection Overload (Items 2, 6, 11, 14, 19, 23): Connection Overload measures the subjective experience of being overwhelmed by the volume and pace of digital communications. High scores on this subscale indicate that the sheer volume of digital communication may be exceeding the individual's psychological resources.

5. Online Vigilance (Items 4, 7, 12, 15): Online Vigilance measures the persistent preoccupation with staying connected to digital devices and online content. High scores on this subscale suggest that digital connectivity has become a dominant psychological need that may interfere with present-moment engagement in offline activities and relationships.

Average scores for each subscale and the total score are converted to percentiles based upon a sample of 735 adolescents and young adults (Hall et al., 2021). These percentiles are then used to derive descriptive categories that aid in clinical interpretation. The descriptive categories for each subscale and the total score are:

- Very Low (10th percentile or below): Indicates significantly less digital stress than most individuals.
- Low (11th to 25th percentile): Indicates less digital stress than most individuals.
- Average (26th to 75th percentile): Indicates a typical level of digital stress compared to peers.
- High (76th to 90th percentile): Indicates more digital stress than most individuals.
- Very High (91st percentile or above): Indicates significantly elevated levels of digital stress.

Research indicates that the pattern and impact of digital stress may vary by developmental stage, with adolescents showing stronger associations between digital stress dimensions (particularly Approval Anxiety and FoMO) and psychosocial outcomes compared to young adults (Hall et al., 2021). When interpreting DSS scores for adolescents, consider the heightened importance of peer evaluation and social connectedness during this developmental period (Nesi et al., 2018).

On first administration a plot is presented displaying the total DSS and the subscale percentiles. The percentiles are presented with the qualitative descriptors in the background for ease of interpretation. When administered on multiple occasions, a longitudinal plot is displayed showing the subscale percentiles over time. When DSS scores are available from multiple timepoints, changes in scores can provide valuable information about the effectiveness of interventions or developmental changes in digital stress. For comparative interpretation, changes of at least 0.5 standard deviations in raw scores are considered clinically meaningful (the minimally important difference) (Norman et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2010). When interpreting changes, attention should be paid to both the total score and the patterns of change across subscales.

Client Responses



Client Name	Generic Client
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		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	My friends expect me to be constantly available online	1	2	3	4	5
2	On top of the other things I must do, keeping up with notifications is a chore	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am nervous about how people will respond to my posts and photos	1	2	3	4	5
4	I feel socially unavailable when I do not have my phone	1	2	3	4	5
5	I fear my friends are having more rewarding experiences than me	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have to check too many notifications	1	2	3	4	5
7	I must have my phone with me to know what is going on	1	2	3	4	5
8	For my friends, it is important that I am constantly available online	1	2	3	4	5
9	I feel anxious about how others will respond when I share a new photo on social media	1	2	3	4	5
10	I fear that others have more rewarding experiences than me	1	2	3	4	5
11	I feel overwhelmed with the flow of messages/notifications on my phone	1	2	3	4	5
12	I feel lost or "naked" without my phone	1	2	3	4	5
13	I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me	1	2	3	4	5
14	It feels like there is always a reminder – like a flashing light or buzz – that there is some other message that I need to attend to	1	2	3	4	5
15	I am constantly checking my phone for messages/notifications	1	2	3	4	5
16	Most of my friends approve of me being constantly available online	1	2	3	4	5
17	I feel nervous after I share a post or photo to see how others responded to it	1	2	3	4	5
18	I feel a social obligation to be constantly available online	1	2	3	4	5
19	I feel stress because I must sift through a lot of unimportant notifications to get to the important ones	1	2	3	4	5
20	I put a lot of effort into composing messages and posts I share online	1	2	3	4	5



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Client Responses (cont.)

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
21	I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to	1	2	3	4	5
22	I put a lot of effort into finding or creating a photo that others will approve of when I post it online	1	2	3	4	5
23	I spend too much time responding to notifications/messages	1	2	3	4	5
24	I feel nervous about how others will respond when I post new updates on social media	1	2	3	4	5