# Assessing Needs, Strengths, and Progress

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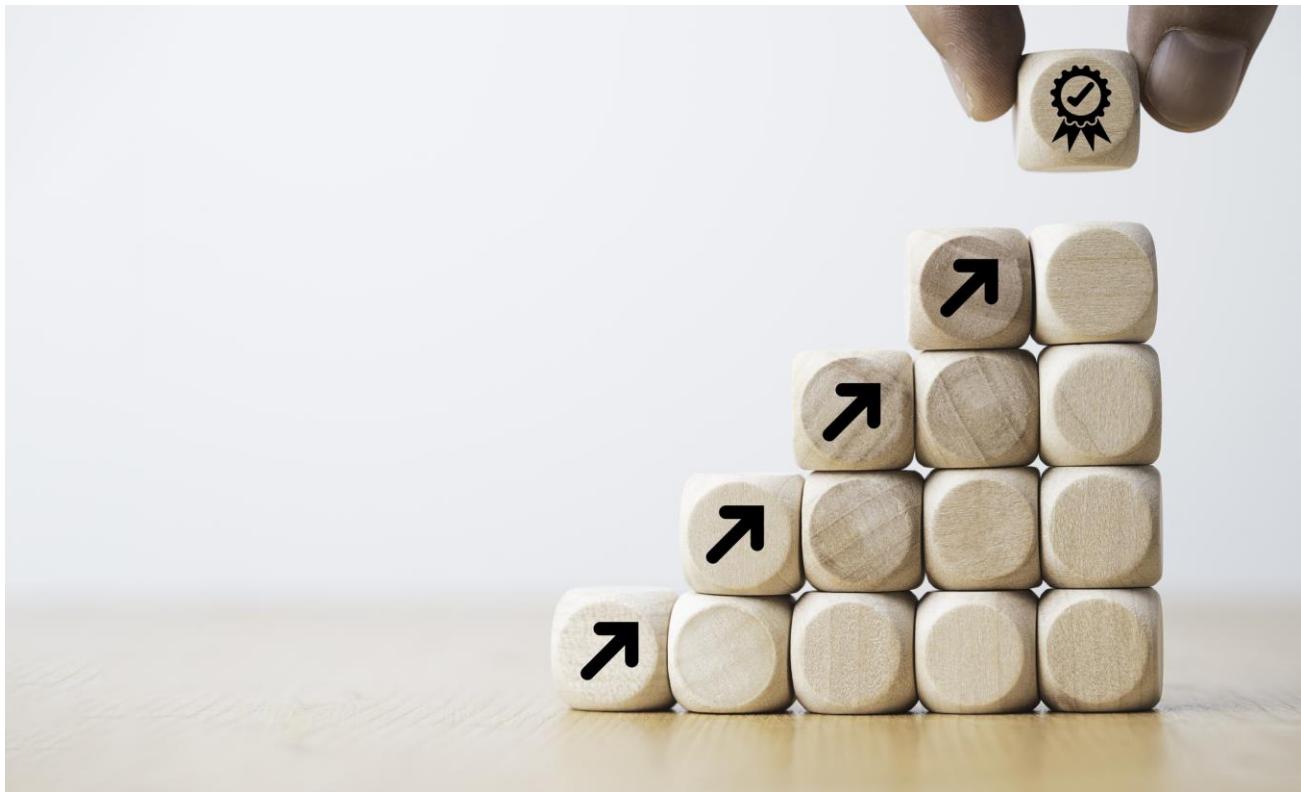
# Requirement

**O.R.C. 121.37(c)(7):**

*A Procedure for assessing the needs and strengths of any child or family that has been referred to the council for service coordination, including a child whose parent or custodian is voluntarily seeking services, and for ensuring that parents and custodians are afforded the opportunity to participate*

The County **Service Coordination Mechanism** must describe a procedure to be followed by all persons or entities providing Service Coordination/High Fidelity Wrapround on behalf of the FCFC to assure a consistent approach is applied to the assessment of the strengths, needs, and cultural discovery of the child and family.

