

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)

Name of instrument	Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
Summary overview	<p>The CANS is the required uniform behavioral health assessment for Members under age 21 as part of the Child Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). The CANS, developed by John S. Lyons, PhD, was modified for use in Massachusetts. The CANS is a document that organizes clinical information collected during a behavioral health assessment in a consistent manner to improve communication among those involved in planning care for a child or adolescent. The CANS is also used as a decision-support tool to guide care planning, and to track changing strengths and needs over time.</p> <p>There are two forms of the Massachusetts CANS (“CANS Birth through Four” and “CANS Five through Twenty”).</p>
Publisher/source	The Buddin Praed Foundation Massachusetts-specific CANS is available through EOHHS.
Source contact information	www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth
Access information	Public domain
Pricing information	Free, in the public domain
How to obtain instrument	The CANS forms for completion on paper may be obtained at the CBHI web site, www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth .
Staff training needed	Clinicians who are required to use the CANS must pass an online CANS certification examination. Recertification is required every two years. Information on training can be found at https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us .
Time for administration	The CANS is required as part of the initial behavioral health assessment. The initial behavioral health assessment using the CANS for outpatient therapy is provided during a psychiatric diagnostic interview evaluation, which is billed with the CPT code 90801 with modifier HA. There is no specific session number during which the CANS needs to be completed; however, it needs to be completed “during a psychiatric diagnostic interview evaluation,” which typically takes place during the first few (1-2) sessions. (MBHP <i>Provider Alert</i> #39)
Scoring information	The CANS is an item-level tool; each domain is scored on a 4-point scale (0-3), and there is no total score.
Reporting information	Individual reports are not available. Once the data is entered in the Virtual Gateway, the completed tool can be printed to keep in the Member’s health record.
Languages available	English
Scales (if appropriate)	The following areas are addressed in the instrument: life functioning, behavioral/emotional needs, risk behaviors, caregiver resources and needs, acculturation, transition to adulthood, and child strengths.
Appropriate clinical population(s)	Services performing behavioral health assessments
Appropriate level(s) of care	Specific levels of care are required to utilize the CANS. Refer to MBHP’s Clinical Outcomes Management Protocol and MBHP <i>Alerts</i> #39 and #48.
Stand-alone instrument vs. system	Stand-alone instrument
Age range	Children and adolescents under age 21