

Comprehensive, Trauma-Informed Assessment Strategies:

Development and Use of the
*Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)- Trauma
Comprehensive version*

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NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

Why is Trauma-Informed Child and Family Assessment Important ?

Identify high risk children and families

Identify salient symptoms and needs for child and family

Support appropriate referrals to treatment

Help guide treatment goals

Help determine appropriate evidence-based interventions

Gather information not disclosed during an interview

Assess changes in symptoms over time

Support legal system in assessing children's safety/best interests

Identify systemic needs and strengths

Support sustainability in funding by tracking improvements

Development and Use of the CANS-Trauma: Need for Comprehensive Assessment Strategies for Child Trauma

Develop a “common language” to understand and communicate about the effects of trauma between families and providers

Gather information on multiple dimensions, including contextual factors and systems to support a child’s adaptation from trauma

Gather information on strengths for child, caregiver, other family subsystems and family to utilize in the context of treatment/service planning

Provide a structured framework for understanding complex needs and strengths associated with child trauma

Utilize assessment data in clinical decision-making, treatment planning, quality improvement and systems planning

Match appropriate type and level of services to child or family needs/strengths



An Integrated and Functional Assessment

A Comprehensive and Flexible Assessment Strategy

An Information Integration Tool

A Decision Support Tool

A Communication Tool

An Outcomes Management/Quality Improvement Tool

Action-oriented Treatment Planning Tool

A Prospective and Retrospective Rating Tool

The CANS Methodology

- Based on Total Clinical Outcomes Management (TCOM) philosophy: Identifies the 'shared vision' of the system(s): the health and well being of youth and families
- Item-level tool – responses to each item have implications for action
- Items translate immediately into action, without any need to calculate a total score or interpret
- It's about the *child*, not about the *service*
- It's about *what*, not *why*.

Total Clinical Outcomes Management (TCOM)

Application of the CANS at all levels:

- **Child and Family** – focus on child and family needs, open communication about areas of need and strength guide the intervention plan
- **Program** – New program development and program goals based on the aggregate needs/strengths of youth/families in the community, use in supervision, aggregate data to determine staff training needs; ask is my program working; is it addressing the most pressing needs of youth that come through the door?
- **Administrative and or Systems Level** – Communication between/across professionals working ; data to support the need for monies for specific programs or trainings

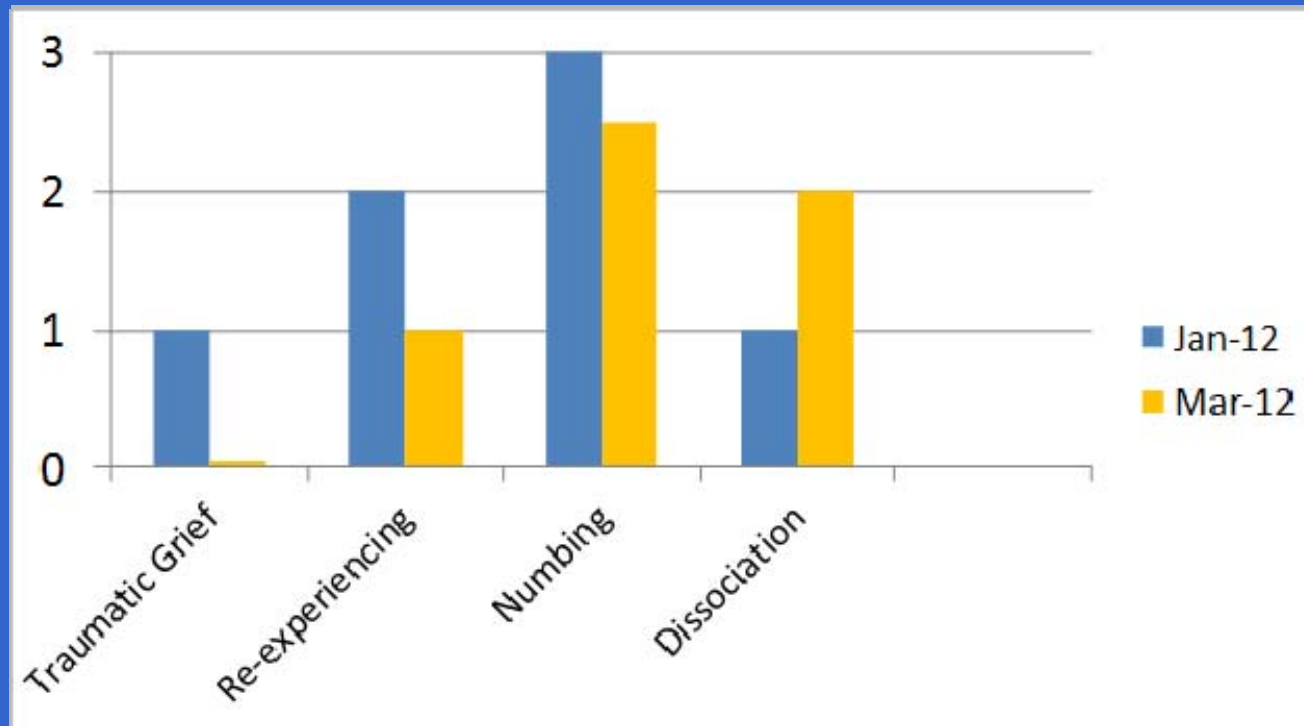
TCOM: Different stakes in our shared vision

