

**OTHER ISSUES AND OPTIONS SURROUNDING A STUDENT'S RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Any number of issues are likely to surface and will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and addressed at the re-entry planning session. It is very likely that some of the school staff, the family, the mental health professional and the student will express concerns. Some of the more common issues are listed below:

**1. Issue: Transition from the hospital setting****Options:**

- Visit the student in the hospital or home to begin the re-entry process with permission from the parent/guardian.
- Consult with the student to discuss what support he/she feels that he/she needs to make a more successful transition. Seek information about what the student would like communicated to friends and peers about what happened.
- Request permission to attend the treatment planning meetings and the hospital discharge conference.
- Arrange for the student to work on some school assignments while in the hospital.
- Include the therapist/counselor in the school re-entry planning meeting.

**2. Issue: Family concerns (denial, guilt, lack of support, social embarrassment, anxiety, etc.)****Options:**

- Schedule a family conference with designated school personnel or home-school coordinator to address their concerns.
- Include parents in the re-entry planning meeting.
- Refer the family to an outside community agency for family counseling services.
- Include information about those with sliding fee scale.

**3. Issue: Social and Peer Relations****Options:**

- Schedule a meeting with friends prior to re-entry to discuss their feelings regarding their friend, how to relate and when to be concerned.
- Place the student in a school-based support group, peer helpers program but not as the helper, or buddy system.
- Arrange for a transfer to another school if indicated.
- Be sensitive to the need for confidentiality and how to restrict gossip.

**4. Issue: Academic concerns upon return to school****Options:**

- Ask the student about his/her academic concerns and discuss potential options.
- Arrange tutoring from peers or teachers.
- Modify the schedule and adjust the course load to relieve stress.
- Allow make-up work to be adjusted and extended without penalty.
- Monitor the student's progress.

**5. Issue: Medication**

**Options:**

- Alert the school nurse to obtain information regarding prescribed medication and possible side effects.
- Notify teachers if significant side effects are anticipated.
- Follow the policy of having the school nurse monitor and dispense all medication taken by the student at school.

**6. Issue: Behavior and attendance problems**

**Options:**

- Meet with teachers to help them anticipate appropriate limits and consequences of behavior.
- Discuss concerns and options with the student.
- Consult with discipline administrator.
- Request daily attendance report from attendance office.
- Make home visits or regularly schedule parent conferences to review attendance and discipline record.
- Arrange for counseling for student.
- Place the student on a sign in/out attendance sheet to be signed by the classroom teachers and returned to the attendance office at the end of the school day.

**7. Issue: Ongoing support\***

**Options:**

- Assign a school liaison to meet regularly with the student at established times. Talk to the student about his/her natural contact at school – try to assign the person who already has a relationship with the student.
- Maintain contact with the therapist and parents.
- Ask the student to check in with the school counselor daily/weekly.
- Utilize established support systems, Student Assistance Teams, support groups, friends, clubs and organizations.
- Schedule follow-up sessions with the school psychologist or home school coordinator.
- Provide information to families on available community resources when school is not in session.

\*In the event that a student loses a family member to suicide, school personnel should understand that suicide evokes a special, complicated grief and most of the on-going support considerations mentioned in #7 would also apply.