The **assessment tool** must contain the following elements for evaluation, but not limited to:

- Life Functioning/Independent Living
- Child Strengths
- Behavorial/Emotional Needs
- School
- Child Risk Behaviors

- Developmental Needs
- Trauma
- Juvenile Justice Needs
- Substance Abuse Need
- Vocational/Employment Need

**Steps to Utilizing the Assessment:**

1. **Engagement and Team Preparation**

Family meets Service Coordinator, Youth Partner and/or Family Partner. Together they explore the family's strengths, needs and culture. They talk about what has worked in the past, and what to expect from the process.

- See assessment prompts handout

# Essential Steps to Engage with assessments

- Completion of a strengths discovery and assessment

- Completion of a list of strengths for all family members

- Discussion and list of existing and potential natural supports

- Completion of a list of potential team members

- Completion of the assessment narrative document that summarizes context, strengths, needs, vision for the future, and supports

- Review CANS and assessment with youth and family and draw relationship between youth and family perspective and CANS items

- Begin to complete Crisis & Safety Plan

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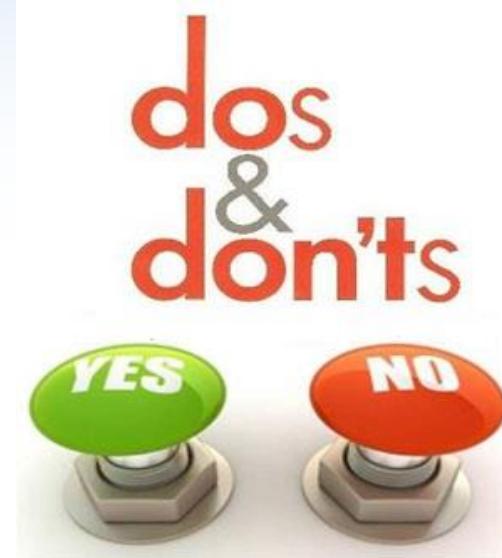
✓ Complete a full baseline assessment using information from the family's story, combined with input from other sources (records, case files, referral information, relevant potential team members

✓ Complete the assessment within 30 days of the referral to keep the outcome relevant and in present time

✓ Make sure immediate actionable needs are considered for the initial crisis/safety plans

✗ DONT administer the assessment item by item like a survey to family

✗ DON'T prepopulate a plan of Care with the assessment items BEFORE the team meeting process

Estep, K., Lyons, J.S., Bruns, E.J., & Zabel, M.D. (2019). Effectively Integrating the CANS into the Wraparound Process. Baltimore, MD: National Technical Assistance Network for Children's Behavioral Health.

# Steps to Utilizing the Assessment:

## 2. Planning

Team members learn about the family's strengths, needs, and vision for the future. Team creates a team mission, decides what to work on in the Plan of Care, how the work will be accomplished, and who is responsible for what. A plan is developed to manage crises that may occur.

# Essential Steps to PLAN with assessments

- Coordinator convenes meetings to discuss and draw agreement on the elements of the care plan

- The team reviews and expands the list of strengths for the youth and family

- The team reviews the list of needs, adds to it, and agrees which to prioritize in the initial plan

- The team determines intended outcomes that are measurable and that will transpire when the needs are met

- The team brainstorms strategies to meet these needs, and then prioritizes strategies for each need

- The team members receive assignments, or action steps, around implementing the strategies. The team evaluates and adds to the crisis plan

✓ Use the assessment results to help brainstorm strategies for the plan of care

✓ Use the assessment items as an option for monitoring progress toward addressing needs in initial plan development

✗ DONT develop TOO many underlying needs and strategies, no matter how many actionable CANS items emerge.

