

BIT members and case managers need to be informed when their students have been hospitalized so that they can partner with the treatment providers, be in communication with the student about any support they need and assist them in transitioning back to campus. Following a behavioral health hospitalization, students returning to campus must catch up in their classes, find treatment providers, explain their disappearance to friends on campus, and continue to recover from whatever difficulties led to the hospitalization in the first place. These students need the support and assistance offered by the BIT and/or case managers in their transition back to campus.

When our systems work perfectly, the BIT receives a referral notifying them that a student has been hospitalized; however, there are often times when the student takes themselves to the hospital, they are hospitalized by an off-campus agency, etc., and no one on campus has knowledge of the hospitalization. In these instances, it can be helpful to have pre-established relationships with the local hospitals. If the hospitals know about the BIT and/or the case management program, they can work with the student to obtain a release of information and they can make the referral to the BIT.

Fostering the relationships with the local hospitals takes time, and it needs to be done intentionally, but the payoff in terms of increased referrals and thus increased support to the student is worth it. At the beginning of each year, reach out to the area behavioral health units and request a time to meet in person. Discharge planners tend to be overtasked and under-resourced and are always looking for more resources for the discharge planning. During this meeting with the hospital, aim to accomplish the following:

1. Overview of your services: Let the staff know what it is that you do to support students. Explain that you are helpful in nature and not punitive so as to dispel any myths that the student would be in trouble. Provide specific examples of how you can help them in their job by also assisting the student in connecting with treatment providers post-discharge and providing supportive care and follow up.
2. Explain the referral process: Submitting a BIT referral is not a common process for hospital staff. To make a referral, their normal process includes providing a business card or flyer to the patient and telling them to follow up. The BIT process is very different from this as we want the hospital to fill out the referral form on behalf of the student. Provide context for the purpose of this process as well as specific information about how they can complete a referral.
3. Leave student-friendly materials: The staff needs to motivate the student to sign a release in order to make the referral. Students therefore need to

understand how the referral helps them and why the release is important. Provide specific examples of how a student might benefit from connecting with you, such as assistance communicating with professors, facilitation of connection to resources, etc. Having materials that explain what you do and how you do it will help the staff explain your services to the student so that they will be able to obtain a release of information.

4. Baked goods! Your goal in this meeting is to foster relationships and make a memorable impact. Bribery with cookies, cupcakes, pastries, etc., can go a long way with hospital staff.

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