

Reading the Initial Scan Results

What is the Initial Scan?

The **Initial Scan** generates two scores, the **SSOS** and the **SSIX**.

SSOS means Stress Satisfaction Offset Score. As its name implies, the SSOS treats demand and effort as “stressors” (items 3 and 4 below), offset by the “satisfiers,” control and reward (items 1 and 2 below). The appeal of this approach is that the resulting metric, expressed as single number ranging from +2 to -2, sketches an immediate and compelling picture of the workforce or a unit within it in terms of job stress as offset by job satisfaction. Positive scores point toward a psychologically safer environment while more negative scores suggest the existence of more psychologically risky working environments.

The most practical advantage of the “offset” approach is that the expression of a relationship between stress and satisfaction provides clear guidance with regard to action. There is a strong and common tendency for worksite consumers of SSOS reports to want to shift the balance between stress and satisfaction as far as possible away from stress and as far as possible toward satisfaction. So, almost no matter where the score lies, there is almost always some room for improvement, and often a great deal of room.

These are the items used in the Initial Scan

1. I am satisfied with the amount of involvement I have in decisions that affect my work.
(Control as a Satisfier)
2. I feel I am well rewarded (in terms of praise and recognition) for the level of effort I put out for my job. **(Reward as a Satisfier)**
3. In the last six months, too much time pressure at work has caused me worry, “nerves” or stress. **(Demand as a Stressor)**
4. In the last six months, I have experienced worry, “nerves” or stress from mental fatigue at work. **(Effort as a Stressor)**
5. I am satisfied with the fairness and respect I receive on the job **(Fairness and Respect as Mediators)**
6. My supervisor supports me in getting my work done **(Supervisory Support as a Mediator)**

SSIX means Stress Satisfaction Index

The SSIX is the SSOS with two extra questions added (items 5 and 6 above).

The SSOS and the SSIX provide two perspectives on risk to psychological safety and health.

As noted above, by itself, the **SSOS** provides information on how employees perceive the basic conditions of their work in terms of *demand*, *control*, *effort* and *reward*. This is important information in itself and it is often sufficient for identifying high, medium and low risk zones in your workplace with regard to psychosocial conditions of work.

With its two extra questions, the **SSIX** provides information on how SSOS scores are either raised or lowered when the role of perceived *fairness* and *supervisor support* are factored in. These two questions are called “mediators” because they mediate the impact of the basic SSO Scores by either raise or lowering them. So, for example, stressful work due to high demand and mental effort can have a greater negative impact on mental health when these conditions are made worse by perceived lack of supervisory support, fairness and respectfulness. Conversely, these same stressful conditions can have less negative impact on mental health when these conditions are made better by perceived supervisory support, fairness and respectfulness.

The additional information provided by the mediators may help you to focus on where you need to concentrate your efforts to create a psychologically safe and healthy workplace: for example, when there is little that can be done to relieve demands and effort it may still be possible to work on improving supervisory support and fairness. This is why it is useful to compare the two scores – the SSOS and the SSIX – to see where supervisory support and fairness make a positive difference and where they make a negative difference. Those environments in which they make a negative difference may recommend themselves as priority targets for workplace restoration efforts

How do I interpret Initial Scan Results?

The following quick reference guide will help you with your interpretation.

-2.5 to -0.50 = red

-0.49 to 0.0 = amber

+0.01 to +0.49 = yellow

+0.50 to +2.5 = green

Red Zone: much higher chance of mental injury, negligible chance of mental health promotion

Amber zone: elevated risk of mental injury, reduced chance of mental health promotion

Yellow zone: average risk of mental injury, better than 50:50 chance of mental health promotion

Green zone: low risk of mental injury, high potential for mental health promotion

When calculating scores, it is helpful to consider the **ranges** as well as the averages. For example, the average SSIX for a unit of 25 people might be +1.0 but the range may be between +2.5 (the maximum) and – 1.5. This is important information because it reveals significant differences in how members of a team or unit perceive and experience their psychosocial work environments. This information can be very helpful as a conversation starter with groups that are struggling, for whatever reason, with interpersonal issues that draw energy away from achieving the goals of the organization.

Remember the scores are a starting point not a destination!

Bear in mind that these scores and ranges, helpful as they are, provide only a starting or ignition point for further investigation such as conducting the **Employee Survey** as well as other methods such as interviews, feedback/focus groups, etc. It is only through these means that survey results can be validated and provide a sufficient basis for action when required.