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# Steps to Utilizing the Assessment

3. **Implementation**

   Family and Team members meet regularly. Team reviews accomplishments and progress toward goals, and makes adjustments. Family and team members work together to implement the plan.  Assessments are updated every 90 days

# Essential Steps to IMPLEMENT with assessments

- The Service Coordination/Wraparound team continues to meet regularly to evaluate progress towards meeting needs, and the effectiveness of indicated strategies

- The team evaluates whether there is progress towards the designated outcomes

- The team celebrates successes, and adjusts the outcomes to guide next steps

- The team adjusts strategies to meet changes in the needs and outcomes. The team adds, subtracts and modifies strategies to create the most effective mix

- The team adds members, and strives to create a mix of formal, informal, and natural supports

- The team celebrates successes and adds to strengths as needed

- Assessments are administered every three months to help track progress and to catch emerging needs

✓ Check on progress at each meeting, and satisfaction around strategies based on the assessment items that have been integrated into the care plan

✓ Use completed items as the basis for celebration, along with progress in meeting mission, family vision, needs, and outcomes.

✗ DONT ask the family to complete an assessment by another interview at every follow up assessment point – but rather gather information on progress

✗ DON'T spend the entire team meeting reviewing the assessment items.



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# Steps to Utilizing the Assessment

**4. Transition**

As the team nears its goals, preparations are made for the youth and family to transition out of formal Wraparound. Youth, family and team decide how family will continue to get support when needed, and how Wraparound can be "restarted" if necessary.

# Essential Steps to TRANSITION with assessments

- Review the team mission

- Review CANS scores

- Review underlying context/conditions that brought family to the system in the first place to determine if situation has changed

- Solicits all team members about their sense of progress made

- Highlight needs that are met

- Youth, family and team discuss what life will look like after Service Coordination

- Identify who will continue to be involved

- Create or assign rehearsals or drills with a "what if" approach

- Formalizes structured for follow-up

- Creates a celebration or commencement ritual appropriate to family & team

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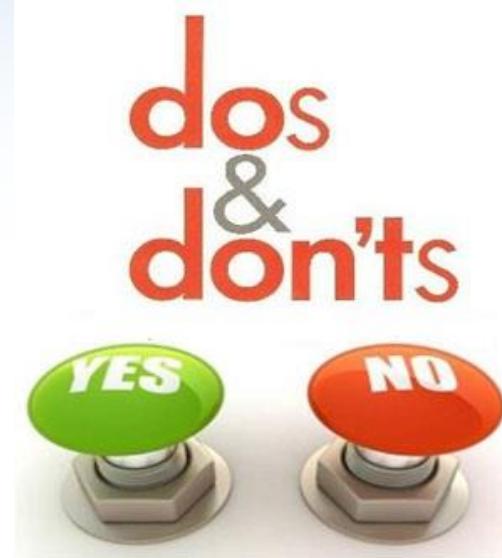
✓ Ensure warm handoffs are provided if needed

✓ Track and celebrate all families' success around progress toward the family's vision, strength development, achieving outcomes, and addressing underlying needs.

✗ DONT use change in assessment results as the <u>only</u> indicator of readiness for transition

✗ DON'T mistake a reduced number of actionable assessment items as an indicator of transition. Sometimes the presence of just a few actionable items could represent significant strain for families needing ongoing support.



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# Handouts

## Effectively Integrating the CANS into the Wraparound Process

*A joint statement from: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, The National Wraparound Initiative (NWI), The National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC), and The John Praed Foundation*

### INTRODUCTION

The Wraparound process is the most common practice model focused on coordination of services and supports for children and youth with complex behavioral health needs. Meanwhile, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is now the most widely used assessment tool in public systems serving children and families. Given the increasing number of states and systems using both approaches, it is increasingly common for the CANS to be mandated for use within Wraparound programs around the country.

In states and systems that use both approaches, the CANS is typically used system-wide to determine service eligibility and monitor outcomes for a broad population of youth presenting with behavioral health needs, while Wraparound is reserved for youth with multi-system involvement and/or the most serious and persistent needs. Some states, systems, and provider organizations have determined how the Wraparound process and the CANS

assessment — and its Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) philosophy — can co-exist and even enhance each other. However, others have struggled, undermining the positive impact of both implementation efforts.

