

CANS Executive Summary

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision making, including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services. Versions of the CANS are currently used in 25 states in child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, and early intervention applications. A comprehensive, multi-system version exists as well.

The CANS was developed from a communication perspective so as to facilitate the linkage between the assessment process and the design of individualized service plans including the application of evidence-based practices. The CANS is easy to learn and is well liked by parents, providers and other partners in the services system because it is easy to understand and does not necessarily require scoring in order to be meaningful to an individual child and family. The way the CANS works is that each item suggests different pathways for service planning. There are four levels of each item with anchored definitions; however, these definitions are designed to translate into the following action levels (separate for needs and strengths):

For needs:

1. No evidence
2. Watchful waiting/prevention
3. Action
4. Immediate/Intensive Action

For strengths:

1. Centerpiece strength
2. Strength that you can use in planning
3. Strength has been identified-must be built
4. No strength identified

Decision support applications include the development of specific algorithms for levels of care including treatment foster care, residential treatment, intensive community services, and traditional outpatient care. Algorithms can be localized for sensitivity to varying service delivery systems and cultures. The applications of CANS-based decision algorithms have documented dramatic impacts on service system. In Illinois, use of a simple decision model for residential treatment resulted in savings of approximately \$80 million per year in residential treatment in the late 1990's. In Philadelphia, their use of a decision model for Treatment Foster Care reduced lengths of stay dramatically and saved the city \$11 million in the first year of use.

In terms of quality improvement activities, a number of settings have utilized a fidelity model approach to look at service/treatment/action planning based on the CANS assessment. A rating of '2' or '3' on a CANS needs suggests that this area must be addressed in the plan. A rating of a '0' or '1' identifies a strength that can be used for strength-based planning and a '2' or '3' a strength that should be the focus on strength-building activities.

Finally, the CANS can be used to monitor outcomes. This can be accomplished in two ways. First, items that are initially rated a '2' or '3' are monitored over time to determine the percent of youth who move to a rating of '0' or '1' (resolved need, built strength). Or, dimension scores can be generated by summing items within each of the dimensions (Problems, Risk Behaviors, Functioning, etc). These scores can be compared over the course of treatment. CANS dimension scores have been shown to be valid outcome measures in residential treatment, intensive community treatment, foster care and treatment foster care, community mental health, and juvenile justice programs.

The CANS has demonstrated reliability and validity. With training, anyone with a bachelor's degree can learn to complete the tool reliably, although some applications require a higher degree. The average reliability of the CANS is 0.75 with vignettes, 0.84 with case records, and can be above 0.90 with live cases. The CANS is auditable and audit reliabilities demonstrate that the CANS is reliable at the item level. Validity is demonstrated with the CANS relationship to level of care decisions and other similar measures of symptoms, risk behaviors, and functioning.

The CANS is an open domain tool that is free for anyone to use. There is a community of people who use the various versions of the CANS and share experiences and additional items and supplementary tools.

SIX KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMMUNIMETRIC TOOL

1. Items are selected based on relevance to planning.
2. Action levels for all items
3. Consider culture and development before establishing the action level
4. Agnostic as to etiology—descriptive, no cause and effect
5. About the child, not about the service. Rate needs when masked by interventions.
6. Specific ratings window (e.g. 30 days) can be over-ridden based on action levels

For more information:

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Source: The Praed Foundation website: <http://www.praedfoundation.org>; "About the CANS"

WISCONSIN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT NEEDS AND STRENGTHS (CANS) - COMPREHENSIVE

Name – Child/Youth			DOB	Court File Number
Effective Date	Age at Time of Assessment	Assessment Type	Current Caregiver	

TRAUMA	0	1	2	3
Sexual Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a. Emotional Closeness to Perpetrator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Frequency of Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Duration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Reaction to Disclosure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neglect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Trauma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural Disaster	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Witness to Family Violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Witness to Community Violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Witness/Victim - Criminal Acts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjustment to Trauma	0	1	2	3
Adjustment to Trauma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traumatic Grief/Separation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intrusions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attachment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissociation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

LIFE FUNCTIONING	0	1	2	3
Family - Nuclear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family - Extended	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living Situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developmental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a. Cognitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Autism Spectrum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Self Care/Daily Living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a. Life Threat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Chronicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Diagnostic Complexity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Emotional Response	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Impairment in Functioning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Treatment Involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Intensity of Treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Organizational Complexity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily Functioning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Functioning - Peer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Functioning - Adult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a. Seriousness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. History	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Arrests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Community Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Legal Compliance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Peer Influences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Parental Criminal Behavior (Influences)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Environmental Influences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eating Disturbance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sleep	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expectant Parent/Parenting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SCHOOL	0	1	2	3
Attendance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relation with Teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

CHILD/YOUTH & FAMILY ACCULTURATION	0	1	2	3
Language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ritual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge Congruence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help seeking Congruence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expression of Distress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

CHILD/YOUTH BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS	0	1	2	3
Psychosis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impulse/Hyperactivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Depression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oppositional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anger Control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somatization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Behavioral Regression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affect Dysregulation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

CHILD/YOUTH RISK BEHAVIORS	0	1	2	3
Suicide Risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self Injurious Behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Self Harm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exploited	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Danger to Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual Aggression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delinquent Behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Runaway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a. Frequency of Running	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Consistency of Destination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Safety of Destination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Involvement in Illegal Acts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Likelihood of Return on Own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Involvement of Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Realistic Expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intentional Misbehavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

WISCONSIN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT NEEDS AND STRENGTHS (CANS) - COMPREHENSIVE

Name – Child/Youth			DOB	Court File Number
Effective Date	Age at Time of Assessment	Assessment Type	Current Caregiver	

CHILD/YOUTH STRENGTHS	0	1	2	3
Relationship Permanence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family - Nuclear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family - Extended	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive Peer Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Optimism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision Making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well Being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vocational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talents/Interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual/Religious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural Supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resiliency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resourcefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

CURRENT CAREGIVER	0	1	2	3
Supervision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement with Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy with Child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developmental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Congruence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

IDENTIFIED PERMANENT RESOURCE STRENGTHS & NEEDS	0	1	2	3
Residential Stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to Child Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acculturation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Connect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement with Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy with Child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developmental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Congruence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>