

## Cultural Factors

Items in the Cultural Factors domain describe difficulties that children may experience or encounter as a result of their membership in any cultural group, and/or because of the relationship between members of that group and members of the dominant society.

Health care disparities are differences in health care quality, affordability, access, utilization and outcomes between groups. Culture in this domain is defined broadly to include cultural groups that are racial, ethnic or religious, or are based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status and/or geography. Literature exploring issues of health care disparity states that race and/or ethnic group membership may be a primary influence on health outcomes.

It is important to remember when using the CANS that the family should be defined from the individual client's perspective (who the individual describes as part of her/his family). The cultural issues in this domain should be considered in relation to the impact they are having on the life of the individual when rating these items and creating a treatment or service plan.

**For Cultural Factors, the following categories and action levels are used:**

- 0 = A dimension where there is no evidence of any needs.
- 1 = An identified need that requires monitoring, watchful waiting, or preventive activities.
- 2 = Action or intervention is required to ensure that the identified need is addressed.
- 3 = Intensive, immediate action is required to address the need.

**Question to Consider for this Domain:** How does the child or family's membership to a particular cultural group impact his or her stress and wellbeing? **Please rate the highest level from the past 30 days**

**52. LANGUAGE** - This item looks at whether the child and family need help to communicate with you or others in English. This item includes spoken, written, and sign language, as well as addresses issues of literacy.

**Questions to Consider**

- What language does the family speak at home?
- Is there a child interpreting for the family in situations that may compromise the child or family's care?
- Is information presented in treatment plan documents, legal documents, and case conference discussions in the language preferred by the family?
- Does the child or significant family members have any difficulty communicating (either because English is not their first language or s/he uses ASL, Braille, or assisted technology)?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** No evidence that there is a need or preference for an interpreter or bilingual services and/or the child and family speak, hear and read English.
- 1** Child and/or family speak or read English, but potential communication problems exist because of limited vocabulary or comprehension of the nuances of the language.
- 2** Child and/or significant family members possess only limited ability to speak and/or read English. While basic communication may be possible, a bilingual provider or interpreter is needed to assure that adequate communication is possible for extensive work.
- 3** Child and/or significant family members do not speak English. A bilingual provider or interpreter is needed for all communication.

**53. CULTURAL IDENTITY** - This item refers to a child's feelings about her/his cultural identity. This cultural identity may be defined by a number of factors including race, religion, ethnicity, geography or lifestyle. This item measures extent to which feelings related to cultural identity cause stress or influence the behavior of the child.

**Questions to Consider**

- Does the child identify with any racial/ ethnic/cultural group? Does the child find this group a source of support?
- Does the child ever feel conflicted about her/his racial/ethnic/cultural identity?
- Does the child feel pressured to join/leave a racial/ethnic/cultural subgroup for another?
- Does the child openly denigrate members of her/his own group?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** No evidence of an issue with the child's cultural identity or child has a strong and positive racial/ethnic/cultural identity.
- 1** Child has struggled in the past with her/his group or sub group membership, but is presently comfortable with her/his identity or there are mild issues related to identity.
- 2** Child expresses some distress or conflict about her/his racial/ethnic/cultural identity that interferes with the child's or family's functioning.
- 3** Child expresses significant distress or conflict about her/his racial/ethnic/cultural identity. Child may reject her/his cultural group identity, which severely interferes with the child or family's functioning and/or requires immediate action.

**54. RITUAL** - This item rates the child and family's access to and participation in cultural rituals and practices, including the celebration of culturally specific holidays such as kwanza, Cinco de mayo, etc. Rituals also may include daily activities that are culturally specific (e.g. praying toward Mecca at specific times, eating a specific diet, access to media, celebrating birthdays).

**Questions to Consider**

- What holidays does the child's family celebrate?
- What traditions are important to the child and his/her family?
- Does the child or family fear discrimination for practicing their rituals and traditions?

**Ratings & Definitions**

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

**55. DISCRIMINATION/BIAS** - This item refers to any experience of discrimination or bias that is purposeful or accidental, direct or indirect. Discrimination may be based on gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, skin shade/color/complexion, linguistic ability, body shape/size, etc. Any statement of discrimination by a child should be acknowledged and respected. Children and families' feelings are what matter. These feelings can impact how a child or family function, and creates stress for the child and/or family, which can correlate with depression and/or poor health outcomes. The presence of such discrimination or experiences may present a barrier to accessing supports or services that may be helpful to the child or family. When families report feelings of discrimination providers can discuss those feelings and how they impact functioning, create an advocacy statement in the treatment plan, or assist the family in finding a better fit for necessary services.

**Questions to Consider**

- Does the child or his/her family experience racism, sexism, or any other kind of discrimination?
- How does discrimination impact his/her life?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** No report of experiences of discrimination that impacts the child or family's ability to function and/or creates stress.

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- 1** Child or family reports experiences of discrimination that occurred recently or in the past, but it is not currently causing any stress or difficulties for the Child or family.

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- 2** Child or family reports experiences of discrimination that are currently interfering with the child's or family's functioning.

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- 3** Child or family reports experiences of discrimination that substantially and immediately interferes with the child or family's functioning on a daily basis and requires immediate action.

**56. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN A FAMILY** - Sometimes child members within a family have different backgrounds, values and/or perspectives. This might occur in a family where a child is adopted from a different race, culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The parent may struggle to understand or lack awareness of the Child's experience of discrimination. Additionally this may occur in families where the parents are first generation immigrants to the United States. The child may refuse to adhere to certain cultural practices, choosing instead to participate more in popular US culture.

**Questions to Consider**

- Do the parents and the child have different understandings of appropriate behaviors that are rooted in cultural traditions?
- Do the family and child understand and respect each other's perspectives?
- Do the family and child have conflicts that result from different cultural perspectives?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** No evidence of conflict, stress or disengagement within the family due to cultural differences or family is able to communicate effectively in this area.

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- 1** Child and family have struggled with cultural differences in the past, but are currently managing them well or there are mild issues of disagreement.

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- 2** Child and family experience difficulties managing cultural differences within the family that negatively impacts the functioning of the child.

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- 3** Child and family experience such significant difficulty managing cultural differences within the family that it interferes with the Child's functioning and/or requires immediate action.