



Returning to School After Hospitalization

A guide for parents and educators



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The transition back to home and school routines after an inpatient hospitalization can be both exciting and stressful for you and your child. Offering the appropriate support during this transition time can be an important factor in your child's recovery and rehabilitation.

Patience, structure, and an ongoing treatment process that includes the entire family are often the most vital tools for success. During this transition, it's important to surround your child with the appropriate resources and supports that will help create an ongoing positive experience.

Important Questions For Parents

Your child's treatment team will offer guidance on how much support your child will need when returning to both home and school. These are common questions for families to consider when developing long-term mental health treatment goals.

- How much supervision does your child require during this transition period?
- Do we have a home safety plan developed?
- How long can my child be left alone?
- When can my child resume and participate in previous daily activities and/or extra-curriculars?
- What is an appropriate time frame to increase independence?
- What services are recommended for ongoing treatment?
- What are my child's long-term treatment goals, and how are these goals going to be measured?

Keep Things Realistic

Bumps in the road after a hospitalization are normal and need to be kept in perspective. It's not realistic to expect that the factors that led to the hospitalization will be completely resolved at discharge.

For many adolescents, the structure and routine in a hospital setting can make managing certain stressors much easier. However, returning home and to school often means returning to the same patterns and stressors that contributed to the hospitalization.

It's important to understand that setbacks are to be expected and need to be met with patience and a shared sense of responsibility. Not every setback means failure. In fact, it's often an opportunity to develop new skills and build resiliency.

Unsure about involving school resources?

Even with proper planning and collaboration, the transition back to school can still be challenging. However, many schools have resource teams available to help you and your child with this transition process.

While you may be concerned that school involvement may be stigmatizing, it's important to understand that your child's level of involvement with school services is a family decision.

Homework For Parents

- Offer verbal encouragement “I’m so glad you are back home. I don’t expect you to be perfect. I am here to support you”.
- Remind your child that you aren’t always going to handle things perfectly but that you are committed to working through it as a team.
- When problems arise - take a deep breath and pause before responding.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child.
- Set aside dedicated time for open family discussions and one on one conversations.
- Embrace active listening - listen to understand, not to respond.
- Keep your own expectations and emotional responses in check with what's realistic.
- Create family goals and ways the entire family can contribute to a safe and supportive home for everyone.
- Work together to establish a list of self-care practices and coping skills for both you and your child.
- Participate in outpatient groups, family therapy, and/or individual therapy sessions.

If informing school staff of a recent hospitalization is a concern to you, ensure your child is aware of the following:

- The types of school mental health services available.
- Where the services are located on campus.
- Who to connect with at the school if they are in need of support.
- Your family's safety plan – as provided by a mental health provider.



Coping Skills "On-The-Go"

Scan the QR code to download and bookmark a digital guide of helpful coping skills that may help your child when stressful situations emerge!

Steps For Educators To Support Students & Families

There are many steps educators can take to help support students and their families with the transition back to school. Below is a list of important things to prioritize during this process:

- Educate the family on available school resources available.
- Ensure the family and all involved school staff have a clear understanding of confidentiality to help avoid issues pertaining to gossip and/or accidental stigmatizing behaviors.
- Educate the family on options for levels of involvement from school services to determine which members of school administration and faculty are appropriate to involve in family meetings.
- Involve the student in planning meetings and obtain feedback about what they think will help the most.
- Assist the family in developing a school and/or home safety plan.
- Utilize peer support groups, tutoring, and other academic supports to help the student catch up on any work missed.
- Consider partial school-day or remote options to accommodate for step-down outpatient programming that may be needed post-hospitalization.

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Resources



**San Antonio Behavioral
Healthcare Hospital**
(210) 541-5300
24-hour admissions line



The Jason Foundation
(800) 273-Talk (8255)
Teen suicide prevention services
Text “Jason” to 741741



**National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline**
988
24-hour support line staffed
with trained counselors



Texas Youth Helpline
(512)872-5777
24-hour support line staffed
with trained counselors