

What is the CANS Assessment & Why do it?

- CANS is the acronym for **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths**.
- It is a more **in-depth** assessment of needs and strengths and **completed in addition** to the usual mental health assessment (the Comprehensive Diagnostic Assessment) **when children and adolescents seek mental health services**.
- CANS asks **parents** to **provide a broader picture of the child or adolescents' needs and strengths** during the assessment.
- The CANS assessment is a **required part** of the individual assessment process for **Medicaid**.
- CANS is used in **all 50 states**
- **Topics** the CANS assessment asks about:
 - What are the youth's strengths? What do they do well?
 - How do the youth act at home, school, in the community?
 - Any past or current experiences of chronic stress or abuse, neglect, exploitation?
 - What are specific cultural experiences that may be contributing to their needs or strengths?
 - Are there any behavioral or emotional needs to require more support?
 - Are there any safety or risk behaviors that need attention and support?
 - Are there any specific life transition needs?
- **The information** given during the assessment **is used to support** the creation of a plan for treatment.

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