



ONTARIO COMMON ASSESSMENT OF NEED

OACAN & COVID-19 FAQs

This document is a summary of the questions and answers from stakeholders on EENet Connects's OACAN space. Visit eenetconnect.ca/g/oacan-community-of-interest

How is your organization assessing clients during this challenging period of physical distancing due to COVID-19?

Organizations are communicating with clients through the phone, videoconferencing, social media, mail, Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), and in person with physical distancing. Each staff member decides which method to use with each client based on their relationship with the client and knowledge of their needs and preferences. Any of these methods can be used to complete the OACAN.

Some organizations have also converted the self-assessment into a PDF that clients can complete on a computer or mobile device and send back. To complete the staff portion, staff ask clients the questions and enter responses directly into the computer. This saves time because they don't need to transfer responses from a paper copy into the electronic version.

Since most front-line workers are not meeting all their clients in person, they have less travel time. They're being encouraged to use the extra time to monitor and follow-up on their caseloads' OACAN re-assessments.

How are programs completing the OACAN tool over the phone?

In general, think of the OACAN as a tool that enables you to have a natural conversation

with your client about their needs and concerns, which you can also do over the phone. Focus on those domains and areas of need that are most important to your clients.

If you think your client can manage to discuss all 24 domains, go for it. For other clients, it may be best to only cover those where they have strengths and unmet needs. Tie these discussions to actions that are most important to the client and develop a service plan that focuses on that.

Some programs are also reaching out to people on their wait list to offer support and help them complete the self-assessment on the phone. These programs may decide to continue this practice after the pandemic.

When helping a client with the self-assessment over the phone, the ideal approach includes the following steps::

- Explain the benefits of the self-assessment. Emphasize that they can skip any domain or question they don't want to answer.
- Review the instructions with the client.
- Go through each question, rating each need and documenting comments from the client's perspective.
- Ensure you don't influence the client's responses.

If you think a client might find completing all the domains at once too difficult or overwhelming, split it into two calls.

When completing OCAN on the phone, are programs accepting verbal consent to share it in the Integrated Assessment Record?

Many organizations feel comfortable obtaining clients' verbal consent. It's especially important to obtain verbal consent when doing the first OCAN with a new client and to document this in your organization's database.

Each organization has its own policies and procedures regarding collecting, using and disclosing personal health information. Staff should be following their organization's processes, which may have been modified due to more virtual interactions with clients.

What are people doing about clients who don't have phones?

It is certainly challenging to check in with clients who don't have access to a phone, mobile device, or computer. Many organizations are reaching out to these clients by mailing them information packages and cards to let them know they're still available to provide services. In some cases, they're including a hard copy of the OCAN self-assessment with a stamped return envelope with instructions on how to complete the self-assessment and send it back.

Some organizations are also looking at other options, such as completing OCANS face-to-face using physical distancing measures. Some organizations are considering re-opening one site, where staff can meet with clients by appointment (either wearing PPE or using a Plexiglas barrier) or by giving the client access to a computer or mobile device

they can use on site to meet virtually with their provider. This option would also require disinfecting all equipment between clients.

How are programs across the province training staff on the OCAN tool during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Before COVID-19, many organizations had their staff complete the OCAN online training from CCIM as well as in-person sessions.

Since physical distancing measures are now in place, these organizations are only using the OCAN online training module to ensure that new staff have the capability to use it.

Here are some suggestions for training:

- At a minimum, staff should complete the online OCAN training. It covers what you need to know to be able to complete an OCAN. It's also a good idea for staff who have been using OCAN for a long time to complete the online training as a refresher. This course also has new material that all staff will find useful.
- Ensure that you have an OCAN mentor/trainer in your organization who can answer questions about the online training and the use of OCAN with clients.
- Have the mentor/trainer plan and run a virtual meeting to reinforce what staff learned in the online training.
- Periodically have the mentor do virtual refresher trainings. This can be done in different ways, such as:
 - Completing an OCAN re-assessment together for a known client
 - Running an OCAN meeting with items for discussion. For example:
 - Which domains are confusing for clients?
 - What are the challenges with completing self-assessments?
 - How are you using the information from OCAN?)