

How to use the CANSAS

What is the CANSAS?

The CANSAS is a tool for the comprehensive assessment of the needs of people with severe mental health problems. It is designed for research and clinical use, in conjunction with Chapter 4. Interviewers will need to have experience of clinical assessment interviews, and reliability will be increased by using the training programme contained in Chapter 7.

How do I complete the CANSAS?

The CANSAS assesses problems during the last one month in 22 domains of life. This relatively short time span leads to a snapshot of the current situation. Assessment may involve an interview with a service user (the term used to cover patient/client/consumer – the person being assessed), a carer or a staff member who knows the user sufficiently well. It is important that the interviewee's reply is recorded directly, even if the interviewer disagrees with his or her view. User, staff and carer perceptions of need may differ, which is why they are recorded in separate columns.

Each assessment uses one column. Circle the letter indicating who is being assessed (U=user, S=staff, C=carer), and record the date and initials of the interviewer. Work down the column using the suggested questions (shown in italics) to open discussion on each domain. Supplementary questions should be asked where necessary, with the goal of establishing:

- (a) whether the user has a serious problem in this domain; and
- (b) if the user does have a serious problem, whether he or she is getting effective help.

On the basis of the interviewee's responses, a 'need rating' is made for the last month:

- 0 = no need** (i.e. no serious problem)
- 1 = met need** (i.e. no/moderate problem due to help given)
- 2 = unmet need** (i.e. serious problem, whether or not help is given)
- 9 = not known**

The need rating is made using the following guidelines:

- If a serious problem is present (regardless of cause, or whether or not any help is being given), then **rate 2** (unmet need).
- If there is no serious problem because help is being given (e.g. family support, sheltered housing, psychotherapy, medication), then **rate 1** (met need).
- If there are no problems in this area, then **rate 0** (no need).
- If the person being interviewed does not know or does not want to answer questions on this domain, then **rate 9** (not known).

Note

- Just because there is currently no problem, the need rating is not automatically 0. For example, a person with diabetes who is physically well because of the prescribed insulin would be rated as 1 (met need) for physical health.
- A need can exist for a variety of reasons. For example, a person with a psychotic illness may currently be unable to go shopping because of a sprained ankle. He or she should be rated as having a need (i.e. need rating 1 or 2) in the Food domain, even though this need is not related to his or her psychiatric condition.
- The CANSAS does not assess overmet need. For example, if a person was an in-patient for the last month, but has what he or she considers to be adequate accommodation outside of hospital, then accommodation should be rated as 0, even though he or she is currently being provided with hospital accommodation.

Camberwell Assessment of Need Short Appraisal Schedule

User/Client name	Need rating			
	0 = no problem 1 = met need	2 = unmet need	3	4
Assessment number	1	2	3	4
Circle who is interviewed (U=User, S=Staff, C=Carer)	U/S/C	U/S/C	U/S/C	U/S/C
Date of assessment				
Initials of assessor				
1 Accommodation <i>What kind of place do you live in?</i>				
2 Food <i>Do you get enough to eat?</i>				
3 Looking after the home <i>Are you able to look after your home?</i>				
4 Self-care <i>Do you have problems keeping clean and tidy?</i>				
5 Daytime activities <i>How do you spend your day?</i>				
6 Physical health <i>How well do you feel physically?</i>				
7 Psychotic symptoms <i>Do you ever hear voices or have problems with your thoughts?</i>				
8 Information on condition and treatment <i>Have you been given clear information about your medication?</i>				
9 Psychological distress <i>Have you recently felt very sad or low?</i>				
10 Safety to self <i>Do you ever have thoughts of harming yourself?</i>				
11 Safety to others <i>Do you think you could be a danger to other people's safety?</i>				
12 Alcohol <i>Does drinking cause you any problems?</i>				
13 Drugs <i>Do you take any drugs that aren't prescribed?</i>				
14 Company <i>Are you happy with your social life?</i>				
15 Intimate relationships <i>Do you have a partner?</i>				
16 Sexual expression <i>How is your sex life?</i>				
17 Child care <i>Do you have any children under 18?</i>				
18 Basic education <i>Any difficulty in reading, writing or understanding English?</i>				
19 Telephone <i>Do you know how to use a telephone?</i>				
20 Transport <i>How do you find using the bus, tube or train?</i>				
21 Money <i>How do you find budgeting your money?</i>				
22 Benefits <i>Are you getting all the money you are entitled to?</i>				
A Met needs – count the number of 1s in the column				
B Unmet need – count the number of 2s in the column				
C Total number of needs – add together A + B				