Aligning TCOM and Systems Theory
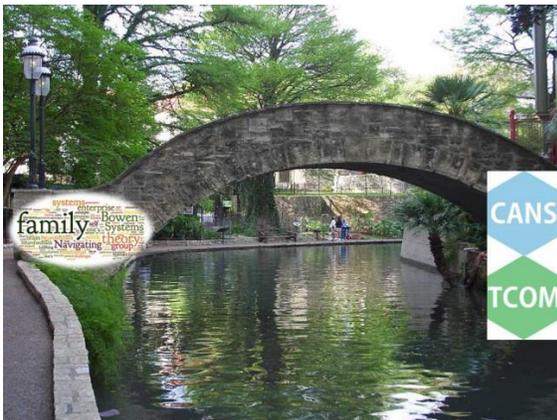
TCOM Conversations Blog written by: Ken McGill, LMFT Posted on September 22, 2017

In many ways the CANS, the FAST (the family version of the Communimetrics approach to measurement) and the ANSA align with the foundational definition of a system as outlined by Ludwig von Bertalanffy almost 40 years ago. A system must consist of four distinct components:

1. **Objects:** the parts, elements or variables within the system. These may be physical or abstract or both, depending on the nature of the system.

2. **A System of Attributes:** the qualities or properties of the system and its objects.

3. **Internal Relationships:** objects in a system have internal relationships.

4. **The Environment:** a system contains things that affect one another within this environment, forming a larger pattern that is different from any of the parts.

This stems from general systems theory, which dates back to the early 1950s, beginning with the pioneering work by Ludwig von Bertalanffy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.[i]

General systems theory, which is often used to inform family-based interventions, relates to the general science of 'wholeness.' Wholeness can be utilized for scientific study when there is concern for the 'organized whole.' The significance of general systems theory as outlined by von Bertalanffy is a scientific attempt to bridge the gap between probabilities and outcomes and/or theorize the probability concerning the likelihood of subsequent events happening.

This systems theory perspective seems to align with the purposes behind the TCOM tools. Individuals, children/adolescents, or adults can and should be viewed from a systems perspective, especially when using the CANS. The family is something more than simply a collection of individuals, and so are many cultural and systemic environments that people live within. The CANS/ANSA/FAST tools should take this into account.

Fortunately, there are already many points of alignment between systems theory and TCOM tools:

In the CANS, the person-in-environment definition of both needs and strengths, as well as the inclusion of the Caregiver section, is aligned with this systems theory perspective.

The FAST has a domain generally referred to as the 'Family Together' to help tell the story of the family system above and beyond the stories of the individual family members. The FAST also views the person being assessed as a physiological, psychological and sociocultural-behavioral being living within a larger cultural system and connected to family of origin.

Similarly, The ANSA charts the adult needs and strengths within the context of that individual's family of origin, current family constellation, work and community—all systems.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: When using the CANS and the FAST to chart youth/family needs and strengths, shouldn't it be done within the systems framework of that individual's family, school and community? And when using the ANSA in the diagnosing and treatment of adults, wouldn't it make sense to utilize systemic theory to assist this process?

General systems theory, as outlined by Von Bertalanffy, aims to:

- Enable integration in the various natural and social sciences
- Integrate a general theory of systems
- Use theory to create exact theory in the non-physical fields of science
- Develop unifying principles running 'vertically' through the universe of the individual sciences, bringing us nearer to the goal of the unity of science
- Argue for much-needed integration in scientific education

[i] von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). General System Theory Foundations, Development, Applications. New York, NY: George Braziller, Inc.

SNA-TCOM Technical Assistance for all CMOs!

There will be available in the New Year a 2 hour Technical Assistance (TA) for all CMOs regarding not only connecting the SNA to the Plan of Care, but to create with the family a manageable, meaningful and individual treatment plan. This TA will use a vignette (or an actual vignette-with identifiers removed for HIPAA compliance) to offer a 'hands on' experience. The main objectives/goals will be:

- Gain understanding of Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management or TCOM Philosophy
- Increased Child/Family Team Understanding of the SNA Tool & Treatment Planning
- Effective Infusing of Wraparound Values/Principles in Creation of Individualized Service Plans (ISPs) in the Child Family Team

This TA will be offered at the CMOs with the guidance of Care Manager Supervisors and their team of Care Managers. Time and dates of TAs can be individualized to coincide with supervision. For more information contact Ken McGill at (732) 235-2812 or kenneth.mcgill@rutgers.edu

New CANS Training 'Beyond the Certification!'

This new CANS training will take those who have been using the tool well beyond the information needed to just to get certified. It will move people from viewing it as a 'form' to developing a 'shared vision' among the Child/Family Team to a catalyst used to help children/youth achieve transformations in their lives and move families towards improved overall wellness and health. For more information please contact Ken McGill at kenneth.mcgill@rutgers.edu or at 732-235-2812.

OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS???

These are questions that CANS/IMDS SuperUsers have been asked by their staff regarding how to accurately complete the tools.

-"**How would I rate the caregiver's needs/strengths when a child/youth is an out of home placement?"** This question has been the number one question asked at past SuperUser Meetings and has been answered by Dr. John Lyons, the developer of the IMDS Tools. You would **never** rate a 'paid' caregiver, for if the funds discontinue then they would no longer be involved in the life of the child/youth. The only exception is if the person is considering 'adopting' child/youth then we could consider them their caregiver. The question that should be asked if DCP&P is the legal guardian, "Have the parent's terminated their parental rights? If no, then is reunification the plan? If not to the biological parents then what other relatives may be able to step for the parents?" Our system of care's philosophy is that every child/youth deserves to grow up and live with people who love and care for them!

