

ATTACHMENT A: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES-APPROVED YOUTH TRAUMA SCREENING TOOLS FOR SPECIALTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACCESS CRITERIA

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) approved the use of the below youth trauma screening tool(s) to establish that an enrolled Member under the age of 21 meets access criteria for Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS).

There are various pathways for Members to meet access criteria for SMHS. Effective April 1, 2026, if a Provider determines that a youth trauma screening is necessary for SMHS eligibility assessment, only the DHCS-approved youth trauma screening tools listed below may be used. Standard tool specific scoring methodology must be used to establish whether a Member scores in the "high-risk range" on a youth trauma screening tool approved by DHCS. In cases where there is no clear "high-risk" scoring range, MCPs must establish a process for determining whether the Member meets access criteria for SMHS.

If youth trauma is identified or screened for during a clinical assessment of a Member under the age of 21, clinical judgement may be used to determine the need for further assessment and/or to determine whether a Member meets access criteria for SMHS.

Note: Not all DHCS-approved youth trauma screening tools listed below are eligible for Medi-Cal reimbursement. Please see All Plan Letter 23-017 and the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) section of the Provider Manual to identify youth trauma screening tools eligible for reimbursement in the Medi-Cal managed care and Fee-For-Service (FFS) delivery systems under the ACEs screening services benefit.¹

DHCS-Approved Youth Trauma Screening Tools

1. ACEs Questionnaire²
2. Standard Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Trauma Module (also referred to as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network CANS – Trauma Comprehensive)³
3. California Integrated Practice-Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (IP-CANS) tool⁴

4. Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS)⁵
5. Child Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptom Scale – 6-item Screening Version (CPSS-5-Screen)⁶
6. Child Trauma Screening (CTS)⁷
7. Life Events Checklist for DSM-V Standard Version (LEC-5)⁸
8. Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-Events Screener (PEARLS), including Parent-Caregiver report and self-report versions.⁹
9. UCLA Child/Adolescent PTSD Reaction Index for DSM-5 Brief Form (UCLA PTSD RI-5 BF)¹⁰

Note: Endnotes referenced examples of youth trauma screening tools listed above. In cases where the youth trauma screening tool(s) are not available online, DHCS included links to literature references.

¹ The Provider Manual for Medi-Cal managed care and FFS delivery systems is searchable at: <https://mcweb.apps.prd.cammis.medi-cal.ca.gov/publications/manual>.

² The ACEs Questionnaire is available at: <https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/screening-tools-additional-languages/>.

³ The CANS Trauma Module is available at: https://praedfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/REFERENCE-GUIDE_Standard-Comprehensive-CANS-3.0_CWBH_Final_Hyperlink_2021.01.13.pdf.

⁴ The CA IP-CANS rating sheet is available at: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ISU/CANS/CA_CANS_IP%20Rating%20Sheet_1.0_CW_ENGLISH.pdf; The CA-IP CANS Guide is available at: <https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ISU/CANS/ca-ipcans-guide-hyperlinked.pdf>

⁵ The CATS is available at: <https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Child-and-Adolescent-Trauma-Screen-CATS-Youth-Self-Report-7-17-years.pdf>

⁶ The CPSS-5-Screen is described at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2017.1350962>

⁷ The CTS is available at: <https://www.chdi.org/our-work/trauma-informed-initiatives/ct-trauma-screen-cts/>

⁸ The LEC-5 is available at: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/LEC5_Standard_Self-report.PDF

⁹ The PEARLS is available at: <https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/>

¹⁰ The UCLA PTSD RI-5 BF is described at: <https://escholarship.org/content/qt0xf2998r/qt0xf2998r.pdf?t=rrnq7v>