STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT PRACTICE FOR FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

May 2015

Today's Goal

- Role of standardized assessment in complex organizations
- Information about the use of the CANS in Tennessee DCS

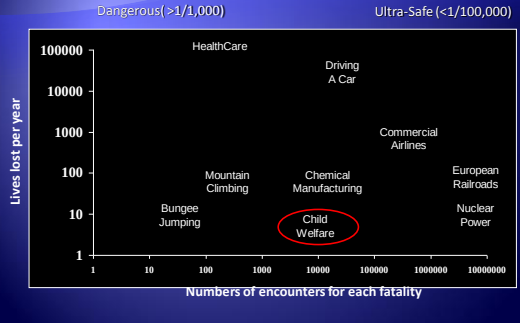
Measurement as Communication

- Assessment is one type of measurement
- Purpose of all measurement is to communicate
  - Time (e.g., seconds, hours, days)
  - Temperature (e.g., F°, C°)
  - Value (e.g., dollars)

What Are Complex Organizations?

- Operate under high-risk conditions
  - High-risk conditions defined as
    - Complicated work
    - Normal accidents can be expected
    - Work occurs in a social and political environments that make normal accidents high profile events
- Belief is that complex organizations should
  - Strive to attain "highly reliable" operations
    - High reliability is the ability to operate without normal, expected accidents for long periods of time

Safety in Complex Organizations



U.S. Airways Flight #1549

- http://youtu.be/jZPvVwvX_Nc

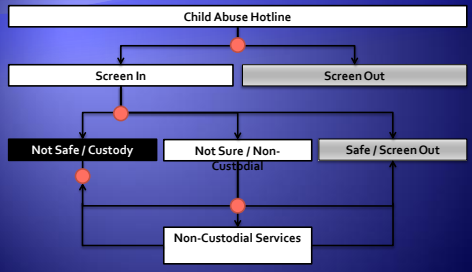
U.S. Airways Flight #1549

- http://youtu.be/jZPvVwvX_Nc
- Preparation
- Teamwork
- Strict adherence to protocols
  - E.g., the list of things to pay attention to

Protocols

- Are a type of standardized assessment
  - Standardize practice between and within persons
  - Improve communication
  - Guard against human error

General Model of Decisional Dilemmas in Child Welfare Systems



Revisiting Goals

- Role of standardized assessment in complex organizations
- Information about the use of the CANS in Tennessee DCS

CANS Measurement Principles

- Inter-rater reliability
- Clear, concise communication
- Items selected
  - Based on face validity
  - Relevance to task at hand – if they don't or won't inform decision making, then…
  - Immediately translate into action
  - About the "what" not the "why"
- Easily integrate information from multiple sources

What Do These Principles Mean?

- Measurement tools may
  - Have fewer items per concept, sometimes only one
  - Not rely upon a Likert scale, but have anchors that represent action levels
  - Not necessarily need to add individual scores to create a total score (items stand alone)

General "Need" Item Ratings

0 – No evidence; no reason to believe that a particular need exists

Example: Does Suzy smoke weed? She says he doesn't, her mother says she doesn't, no one else has expressed any concern – does this mean that Suzy is not smoking weed? NO, but based on the available information we have no reason to believe that she does and would not refer her to programming for services.

General "Need" Item Ratings

1 – History / Watchful waiting / Prevention

Example: John has been suicidal in the past. We know that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior and that such behavior may return under stress, so we would want to keep an eye on him from a preventive point of view.

General "Need" Item Ratings

2 – Action needed

Example: This rating implies that something must be done to address the identified need. Continuing with the example of John and suicidal behavior, let's now assume that he engaged in serious suicidal behavior 4 days ago, but is not currently making suicidal statements or engaging in suicidal behaviors. He needs services for his suicidal ideation, but perhaps not immediate or intensive action (e.g., hospitalization).

General "Need" Item Ratings

- 3 – Immediate / Intensive action

Example: This rating indicates a need that requires immediate or intensive action to address. If John were acutely suicidal, this rating would be appropriate for him. Similarly, dangerous or disabling levels of needs are rated here. To give another example, a child who is not attending school at all would be rated with a 3 on the school attendance item.

