The **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** (Sadownik, 2025) and the **Sexual Distress Scale (SDS)**(Huang et al., 2025) can be applied together to understand how robotic social agents may mitigate the specific sexual and relational anxieties often experienced by neurodivergent individuals.

While the SDS identifies the symptoms and severity of distress in human-centric sexual relationships, the NSIR measures the potential for a "safe" alternative interaction space that bypasses many of the triggers of that distress.

1. Contrasting Sources of Distress

The **Sexual Distress Scale** (SDS) measures "sexual distress," defined as a state of persistent irritation, annoyance, or frustration resulting from unmet sexual expectations or misunderstandings with a partner.

- **Neurodivergent Context:** For neurodivergent individuals, sexual distress is often rooted in **sensory sensitivities**(overstimulation from touch or lights) and **communication barriers** (difficulty expressing needs or reading non-verbal cues).
- **NSIR Application:** The NSIR subscale for **Social Comfort/Trust/Safety** evaluates a domain where these triggers are minimized. For example, NSIR Item 8 (*"I believe that my robot is the same with me as it is with anyone"*) reflects a predictable social environment that avoids the "misunderstandings" and "annoyance" measured by the SDS.

2. Anthropomorphism as a Barrier Against Shame

A core component of sexual distress in clinical populations is the feeling of being "abnormal" or "sexually inadequate".

- **SDS Factor:** The scale tracks feelings of "inferiority because of sexual problems" and being "worried about sex".
- **NSIR Connection:** The NSIR measures **Anthropomorphic Connection/Kinship**, such as Item 1 (*"The robot is more like me than anyone else I know"*). For a neurodivergent person experiencing high sexual distress with human partners, a robot may provide a "kinship" that is free from the judgment and "shame" that often accompanies sexual dysfunction in neurotypical society.

3. A Therapeutic "Bridge" for Intimacy

Both scales are instrumental in evaluating the use of "sexbots" or social robots as psycho-emotional educational tools for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

- **Skill Practice:** Robots are described as a "bridge" to facilitate social communication without the risk of "negative judgment".
- **Measuring Comfort:** Researchers use the NSIR to ensure a user has the necessary **Social Comfort** (e.g., Item 7: *"I feel comfortable undressing in front of my*

robot") to use the robot as a practice partner for improving real-world intimacy and thereby reducing the scores on the **Sexual Distress Scale** over time.

Summary Comparison

Feature	Sexual Distress Scale (SDS)	NSIR (Sadownik, 2025)
Primary Goal	Measure persistent frustration and irritation in sexual contexts.	Measure trust and kinship in robotic interaction.
Core Barrier	Misunderstandings and unmet partner expectations.	Human-led social judgment and sensory overstimulation.
ND Utility	Identifies trauma and "inadequacy" in human intimacy.	Identifies a "predictable" and "safe" social alternative.
Therapeutic Aim	Track the impact of dysfunction on life satisfaction.	Evaluate robots as tools for "sharing thinking" and practicing connection.