- Individual child & family: a shared understanding of their needs & strengths, decreased suffering, increased strengths and progress moving through the system
- Therapist: interventions that will help my clients
- Program heads: referrals and staff investment
- Agency heads: data to support expenditure and justify requests for additional assistance
- State: rationale for maintenance of or increased support
- Federal Government: convinced that appropriated money is being used to meet policy expectations

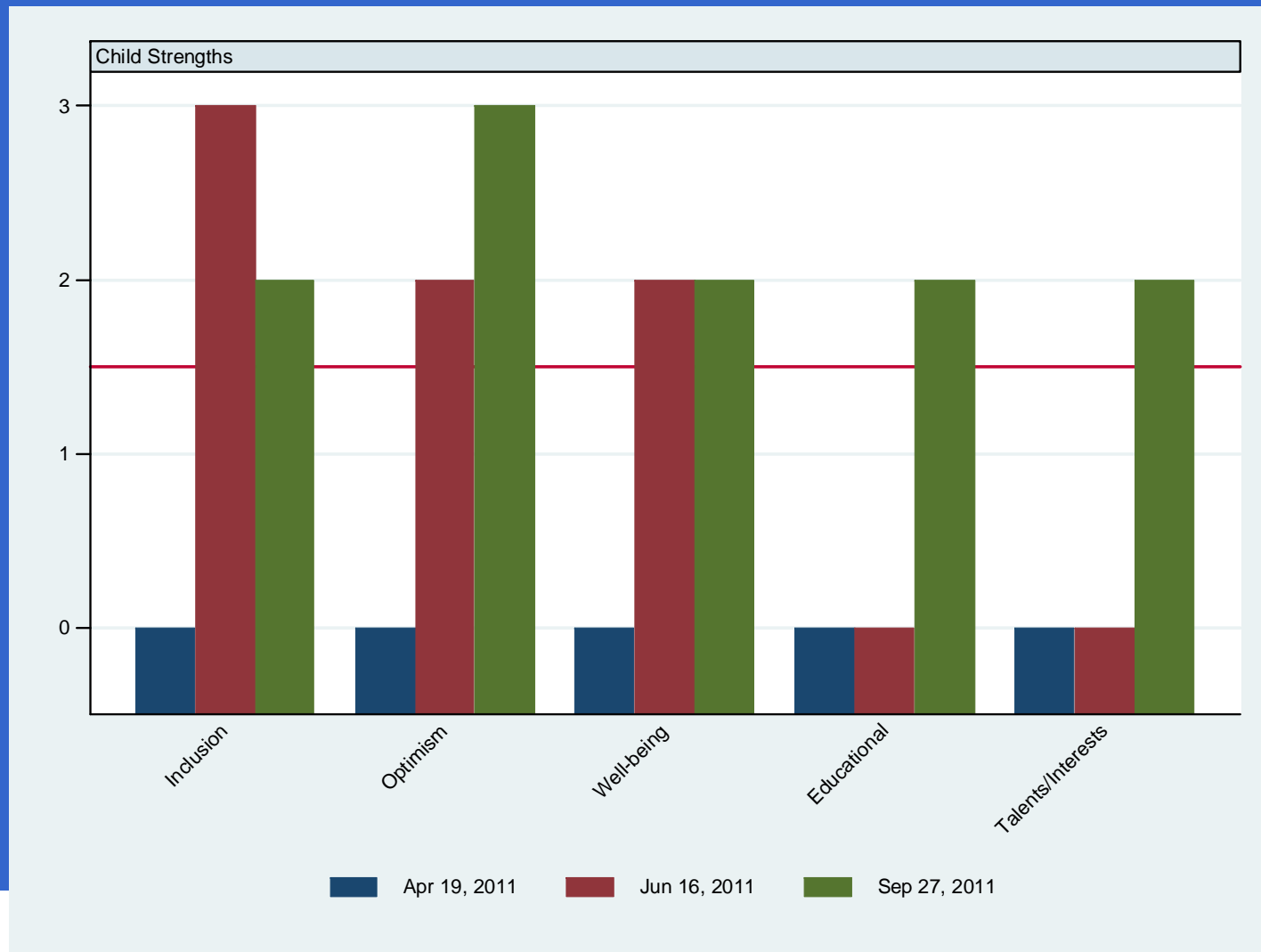
CANS Sample Individual 'Change' Reports

*Supporting outcomes management,
caregiver/family engagement, and
psychoeducation*

Sample Individual CANS Change Report- Traumatic Stress Symptoms







Sample Individual Client Change Report – Top 5 Items Child Strengths









Consumer Friendly "Thumbs" Report

- ✓ Strengths first
- ✓ Brief descriptors
- ✓ Accessible item labels

Improved Needs. Great job!

	4/1/11	5/24/11
Attention/Impulse – Trouble concentrating	 Needed Work (2)	 Got Better! (1)
Risk to Self – Dangerous behaviors towards yourself	 Needed Work (2)	 Got Better! (1)















Your Strengths. Keep it up!

	4/1/11	5/24/11
Stable Relationships – Consistency of relationships with family	 (1)	 (1)
Educational – Having a plan to stay in school	 (1)	 (1)
Optimism – Feeling positive about the future	 (1)	 (1)











NOTES & KEY