General "Strength" Item Ratings

- 0 – Centerpiece strength

Example: A significant and functional strength that could become the centerpiece of service planning is rated here. A good example is a child with a significant interest and involvement in sports or dance activities and who feels good about his/her involvement.

General "Strength" Item Ratings

- 1 – Strength used for planning

Example: A clearly existing strength that could become part of the plan is rated here. Following our previous example, a child who has used to engage in sports or dance and could be re-involved in the activity could be rated here.

General "Strength" Item Ratings

- 2 – Identified strength

Example: This level of rating indicates that a potential strength has been identified but requires building and development to become useful to the child. A teenager expressing interest in working with animals, but who has no experience might possibly be involved in a plan to develop vocational experience working with animals.

General "Strength" Item Ratings

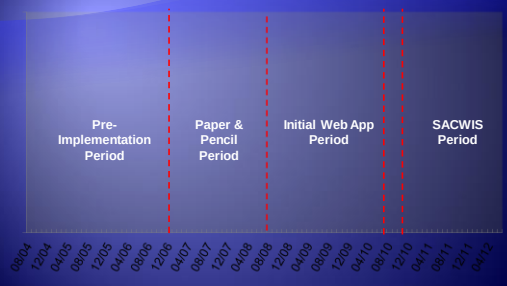
- 3 – No strength identified

Example: This level of rating indicates that no strength has been identified at this time. A rating at this level suggests that, in this area, the effort toward identifying and building a strength could be useful. Again, consider our teenager with no vocational experience or identified interests. It would be helpful for this child to begin to identify areas of interest.

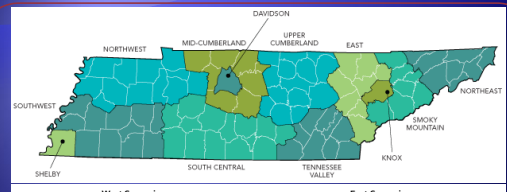
DCS CANS Implementation

- During custody episode, children are assessed
  - Entry, discharge, transitions, and regular intervals
- Vanderbilt Center Of Excellence (COE) provides technical assistance
  - Training, consultation, third party review, & data analysis
- Data is used to monitor child outcomes and to:
  - Guide child placement decisions
  - Inform provider treatment plans
  - Help plan the system service array
  - Continue to improve the systems' functioning

CANS Implementation Timeline



Implementation Team



West Supervisor | East Supervisor

Program Manager

PI/Director

Director, Service Integration

Deputy Commissioner, Child Programs

~ 20 FTE

Implementation Details

- Child welfare and juvenile justice systems
  - Juvenile justice also uses YLS
- Child welfare
  - Pre-custodial assessment is the FAST (a related measure)
  - Custodial assessment is CANS (ages 5 and up)
- FSWs complete assessments
  - Initial trainings are face-to-face; Recertification is online with support or a combination
- Community partners are trained on request
- Information must be useful and support activities at all system levels

Grid of Activities

	Family & Youth	Program	System
Decision Support	Service Planning	Eligibility	Resource Management
Quality Improvement	Case Management & Supervision	Accreditation CQI	Transformation System Evolution
Outcome Monitoring	Service Transitions & Celebrations	Evaluation	Performance Contracting

