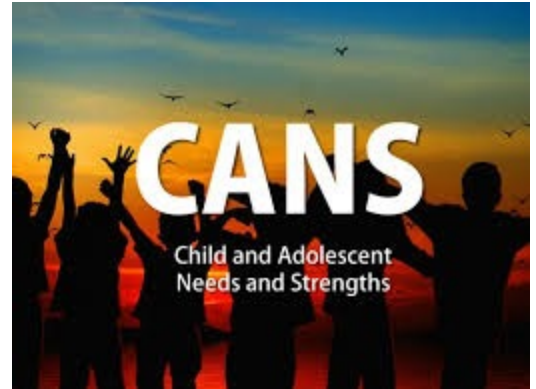




# YOUTH ERA

## -Introducing CANS: A Guide for Youth-

**What is CANS?** The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment is a multi-purpose communication tool created for youth services to support planning and decision making. CANS is also used by OHA (Oregon Health Authority) and other agencies to monitor outcomes of services. The CANS was developed to be a universal communication tool that system partners, youth, and family and natural supports can all contribute to and understand. The CANS training that is delivered to Care coordinators, youth partners, and system partners has been developed in collaboration with Oregon Health Authority, Portland State University, Youth Era, and Oregon Family Support Network.



**What does CANS do for me?** The CANS tool helps identify Strengths and Needs. Unlike any other tool, CANS looks at several life domains (i.e., youth strengths, life functioning, behavioral/emotional needs, cultural considerations, etc.) with the intent to highlight all the strengths and underline the needs that must be addressed. This is a strengths-based tool that focuses on helping meet youth and family's needs while using the identified strengths.

**What does CANS have to do with Wraparound and my team?** The care coordinator collaborates with the wraparound team to fill out the CANS assessment. They will get feedback from every team member including you and your wraparound youth partner (if you have one). This tool will capture your strengths and needs that will guide the planning process in wraparound and the plan of care for you and your family.

**Who will be doing the CANS and how will I say informed?** The care coordinator will be administering the tool with input from the team. Youth and Family Partners are also trained and certified on the CANS assessment tool. The CANS tool and Wraparound Process align with the two principles of wraparound: Youth Voice and Choice, and Nothing about us without us. You can be as involved as you would like and you will have access to the tool and results as well.

**Does CANS decide everything that we work on?** The CANS is used to inform the wraparound process, it is not the ultimate deciding factor. Youth Voice and Choice still is the priority over the CANS assessment tool. The CANS is used to guide the planning process and track progress along the way.



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## Tips on Understanding the CANS and Getting Involved in the Process

**CANS:** This will be done at the beginning of the Wraparound process and will continue to be updated and adjusted throughout the wraparound process. As things change so will the ratings in the assessment, this means progress! Things are ever-changing and new things happen which is why this is a working document throughout the wraparound process. CANS ratings can be used to showcase all the progress and change happening in the wraparound process, and updates can be made every 90 days or after major life events and lastly transitions.

**Rating:** There are different sections within eight different life domains that will be rated in the CANS assessment tool. *Ratings* range between 0 and 3.

Needs ratings at 0 means that there is no evidence of a need in that specific setting and no action is required. For example, the “cultural identity” section in the “cultural considerations” domain focuses on *the youth’s view of self and belonging to a specific cultural group*. With a rating of 0, it’s understood that there’s no action needed because the youth is connected to their cultural identity and is supported by others. Next, a need rated at 1 signifies a history of need that simply requires watchful waiting. If anything in the Needs section is rated above 1 then we will make a plan around it. This rating means that we need to make a plan to ensure safety and plan for possible crisis situations.

Strength ratings are flipped, meaning the rating and appropriate action corresponds differently than in the needs ratings. So, A strength that’s rated at 2 (*aka identified strength*) or 3 (*aka no evidence of strength*) means that it requires strength building and development so that it can help meet needs in the future. Next, a strength rated at 0 signifies that the strength is powerful and is central to planning (both in the Plan of Care and the safety and crisis plan) because the strength is developed and can help meet needs. Finally, a strength rated at 1 means that it is useful and there is an opportunity for it to further develop for use in planning.



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**Example:** *Carla loves to play basketball. She uses this sport to make friends and keep busy when she is stressed out and it helps with her anxiety. In the CANS, this strength would be rated a 0. Carla would like more access to basketball because it helps her. Now, come the time to look at the CANS and create a plan of care, we know we want to add Carla's love for basketball and her ability to socialize and use it as a way to work through her anxiety and stress. This is a well-developed strength.*

## Needs and Strengths Rating Guide

Needs				Strengths			
	Rating	Level of Need	Action Level		Rating	Level of Strength	Action Level
	0	No evidence of need	No action needed		0	Centerpiece strength	Central to planning
	1	Suspicion or history of need	Keep an eye on it or collect more information		1	Strength present	Useful in planning
	2	Need interferes with functioning	Take action/intervention needed		2	Identified strength	Needs building or development
	3	Intensive need, dangerous or disabling	Immediate and/or intensive action		3	No strength identified	Strength creation or identification may be indicated

**Planning Process:** Once the CANS ratings are made and needs are identified, the planning process begins. This team-based process involves creating a plan around specific needs, and this plan will be incorporated in the Plan of Care.



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## Common Terms and Lingo

- ★ **CANS:** Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment.
- ★ **Ratings:** Are on scales of 0-3 for Needs and 3-0 for Strengths.
- ★ **Team:** Consist of the people who sit on your wraparound team including members such as; Juvenile Justice, DHS, Family, Care Coordinator, Mental Health, Education and Natural supports.
- ★ **Plan of Care:** A dynamic document that describes the youth and family, the team, and the work to be undertaken to meet the family's needs, achieve the team mission and work toward the youth and family's long-term vision.
- ★ **Need:** Anything that is necessary, but lacking. A need is a condition requiring relief and something required or wanted. Needs are not considered services.
- ★ **Strengths:** the capacity or potential for effective action. They are a source of power and the ability to resist stress or strain. Strengths are pathways to solutions and ultimately resolve concerns.
- ★ **Outcomes:** Youth, family, and/or team goals stated in a way that can be observed and measured as indicators of progress related to addressing an identified need. Reflects the team's desired end result.

## What are the 6 Key Components of the CANS?

- (1) Items are included because they are relevant for planning and decision-making.
- (2) Items ratings translate into action levels.
- (3) Focus is on the youth's needs, not interventions or services that could mask a need.
- (4) Culture and development is considered before ratings/action levels are made.
- (5) It's about "what" the need is, not about "why" there is a need.
- (6) Specific rating window (30-days) can be overridden based on action levels.

**How can I access the CANS?** Talk to your Care Coordinator and/or your Wraparound Youth Support Partner about being able to see the CANS. Your Care Coordinator will be the one administering the CANS.

**Do I have a say in what goes into the CANS?** YES! You will have some time with your Care Coordinator to give feedback that will be added to the assessment. You will also have time to talk about some of the results as a team when the assessment has been completed.