NEEDS: scores of 2 or 3 mean we have a challenge.
STRENGTHS: scores of 0 or 1 mean you are strong,
& scores of 2 or 3 means you have more potential.

Your Needs. You can do it!

	4/1/11	5/24/11
Controlling Emotions/Body Reactions – Whether your level of energy/emotion goes up & down	 (3)	 (3)
Depression/Anxiety – Whether you feel nervous or down	 (2)	 (2)
Adjustment to Trauma – How you are reacting now to bad past events	 (2)	 (2)
In All Situations – Whether you have challenges in one or many areas	 (2)	 (2)
Medical – Health problems	 (2)	 (2)
School Achievement – How well you are learning at school	 (2)	 (2)
School Behavior – How you act at school	 (2)	 (2)

Strengths That Are Weak. Potential!

	4/1/11	5/24/11
Family – How you are doing in your family	 (2)	 (2)
Interpersonal – Getting along with others	 (2)	 (2)
Well-being – Enjoying the good & coping with the bad	 (2)	 (2)
Talents/Interests – Hobbies/skills that you enjoy	 (2)	 (2)
Inclusion – Do you feel part of a group	 (2)	 (2)

CANS-Trauma Training and Certification

- Training and certification are required for the reliable usage of the CANS
- Training can be obtained online or in-person.

Online:

- CANS-Trauma Training Website: www.canstraining.com

In-Person:

- Contact Cassandra Kisiel, Ph.D. or Tracy Fehrenbach, Ph.D.
 - c-kisiel@northwestern.edu
 - t-fehrenbach@northwestern.edu

Thank You!

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