

Instrument Title: Berlin Social Support Scales (BSSS)  
Instrument Author: Ralf Schwarzer & Ute Schulz  
Cite instrument as: Ralf Schwarzer & Ute Schulz. (2013) . Berlin Social Support Scales (BSSS) . Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Science. Retrieved from [www.midss.ie](http://www.midss.ie)



## Berlin Social Support Scales (BSSS), Ralf Schwarzer & Ute Schulz (2000)

(Originally designed for Coping with Cancer Surgery Settings)

### Endorsements (for all BSSS scales):

(1) *strongly disagree* (2) *somewhat disagree* (3) *somewhat agree* (4) *strongly agree*

### Perceived Emotional Support, Perceived Instrumental Support, Need for Support & Support Seeking

*Please think of persons who are close to you.*

	<b><i>Perceived Emotional Support</i></b>
1.	There are some people who truly like me.
2.	Whenever I am not feeling well, other people show me that they are fond of me.
3.	Whenever I am sad, there are people who cheer me up.
4.	There is always someone there for me when I need comforting.
	<b><i>Perceived Instrumental Support</i></b>
1.	I know some people upon whom I can always rely.
2.	When I am worried, there is someone who helps me.
3.	There are people who offer me help when I need it.
4.	When everything becomes too much for me to handle, others are there to help me.
	<b><i>Need for Support</i></b>
1.	When I am down, I need someone who boosts my spirits.
2.	It is important for me always to have someone who listens to me.
3.	Before making any important decisions, I absolutely need a second opinion.
4.	I get along best without any outside help. (-)
	<b><i>Support Seeking</i></b>
1.	In critical situations, I prefer to ask others for their advice.
2.	Whenever I am down, I look for someone to cheer me up again.
3.	When I am worried, I reach out to someone to talk to.
4.	If I do not know how to handle a situation, I ask others what they would do.
5.	Whenever I need help, I ask for it.

*Please note that in the 2001 cancer surgery study these items were presented in a mixed order. The present listing by scale has been chosen for clarity.*

## Actually Received Support, Recipient

*Think about the person who is closest to you, such as your spouse, partner, child, friend, and so on. How did this person react to you during this past week?*

Items	Type of Received Support
1. The person showed me that he/she loves and accepts me.	emotional
2. This person comforted me when I was feeling bad.	emotional
3. <i>This person left me alone. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
4. <i>This person did not show much empathy for my situation. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
5. <i>This person criticized me. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
6. This person made me feel valued and important.	emotional
7. This person expressed concern about my condition.	emotional
8. This person assured me that I can rely completely on him/her.	emotional
9. This person encouraged me not to give up.	emotional
10. This person was there when I needed him/her.	instrumental
11. This person took care of many things for me.	instrumental
12. This person took care of things I could not manage on my own.	instrumental
13. This person helped me find something positive in my situation.	informational
14. This person suggested activities that might distract me.	informational

*Please note that in the 2001 cancer surgery study these items were presented in a mixed order. The present listing has been chosen for clarity.*

### Satisfaction with Support Receipt (Recipient only)

In general, I am very satisfied with the way this person behaved.

*Note: Negative items have not been used in the original 2001 cancer surgery study.*

## Actually Provided Support, Provider (for a Male Recipient)

*Now think about the patient. How did you interact with him during this past week?*

Items	Type of Provided Support
1. I showed him how much I cherish and accept him.	emotional
2. I comforted him when he was feeling bad.	emotional
3. <i>I left him alone. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
4. <i>I did not have much empathy for him. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
5. <i>I criticized him. (-)</i>	<i>emotional</i>
6. I made him feel valued and important.	emotional
7. I expressed my concern about his condition.	emotional
8. I reassured him that he can rely completely on me.	emotional
9. I encouraged him not to give up.	emotional
10. I was there when he needed me.	instrumental
11. I did a lot for him.	instrumental
12. I took care of daily duties that he could not fulfill on his own.	instrumental
13. I helped him find something positive in his situation.	informational
14. I suggested an activity that might distract him.	informational

## Protective Buffering Scale: Support Provider/Support Recipient

### Items

I kept all bad news from him/her.
I avoided everything that could upset him/her.
I showed strength in his/her presence.
I did not let him/her notice how bad and depressed I really felt.
I avoided any criticism.
I pretended to be very strong, although I did not feel that way.

*Note: Different forms for men and women were used in the cancer study*