The TCOM Tools: Obtaining Certification

Visit TCOMTraining.com to view the list of all TCOM Tools used in your jurisdiction.

Be sure to watch all of the videos and take the quizzes before you start the Practice Tests or Final Exams. These materials will help prepare you for certification.

EXPLORE TCOM CONTENT AND EMBED TCOM INTO YOUR DAY-TO-DAY PRACTICE:

There are many ways to embed TCOM into your day-to-day practice. At the supervisory level, using action levels (in individual cases and in the aggregate) to guide planning/care, to track progress in care, and to help your staff and your program develop are great ways to do that. Many in the collaborative are using data in wonderful ways, and you can learn about that and much more at our blog: https://tcomconversations.org/TCOMtraining-faq/

Regular User Certification Score: .70, Super User/Trainer Certification Score: .80

WHY TAKE A PRACTICE TEST:

Practice tests are untimed and give you the chance integrate content without stress!
➢ Take at least 1 Practice Test
➢ Review your answers with preferred ratings

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Repeatedly taking certification exams (without the practice test) can lead to struggle! The timed environment and frustration and stress can keep you from building Communimetric skills.

DON'T get hung up on the "anchors" (aka the descriptions for each action level within a given item) and instead focus on the action levels!

Needs Items Translate Directly into ACTION
0 = **Nothing,** no evidence of a need
1 = **Monitor,** or collect more information, suspicion or history of a need
2 = **ACT to address Need,** evidence of the need interfering with functioning
3 = **ACT Immediately/Intensely,** evidence of imminent danger to safety, health, and/or development

"Action Overrides Anchor"

Think about the action level needed for each item. It may even override the specific description provided.

- Would I check on this or think about it (1)?
- Would I definitely intervene/refer for an intervention (2)?
- Would I urgently intervene (3)?

Focus on the action levels, and move to the anchors (or item descriptions) only when you really feel stuck. Remember, we cannot possibly generate examples for every circumstance in the manual, so remembering the action levels (quick review below) really helps.

Take your time on the Certification Exam:

Once you get to the final certification exam, take your time! A sample of 47,000 professionals took an average of 31 minutes to complete a certification exam successfully. You have 2 hours (120 minutes) before you are timed out. DON'T RUSH.
1. Print out the manual and the rating form.
2. Print/Read the vignette (don't forget to breathe) and check off any item on the rating form that is present in the vignette.
3. Check the vignette line by line to correct/add/subtract actionable needs and strengths.

Find a quiet place free from distractions. Close your email and silence your phone. Set aside enough time for testing.
Identify items from the section that you feel are referenced in the story. Rate those first.

Do not read into the vignette or make assumptions. ONLY rate what you KNOW from reading the vignette.
Remember, if it is not written, it did not happen.

CORE DOMAINS

Life Domain Functioning ○ Behavioral/Emotional Needs ○ Risk Behaviors
Cultural Factors ○ Strengths ○ Caregiver Resources and Needs

STRENGTHS DOMAIN—

This domain describes the assets of the child/youth that can be used to advance healthy development. Remember, STRENGTHS are NOT the opposite of NEEDS. Increasing strengths, while addressing other needs, leads to better outcomes!

Strength Items are focused on USEFULNESS/UTILITY
0 = **VERY USEFUL for Planning,** well-developed or centerpiece
1 = **USEFUL for Planning,** could be useful for treatment planning, strength is evident
2 = **POTENTIALLY USEFUL,** strength requires building in order to be used for planning
3 = **Currently NOT a STRENGTH,** consider building, effort required to identify or create strengths

If there is NO MENTION of a strength, rate it a '3.'

- If, for example, you don't explicitly read about a youth with a positive future outlook, or a youth planning for his/her future, the recommended rating would be a '3' on optimism. When there is no evidence of a strength the recommended rating is a '3.'
- A '2' can be potentially useful, any building activities for this strength would be identified in planning.
- A centerpiece strength is a '0' (that is, a powerful strength that can be the focal point, or centerpiece, of the plan).

Example 1 (Centerpiece Strength-0): Molly sings like an angel. She goes to choir and is in a music program at school. Even when she gets down, singing can bring her up. She hopes to be an opera singer in the future.
Example 2 (Useful Strength-1): Molly sings really well. She is in a music program at school and is interested in doing more with her music.
Example 3 (Potential Strength-2): Molly has a nice voice. She likes music.

WHAT TO DO WITH AN N/A? There is no N/A option on the exam, so you'll want to read the instructions listed in order to choose the correct rating. Generally, an N/A is a '0' for a Needs item and a '3' for a Strengths item.

CAREGIVER RESOURCES AND NEEDS DOMAIN—

A caregiver is the family member or paid helper who provides support for an individual who is unable to fully care for themselves. If the child/youth is in foster care, the caregiver is the person(s) who is part of the permanency goal.

Overrating is very common on the Caregiver Resources and Needs Domain. It is important not to make assumptions; rate only what is there. Be careful **not to read into** the needs and strengths of the caregiver based on what you read about the youth. Take the vignette literally, and remember that the action levels on most items in this domain are related to the caregiver's capacity to parent.

This is a great example of how the vignettes force us to practice Communimetric principles. Read the item description at the top of each item in the Caregiver Resources and Needs domain, then go through the vignette and see if you have actual evidence of that caregiver need. Remember to focus on the action levels here. If, for example, the caregiver has mental health issues but is parenting well, the action level for "Mental Health" would likely be a '1.'