

STEP's Tips for Working with Schools

- Always be sure to have permission from the student/client and parent!
- The school social worker or school psychologist is the ideal staff person to coordinate with (understanding of and experience with mental health conditions, most familiar with how to interface between mental health system and educational system, most likely to be aligned on goals i.e. supporting both mental health recovery and school success)
- Be prepared to provide plenty of psychoeducation about mental health and especially psychosis, especially to school personnel who do not have a background in mental health, in particular:
 - what psychosis is (symptoms)
 - how it can affect a student's/client's school performance and interactions with others
 - debunking (e.g. decline in academic functioning is not because of a lack of willpower or because student/client doesn't care about school; psychosis does not mean "psychopath" or "split personality" or that the student is inherently a danger to other people)
- Share treatment goals, interventions, expected side effects of medications, ideas about what supports/accommodations the student/client might need, coping skills that the student/client finds helpful (e.g. listening to music, drawing, having a fidget toy)
- Solicit collateral from school personnel about concerns/progress observed in the student/client
- Notify the school of any relevant risk issues, share and/or develop together a safety plan for the student, and be willing to give input into the safety plan that the school puts in place (e.g. when to use coping skills in class, when to go talk with the school social worker/psychologist, when to call 211, when to call 911 – just because a student/client may be having some auditory hallucinations while at school does not necessarily mean that 911 needs to be called)