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# Working with Students Returning from a Mental Health Crisis

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# Crisis If you had a student returning from school after a hospitalization for any other reason, you would help them transition back to school. This situation is no different.

#### Mental Health Crisis

- In-patient treatment
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Self injury
- Extreme anxiety
- Phobia
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Other crisis



# **During the Crisis**

- Contact Parents/guardians immediately
- Provide as much information to the family as possible
- Send resources with the family
  - Third Party Affidavit
  - Emergency Notification Form
  - Treatment facilities
  - Other supports
- Ask for a re-entry meeting at least one day before the student returns
   EDUCATION

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#### **During the Crisis**

- If you cannot reach parents/guardians, police should be contacted
  - Police will take student into protective custody
  - Police will take the student to get a mental health evaluation
- If parents/guardians won't take their son/daughter to receive a mental health evaluation two things should be done
  - Contact police
  - Contact DHS



#### **During the Crisis**

- Assure the student and his/her family that school should be the last thing that they should worry about
- Assure the student and his/her family that absences will be excused
- Assure the student and his/her family that you will work with them and with the other staff to help transition back
- Ask the student and his/her family what is ok to tell the need-to-know staff members



#### **Our Duty**

- Show empathy
- Providing a safe space
- Advocacy with other staff members
- Communication with the parents/guardians
- Explaining options for student
  - Thinking outside of the box in order to help the student



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# Provide a Safe Space

- Permission for student to see you anytime
  - Check for a pattern
  - Set a timer
- Check in, check out
- Regular times to touch base
- Back-up plan
  - Favorite teacher
  - Office Staff
  - Another counselor or other administrator



# Advocacy with Other Staff

- Train teachers in advance
- Tell teachers, secretaries, principals, etc. only what they NEED to know
- Get permission from the family
- Essential assignments only
- Excused absences
- Consider a 504



#### Why a 504?

- A diagnosed mental health condition is no different than any other chronic health condition
- Accommodations are frequently needed
- Medications may need to be taken at school



#### Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Contact the family the same day and/or day after the crisis
- Contact family to set up a transition meeting
- Greet family and student before meeting
- Be the touchstone with the family once the student returns



# Explaining the Options

- Consider the 504 as a team
- Thinking outside the box to accommodate the student whether they are on a 504 or not
  - Regular touchbase
  - Adjusted schedule
  - Modified assignments/work
  - Are animals allowed?
    - The difference between service animal, therapy animal and emotional support animal



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#### **Animals**

- Service & Emotional support animals
  - Require a 504 or an IEP
  - Impairment must be documented by a doctor
  - Animal must be trained (different levels of trainings)
- Therapy animals
  - Not for those with a disability, they are for service providers
  - Animal/handler must be certified
  - District decision



#### Therapy Dogs

- Certification required
- Insurance needed
- District decision
- Pros and cons





# Student Re-entry Planning

- Set appointment with parent as soon as possible
- Find out date when student wants to return to school
  - Take into consideration tests, finals, etc.
- Let teachers know ahead of time what you will be asking of them



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# Student Re-entry Planning

- You could ask teachers to:
  - Forgive non-essential assignments
  - Work with student on deadlines and make-up work
  - Modifying assignments in the future
  - Shortening the school day
  - Etc.



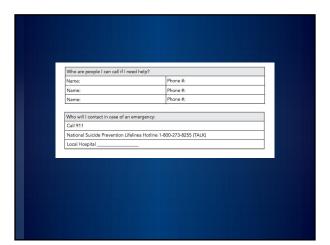
# Student Re-entry Planning

- You will need:
  - Signed release of information on mental health provider
  - Student Safety Plan
  - Invite all interested parties (teachers, principal, mental health provider, coaches, IEP teacher of record, family, etc.)
  - Information about a 504 plan or an IEP





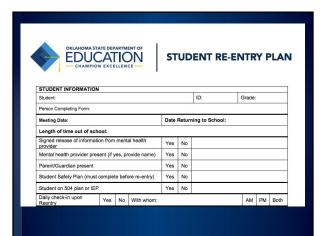
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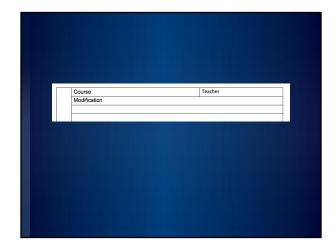
# Student Re-entry Planning

- At the meeting you will need to know:
  - Family concerns about re-entry
  - Academic concerns
  - Mental health provider concerns
  - Mental health provider recommendations
  - Doctor's Note
  - Have they been enrolled someplace else during their treatment?
- Ask teachers to bring list of work student needs to make up (remember to ask for non-essential items to be excused)





Academic Concern	is			
Re-entry Conferen	ce (Names & titles of all preser	t)		
Modification on cour	se assignments (list course an	d if assignments can be modified) L	ist modification	is on back
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