INFORMATION: Kinship guardianship-Kinship caregivers are people who have taken on the responsibility of caring for their relatives' children – frequently their own grandchildren, aunts & uncles for their nephews/nieces and in some occasions even older siblings stepping up to care for their young siblings. For more information you can go to www.nj211.org

-**"What are the differences between social supports and community resources?** The main difference between 'social supports' and 'community resources' (referring to the Caregiver) are as follows: Social supports are the people, either natural (family) and informal (community) members that can be utilized in supporting the needs of the caregiver and/or family. Community Resources are usually those institutions within a family's community, such as church/temple/mosque, FSO, support groups, etc.

-**"What is the difference between an 'interpersonal' strength and 'social development, which is a life domain need?" Please discuss the differences in how to rate interpersonal strengths and social development.** The main difference between 'social development' which is a need and 'interpersonal' which is a strength is that

one is externally rated and the other is primarily internally rated. For example, when rating social development you are looking at friendships, both quantity and quality. If the child has only one friend and has a limited ability to make friends then this would be the focus of treatment planning. However, social development has more to do with a child/youth's ability and skills to make and maintain friendships, regardless whether or not they are currently doing so. This item has more to do with applying these skills for a more strength based treatment plan.

TCOM Conversations
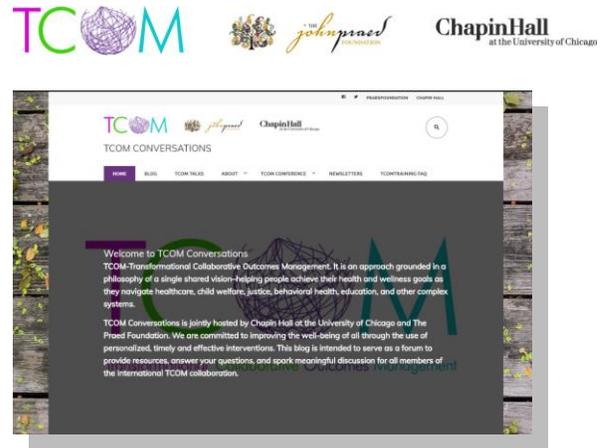
This blog is intended to serve as the forum to provide resources, answer your questions, and spark meaningful discussion for all members of the international TCOM collaboration through the Praed Foundation.

TCOM Conversations is jointly hosted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and The Praed Foundation "We are committed to improving the well-being of all through the use of personalized, timely and effective interventions."

For more info about joining the blog contact Katherine Sun, University of Chicago-Chapin Hall at ksun@chapinhall.org

You can also follow the many CANS developments that are taking place nationally as well as internationally by clicking on Twitter @CANSFamily.

Are Y'all Ready???
Less than a Week Away!!!

2017 TCOM Conference
October 4th thru October 6th
San Antonio Texas

TCOM: Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management is an approach grounded in the philosophy of a shared vision to help people achieve wellness goals as they navigate healthcare, child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, education, and other complex systems around the world. The annual TCOM Conference is jointly hosted by The Praed Foundation and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. This year's conference theme is **Leadership**. Many if not all of us are in a period of rapid change, and to successfully manage change requires leadership. However, leadership must take many forms at many levels of a system and often has little to do with formal power and authority. **Leadership** will be explored in all its manifestations within the collaborative processes and complex systems.

The theme of this year's conference is **_Leadership: Collaboration, Coaching, and Data Informed Decision-Making._** The dissemination of information will be shared using 4 different types of formats:

- ➢ Posters
- ➢ Presentations
- ➢ Workshops
- ➢ Topical Interest-3 hours (only on Day 1)

FREE ONLINE PROFESSIONAL ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES!!!

Learning Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma
http://learn.nctsn.org/

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health- Public Health Preparedness Programs
http://www.jhsph.edu/preparedness/training/online

Georgetown University Center for Children's Mental Health-The National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health
http://gucchdtacenter.georgetown.edu/resources/

National Fatherhood Initiative Webinars
http://www.fatherhood.org/organizations/programs/webinars
Virginia Commonwealth University-VCU Autism Center for Excellence
http://www.vcuautismcenter.org/training

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders
http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/foundations-autism-spectrum-disorders-online-course-content

NADD-A National Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Needs- http://thenadd.org/

CriticalThinkRx an educational project at The School of Social Work, Florida International University, a reference website about psychotropic medications
http://criticalthinkrx.org/

Mental Health & Juvenile Justice Collaborative for Change http://cfc.ncmhjj.com/

US Department of Health & Human Services-Office of Adolescent Health
http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/news/webinars.html

Behavioral Healthcare Magazine-Treatment and Recovery http://www.behavioral.net/webinars

The SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions
http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/about-us/webinars

Mental Health America (MHA)
http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mha-webinars

NAADC-The Association for Addiction Professionals
http://www.naadac.org/education/webinars

American Psychiatric Nurses Association
http://www.apna.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3310

Nurses Continuing Education Units (NurseCEU.com) http://www.nurseceu.com/

National Institute on Drug Abuse-Commonly Abused Drug Charts www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts
The University of Vermont Libraries-Research Guides-Free Medical Resources to Support Medical Care
http://researchguides.uvm.edu/freeresources

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) http://www.nctsn.org/resources

The John Praed Foundation-CANS Collaborative
http://praedfoundation.org/

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THESE FREE RESOURCES. ALSO, PLEASE LET US KNOW IF THERE OTHERS THAT WE CAN ADD TO THIS LIST.

Please email all comments & questions to Ken McGill at kenneth.mcgill@rutgers.edu

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