Source: Lyons, 2004, 2010

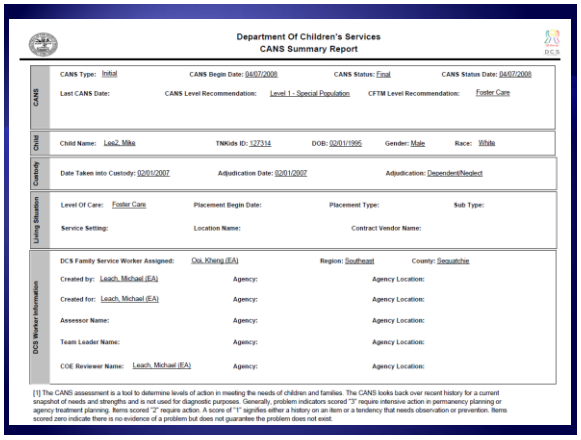
Multi-level Data Uses

- Child and family
- Program
- Systems

Descriptive Information

	Child Welfare (n = 12,509 spells)	Juvenile Justice (n = 4,869 spells)
% African American	24.7	39.4
% Female	39.9	18.5
% Age in years 5-12 13-16 17-21	 51.9 35.0 13.1	 1.1 52.7 46.3
% with 3 or more "actionable" risk behaviors	12.0	60.4
% with 3 or more "actionable" emotional needs	21.1	51.2
% with 3 or more "actionable" life functioning needs	35.0	74.5
% with 3 or more "actionable" caregiver needs	62.0	25.0

Spells from July 2010 – June 2014; with CANS, DN and JJ



Department Of Children's Services
CANS Summary Report

CANS
CANS Type: Initial | CANS Begin Date: 04/07/2008 | CANS Status: Final | CANS Status Date: 04/07/2008
Last CANS Date: | CANS Level Recommendation: Level 1 - Special Population | CFTM Level Recommendation: Foster Care

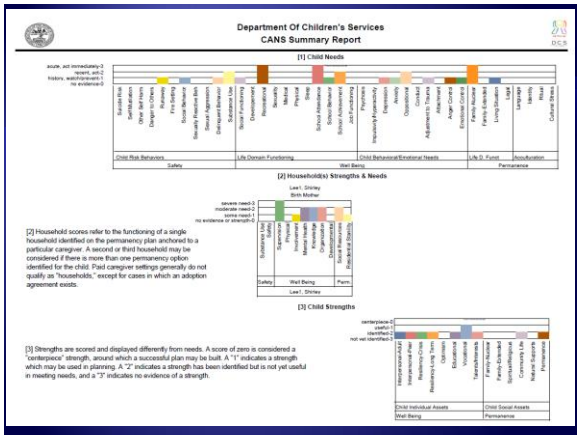
Child
Child Name: Lee2, Mika | TNKids ID: 127314 | DOB: 02/01/1995 | Gender: Male | Race: White

Custody
Date Taken into Custody: 02/01/2007 | Adjudication Date: 02/01/2007 | Adjudication: Dependent/Neglect

Living Situation
Level Of Care: Foster Care | Placement Begin Date: | Placement Type: | Sub Type:
Service Setting: | Location Name: | Contract Vendor Name:

DCS Worker Information
DCS Family Service Worker Assigned: Oxi, Khieng (EA) | Region: Southeast | County: Sequatchie
Created by: Leach, Michael (EA) | Agency: | Agency Location:
Created for: Leach, Michael (EA) | Agency: | Agency Location:
Assessor Name: | Agency: | Agency Location:
Team Leader Name: | Agency: | Agency Location:
COE Reviewer Name: Leach, Michael (EA) | Agency: | Agency Location:

[1] The CANS assessment is a tool to determine levels of action in meeting the needs of children and families. The CANS looks back over recent history for a current snapshot of needs and strengths and is not used for diagnostic purposes. Generally, problem indicators scored "3" require intensive action in permanency planning or agency treatment planning. Items scored "2" require action. A score of "1" signifies either a history on an item or a tendency that needs observation or prevention. Items scored zero indicate there is no evidence of a problem but does not guarantee the problem does not exist.



