

GAD-7 Documentation Cheat Sheet

Reviewed by the BastionGPT Clinical Advisory Board · August 2026

The GAD-7 is a seven-item anxiety severity measure scored 0 to 21 over the past two weeks, free to reproduce under the official PHQ Screeners terms. The score is a severity screen and a trend, never a diagnosis: the scale measures two weeks, and the GAD diagnosis requires about six months of hard-to-control worry established by interview.

Instrument and administration context is data

Do: record GAD-7 vs GAD-2, mode (paper, portal, interview), language, and any assistance.

Pitfall: ignoring drift; instruction emphasis alone moved scores 2.63 points in a 2026 randomized study.

Total and band four bands, over 21

Do: write the fraction and band: 0-4 minimal, 5-9 mild, 10-14 moderate, 15-21 severe.

Pitfall: importing PHQ-9 bands or calling 15 moderate; 15 begins the severe band.

Functional item unscored, still recorded

Do: record the difficulty answer beside the total.

Pitfall: an eighth scored item; the validated range stays 0 to 21.

Trajectory points, percent, construct

Do: name the baseline, then both numbers; MCID ~4, reliable change ~6, registry response 25%, research response 50%.

Pitfall: one universal change number, or "improved" with no baseline named.

Interpretation bridge two weeks to six months

Do: state severity plus concordance; for a new GAD diagnosis, document duration by history.

Pitfall: diagnosis from the score; a third of above-threshold patients failed the duration element alone.

What the scale missed low score rules out nothing

Do: say how panic, trauma, social anxiety, and safety were assessed when they are in the picture.

Pitfall: "anxiety ruled out" from a low total; pooled sensitivity at 10 is about 0.74, and there is no self-harm item.

Plan linkage and next measurement no orphaned scores

Do: state what continues or changes because of the result, and date the next administration.

Pitfall: citing every-session administration as a rule; it is a program convention, not a steward requirement.

Before the note is signed

- ☐ Instrument named: GAD-7 or GAD-2
- ☐ Mode and language recorded, drift flagged
- ☐ Total written over 21 with the correct band
- ☐ Functional item recorded, kept out of the total
- ☐ Change stated in points and percent vs named baseline
- ☐ Duration bridged by interview for any new GAD diagnosis
- ☐ Safety assessed separately; never inferred from this scale

Drafting with AI

Give it the score facts: total, prior score and date, functional answer, paired PHQ-9, and the plan decision.

"Draft GAD-7 documentation: 14/21 at intake today by portal, PHQ-9 5/27, nine months of daily worry by history, starting weekly CBT."

Never paste client-identifying information into consumer AI tools. BastionGPT is HIPAA-compliant with a signed BAA on every plan.

0 to 21

four severity bands

2 to 5 chart lines

typical documentation

Under 2 minutes

patient completion

Free to reproduce

official PHQ Screeners terms

GAD-7 Documentation Template

Copy or print for your practice · Adapt fields to your organization's, payer's and jurisdiction's documentation requirements.

Practice/clinic: Patient (initials): Date administered:

Instrument: GAD-7 / GAD-2: Language: Mode: paper / portal / interview:

Score

Total ___/21 · band: minimal 0-4, mild 5-9, moderate 10-14, severe 15-21 · notable individual items

Functional difficulty (unscored)

Patient's answer: not difficult / somewhat / very / extremely difficult · kept out of the total

Trajectory and change

Baseline score and date · change in points and percent · construct claimed: MCID about 4 / reliable change about 6 / response per named convention / remission below 5 as local convention

Paired measures this visit

PHQ-9 ___/27 or n/a · one integrated interpretation for both domains, not duplicate narratives

Interpretation

Severity plus concordance with interview and function · for a new GAD diagnosis: duration bridge, two weeks measured vs about six months required · discrepancies explained

Not assessed by this scale

Panic, trauma, social anxiety, safety: how each was addressed · no self-harm item exists on the GAD-7

Plan linkage and next measurement

What continues, changes, or is deferred and why · next administration date and reason

Clinician (name and credentials): Signature: Date: