



CANS 2.0: Acculturation

AN ADDITIONAL SUPPORT GUIDE

All children are members of some identifiable cultural group or groups



These ratings describe possible problems that children or adolescents may experience with the relationship between their cultural membership and the predominant culture in which they live.

Please keep in mind that trauma often occurs within the context of greater structural inequities. These items, particularly Culture Stress, may help rate current strain from these structural inequities.

Cultural identification includes race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. but should be defined by the child and is not limited to more traditional forms of “culture.” (For example, a child who is heavily involved in video games and the gaming community might consider themselves a gamer and a part of gaming culture.)

44. LANGUAGE

This item concerns any language-related needs a family might have with regards to the languages spoken in the home and/or by the child. This includes spoken language and sign language.

- 0** Child and family have no problems communicating and do not require the assistance of a translator.
- 1** Child and family speak some of the same language but potential communication problems exist due to limits on vocabulary or understanding of the nuances of the language.
- 2** Child and/or significant family members do not speak the same language. Translator or native language speaker is needed for successful intervention but qualified individual can be identified within natural supports.
- 3** Child and/or significant family members do not speak the same language. Translator or native language speaker is needed for successful intervention and no such individual is available from among natural supports.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Jose and his siblings were recently placed in foster care after his mother was arrested and placed in a rehab facility. Although he speaks English at school, he and his family speak Spanish at home. The foster parents he has been placed with understand some basic Spanish but only speak English in the home. As an 8 year old, Jose occasionally misunderstands informal language (i.e. slang) used in the house but the family is quick to explain.

Based on this scenario, a worker might score this item a **1**

45. IDENTITY

Cultural identity refers to the child's view of themselves as belonging to a specific cultural group. This cultural group may be defined by a number of factors including race, religion, ethnicity, geography or lifestyle. This item rates potential conflicts with the child's cultural identity.

- 0** Child has clear and consistent cultural identity and is connected to others who share their cultural identity.
- 1** Child is experiencing some confusion or concern regarding their cultural identity.
- 2** Child has significant struggles with their own cultural identity. Child may have cultural identity but is not connected with others who share this culture.
- 3** Child has no connection to their cultural identity or is experiencing significant problems due to internal conflict regarding their cultural identity.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Katrina's family recently became involved with Intact Family Services after she was hospitalized for a suicide attempt. Katrina has experienced complex trauma and states that she feels very lonely. After a few meetings with her therapist, she disclosed that she thinks she identifies as queer but that she has no one to talk to about it. She worries that her family and friends will be unsupportive and states that she feels like she is hiding in plain sight. She wishes she had someone like her to help her sort things out.

Based on this scenario, her therapist or Intact worker might rate Katrina as a **3**

46. RITUAL

Cultural rituals are activities and traditions that are culturally specific including the celebration of holidays such as Ramadan, Kwanza, etc. Rituals also may include daily activities that are culturally specific (e.g. praying at specific times, eating a specific diet, etc.)

- 0** Child is consistently able to practice rituals consistent with their cultural identity.
- 1** Child is generally able to practice rituals consistent with their cultural identity; however, they sometimes experiences some obstacles to the performance of these rituals.
- 2** Child experiences significant barriers and is sometimes prevented from practicing rituals consistent with their cultural identity.
- 3** Child is unable to practice rituals consistent with their cultural identity.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Jung was recently adopted after his mother passed away suddenly due to complications from COVID-19. Lately, he has not been sleeping because he says he is worried that her soul is lost. Due to the fact that he and his mother's friends were unable to say goodbye, or hold a traditional funeral, Jung has been very distressed.

Based on this scenario, a worker might score this item a **3**

47. CULTURE STRESS

Culture stress refers to experiences and feelings of discomfort and/or distress arising from friction (real or perceived) between an individual's own cultural identity and the predominant culture in which he/she lives. This could include stress caused by cultural frictions between the child and their specific placement setting, as well as cultural stress between the child and the broader communities they are a part of (such as neighborhoods, towns, regions, and even country or global cultural representations and movements).

- 0** No evidence of stress between child's cultural identity and current situation.
- 1** Some evidence of mild or occasional stress resulting from friction between the child's cultural identity and their current situation.
- 2** Child is experiencing cultural stress from friction between the child's cultural identity and current situation and that is causing some problems with functioning.
- 3** Child is experiencing a high level of cultural stress between their cultural identity and current situation that is making functioning very difficult under the present circumstances.

PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Although Maya is only 8 years old, and does not actively watch the news or consume social media, she saw a news clip at a neighbor's house of a Black man being suffocated by police. She has noticed the adults in her life seem more on edge and the buzz of recent protests and police violence over news programming and general conversation. When asked if she noticed when she began wetting the bed, Maya stated it's often after she has nightmares that her father is being shot by police for being Black.

Based on this scenario, a worker might score this item a **2**

David recently was placed in a group home in a new neighborhood. He is 15, Black, and had lived in a predominantly Black area of Chicago for most of his life. The neighborhood he has been placed in is predominantly white as are many of the staff at the group home. Neighbors have called the police when seeing him walking around the block and on a few occasions he has felt harassed by the police. He ultimately was released to staff but no longer feels safe leaving the placement. He says these walks helped him clear his head and as a result he has been losing his temper more often. Police have also been called to the placement by staff stating they felt threatened by David. David states that he sometimes loses his temper but that he is not aggressive and has not threatened staff or other youth in the home. He no longer leaves his room and has become completely withdrawn or angry with the staff and his peers.

Based on this scenario, a worker might score this item a **3**



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scoring the CANS as
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