It is our perspective that these tensions arise mostly from misunderstandings of how the two strategies should be implemented, both individually and collectively. As such, Chapin Hall and NWIC have teamed up to develop the current joint statement, which aims to provide guidance on how to effectively coordinate the CANS assessment within a well-implemented Wraparound process. The document begins with a brief summary of how subtle differences in the Wraparound and TCOM philosophies may raise "operational frictions" and problems in practice. We go on to describe potential ways to effectively coordinate the CANS assessment with Wraparound practice across the four phases of Wraparound.

### PERCEIVED PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES AND 'OPERATIONAL FRICTIONS'

The CANS aims to be more than an assessment tool. Its underlying theory of Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) refers to continuously aligning the work of all persons with the identified strengths and needs of children and families at all levels of the system. In the TCOM philosophy, consensus ratings by multiple informants across a consistent and comprehensive set of items ("strengths" and "needs") help achieve consensus-based assessment — a common language framework that aids system understanding of presenting issues, impact, and effectiveness across multiple levels (family, program, system).

Somewhat contrasting, Wraparound's core values include being family- and youth-driven, team-based, and individualized.

These principles lead Wraparound practice to emphasize "idiographic" (rather than standardized) assessment that

is individualized to the family. Examples include a recorded narrative of the family story (how, in its own words, the family came to be enrolled in an intensive Wraparound process); construction of a

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vision of the future that provides an often metaphorical statement describing what positive transformation will look like for the family; and a manageable number of needs statements (different from "needs items" on the CANS), which describe the longstanding underlying conditions that have led to the problematic events or behaviors and around which all planning and strategizing are focused.

# Assessment Prompts

**Parents**
- What do you hope to gain from our time together?
- Tell me about your family.
- What do you see as your and your family's strengths?
- What do you see as your three priority needs/goals?
- Where do you see your family in two years (goals, hopes, plans etc...)?
- What is a typical day like in your home?
- What do you like best about your family?
- What does your family like to do together?
- What is important to you (expectations)?
- What do you think you need to have a better life?
- What barriers do you see for your family to have a better life?
- What is the relationship like between siblings?
- Family composition (who do you consider your family-include names and pets).
- Support for family (who do you call for help "friends, relatives, neighbors").
- What Professional supports do you currently receive?
- Are there any financial needs in the family?
- Who do you call when times are tough or when you need something? How do they help you?
- What do you use for transportation? If no transportation, how do you get to places?
- How do you communicate with each other (respectfully/yelling/profanity/is the house loud, arguing daily, etc.)?
- Who makes the decisions in your home?
- What is your parenting style?
- Tell me a little about your neighborhood and living arrangements – do you have any concerns?
- Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? Why or why not?
- Are there any safety concerns in the home?
- What does a crisis look like for you and how often does it happen?

**Youth**
- Tell me about your family. What do you like most about your family?
- Is there anyone you don't get along with and why?
- What do you need to have a better life?
- Have you ever been in danger? Tell me a little about that
- What is a typical day in your home?
- What do you like best about your family?
- What do you like most that you do with your family?
- Do you have any heroes? Why are they your hero?
- What are you interested in?
- What do you do for fun?
- Who is important to you such as friends or family?
- Do you have any friends, and do what do you like to do with your friends?
- What do you want to be when you're an adult?
- How is school going?
- Do you have a favorite subject? Do you have a favorite teacher? Who?
- Do you feel school is important?
- Tell me about your neighborhood
- Does your home feel like safe?
- What do you feel you can improve on?
- How do you think others would describe you?

**Providers**
- What are you currently working on with the child and family?
- What progress has been made? Any barriers?
- What do you see as the child and family strengths?
- What do you think the family needs are?
- What would you like to see the family gain from service coordination?