

How teachers can support students after a trauma



After a trauma, children and teens may need support when returning to school. Trauma may cause both physical and emotional changes. Many students worry about how their class might view or treat them after an accident or injury. Students may also be concerned about their ability to complete schoolwork or keep up with the rest of their class. Students can overcome these worries and challenges with the support and guidance of their teachers.

How teachers can help

1. Treat the student as normal as possible. Keep up with typical routines in the classroom.
2. Learn about the trauma and what impact the event has had on the student.
3. Visit with the student and their parents before the student returns to school. Talk about any concerns or fears the student may have. Ask questions to better understand the student's experience such as, "Is there anything you are worried about?"
4. Prepare the class for any physical or emotional changes the student may have. Offer ways the class can be helpful.
5. When possible, change the amount of work that you give to the student if they cannot complete long assignments.
6. Focus on the most important coursework. It may be hard for the student to do all of the busywork at first. Skip the busywork when possible.
7. Encourage the student to do the best they can. Find the fine line between frustration and challenge.
8. If the student is still in the hospital, help the student stay connected to their class. You may:
 - Visit them in the hospital.
 - Encourage classmates to text, call or write to the student.
 - Send pictures and videos of the class.
9. Give the student healthy boundaries. Do what you say you are going to do.
10. Give the student clear, realistic expectations.

If you need further help or support, reach out to your school counselor and doctor. The student may be affiliated with a Certified Child Life Specialist from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Child Life Specialists are professionals that provide coping support to children in the hospital. Please reach out to the student's Child Life Specialist with any questions or concerns.

Child Life Specialist _____

Phone and Email _____

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.