

Collaboration between Schools and Acute Psychiatric Services: A Guide for Families

If your child is facing mental health challenges, you may be asked to allow schools and treatment teams to communicate about their care and education.

Why collaborate?

- Ensure families, treatment teams, and school staff share a clear understanding of your child's needs and supports
- Promote consistent expectations and strategies across settings
- Reduce misunderstandings and stress through coordinated communication
- Provide steady support during transitions between school and psychiatric care

What are the benefits of collaboration?

Children and Families

- Smooth transition back to school after hospitalization or partial hospitalization
- Minimize the impact of acute mental health concerns on school and align support that addresses both academic and emotional needs
- Streamlined communication & planning between school, family, and treatment teams
- Reduce the need to repeat certain information to multiple providers/school staff

Treatment Teams and Schools

- Shared, holistic understanding of the child's needs and strengths
- Informed & aligned treatment, discharge, and school re-entry planning
- Consistent support strategies across settings
- Fewer crisis-driven responses and re-hospitalizations
- Enhanced communication and collaboration with families

What are the roles and rights of families?

- Providing written or verbal consent for communication
- Sharing your valuable insights about your child's strengths, needs, and triggers
- Participating in planning meetings and next-step decisions
- Communicating questions, concerns, or updates
- Reinforcing coping strategies and supports at home



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What can collaboration look like?

Collaboration between Schools and Inpatient / Partial Hospitalization Treatment Teams:

- Schools provide insights into your child's strengths, challenges, and school supports
- Treatment team shares direct recommendations for academic, emotional, and behavioral support at school and home after discharge or during re-entry
- Support for keeping up with schoolwork while hospitalized or in the partial program
- Support a smooth transition back to school, including timelines, accommodations, and expectations
- Joint efforts around safety planning and coping strategies to ensure that safety plans will actually work within the school setting as well as at home

Frequently Asked Questions

Who will have access to this information?

- Only individuals directly involved in supporting your child within the teams that you give consent to (e.g., inpatient/partial hospitalization team, school team members working to support your child).

What information will be shared?

- Only what is necessary to support your child's safety, learning, and emotional well-being (e.g., school functioning, recommended supports, accommodations, transition plans). You can provide input on what's shared.

Can I change my mind?

- Yes. Families can withdraw or adjust consent at any time, and communication will be tailored to your comfort level.

Are families involved in decisions?

- Yes. Families play a key role in planning and care. You have a very valuable perspective and are critical to understanding and supporting your child!

What if I disagree with recommendations?

- Your perspective matters! We encourage families to openly communicate questions and concerns and collaborate with school and treatment team to determine the best plan for your child.

Will my child be labeled or treated differently?

- Information is shared to promote deeper understanding and ensure appropriate support for your child, not to label or stigmatize.



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