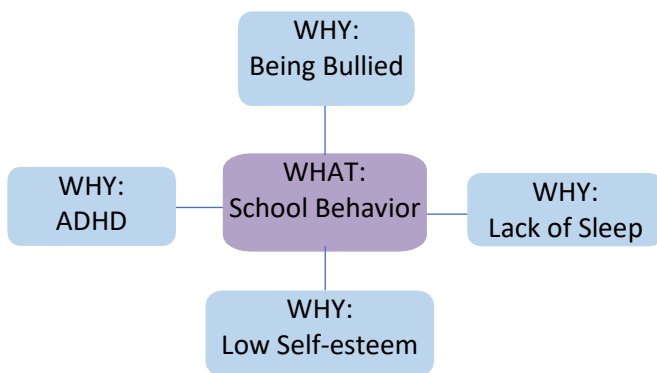


## Key Principle: Rate the “What”, not the “Why”

The CANS-NY organizes the stories we learn about children/youth and the families we serve. When we see evidence of a need or strength, we assign an action rating. Focusing on the “**what**” provides an opportunity to build consensus with children, youth, and families, without bringing shame or blame into the process. While important, the underlying reasons for needs and strengths do not factor into the CANS-NY rating. We avoid making assumptions about needs being present because of other needs, and we do not explain away needs because we know the reasons for them. Later on, when we are building a plan, the “**why**” becomes important. During the assessment, we focus on the “**what**.”

The “**WHAT**” is descriptive and actionable.

The “**WHY**” is addressed in the plan, which connects children/youth, and, families to appropriate resources.



The CANS-NY helps us communicate about and identify needed action around the needs and strengths of children, youth, and families who are receiving care management.

*We ask:* What needs have been identified? What are the strengths of the child/youth and, family? What action is needed to address needs and build upon or build strengths? Focusing on the “**what**” helps us identify the presence of needs that we see evidence for. It keeps our assumptions from obscuring what we see.

Examples of How to Identify the “What”
<p><b>What you see –</b> Have you witnessed the child/youth/ having difficulties interacting with peers? Is action called for? You may have an actionable need for Social Functioning.</p>
<p><b>What you hear –</b> Has a father told you his son frequently harms his siblings, but never purposefully? There may be an actionable need for Danger to Others.</p>
<p><b>What you read –</b> You read about a history of runaway behavior in a youth’s referral information. The youth has not run away for some time. While this need is not actionable, a rating of “1” is called for, as there is a history of runaway behavior.</p>

Examples of Times to Think About the “Why”
<p><b>The Plan –</b> Identifying the reasons for needs and strengths will be critical in building targeted goals and objectives for Care Management. The “<b>why</b>” is important for collaborative goal-setting.</p>
<p><b>Connecting to Services –</b> Care Managers have a responsibility to support families in selecting and connecting to services that can properly address identified needs, build upon identified strengths, and build new strengths. Understanding the <b>WHAT</b> and the <b>WHY</b> are important elements of this process.</p>

## Select Notes and Examples

(See below for examples of focusing on the “why” in a few of the items.

Remember, this principle applies to **all** of the items.)

Item (Domain)	Scenario	Rating & Rationale
Legal (Life's Functioning Domain)	Karissa, 16, was arrested 2 weeks ago after driving her mother home from a local store where she worked. Unbeknownst to Karissa, her mother had shoplifted several items and Karissa was implicated as an accomplice. Karissa’s lawyer reports that the prosecutor does not intend to pursue charges but they have not yet been dismissed.	<b>Rating:</b> Actionable (2/3) <b>Rationale:</b> While it appears that Karissa may be cleared of her charges, the “what” currently remains: She has pending charges that could pose a risk of out-of-home placement.
Talents/Interests (Strengths) and Medical/Physical	12-year-old Anderson plays basketball for his local YMCA team; sports are a centerpiece of his life. He will be undergoing a month-long treatment for childhood cancer which will keep him from playing basketball during that time. His team intends to welcome him back when he’s ready.	<b>Rating:</b> Actionable (2) <b>Rationale:</b> While Talents/Interests would typically be rated as a very useful strength in Anderson’s life, we would currently assign a strengths rating of 2. Anderson’s current medical needs will limit his ability to draw from this strength.
Impulsivity/ Hyperactivity (Behavioral/ Emotional Needs Domain)	Carter is a single parent to his 4-year-old son Zack, whom he describes as “constantly on the move, irritable, and impossible to manage.” Zack’s pre-K teacher reports that, on an almost daily basis, Zack becomes unruly and unable to settle during rest time. If she does not intervene, Zack moves from cot to cot poking, touching, and bothering the other children. He is not easily calmed but will sit with the teacher if she maintains one-on-one support. She is unsure if Zack’s level of activity can be managed in a regular pre-K setting.	<b>Rating:</b> Actionable (3) <b>Rationale:</b> At home and at school, Zack exhibits more restlessness and agitation than is typical of a four-year-old. His caregiver and his teacher are expressing concern about managing his level of agitation. Impulsivity/Hyperactivity is interfering with Zack’s functioning in two life domains.

### Exception: Some items consider the why because they ask us to consider history.

- Intentional Misbehavior. Why the child/youth is misbehaving is the reason for this item. If they're intentionally getting in trouble in school or at home, and looking for consequences.
- Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious Behavior. If the purpose or goal of this behavior is self-soothing.
- Adjustment to Trauma. Items related to trauma ask us to think about cause and effect. We rate these items as actionable when we know that the trauma experience has led to adjustment problems. There is no a way to describe trauma without a cause-and-effect relationship. The cause describes “why it happened” and the effect describes “what happens.”