Department Of Children's Services
CANS Summary Report

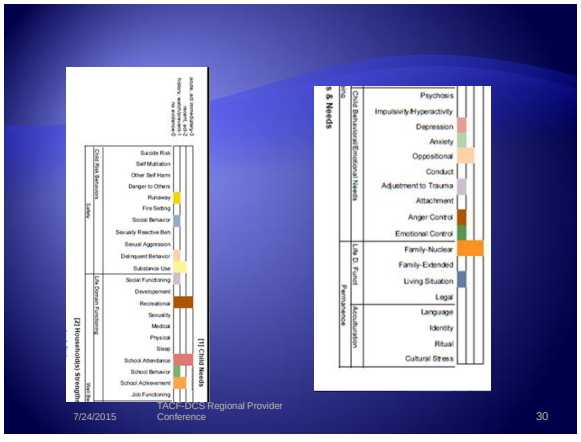
[1] Child Needs

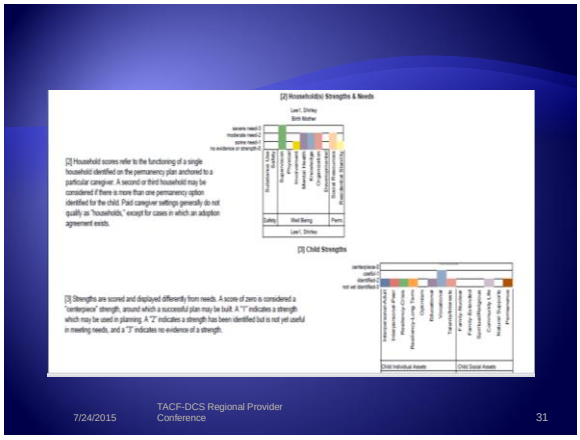
[2] Household(s) Strengths & Needs

[2] Household scores refer to the functioning of a single household identified on the permanency plan anchored to a particular caregiver. A second or third household may be considered if there is more than one permanency option identified for the child. Paid caregiver settings generally do not qualify as "households," except for cases in which an adoption agreement exists.

[3] Child Strengths

[3] Strengths are scored and displayed differently from needs. A score of zero is considered a "centerpiece" strength, around which a successful plan may be built. A "1" indicates a strength which may be used in planning. A "2" indicates a strength has been identified but is not yet useful in meeting needs, and a "3" indicates no evidence of a strength.

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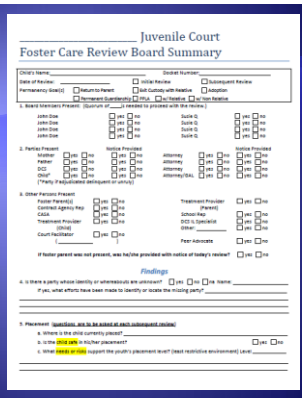
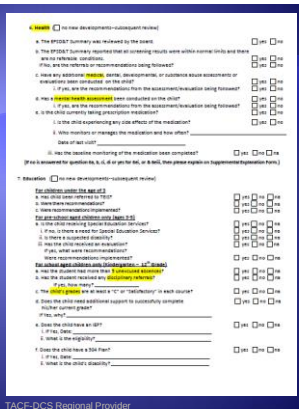
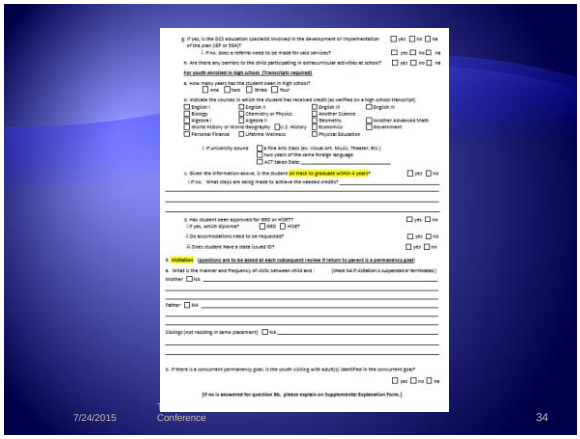

_____ Juvenile Court
Foster Care Review Board Summary
Findings





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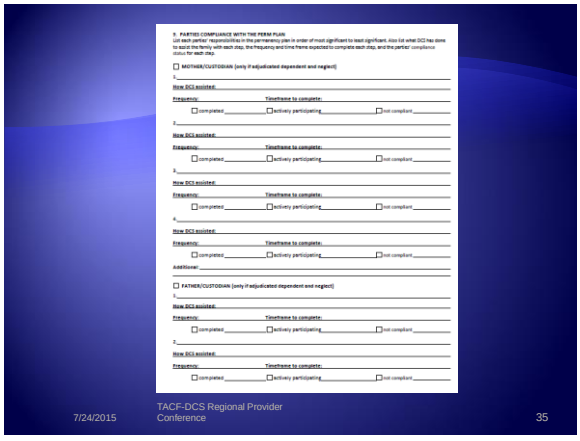

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Today's Goal (Revisited 3)

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