

## Why Your School Needs a Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT)

Following concussion, research indicates that students should return to school after a short period of rest (e.g., 24-48 hours). If schools have a plan in place to monitor students, based on what we currently know about concussion, students should: a) recover faster, b) remain in school while recovering, c) not fall as far behind, and d) experience lower stress because there is a team who understands their needs.

The Colorado Department of Education's BrainSTEPS CO has partnered with Pennsylvania BrainSTEPS to bring **Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT)** training to Colorado educators. BrainSTEPS CO's Return to Learn CMTs support students returning to the demands of school while promoting recovery. The Return to Learn CMT focuses on the student's academics during recovery from concussion. CMTs monitor both student athletes and non-athletes and regularly communicate with the student's teachers, parents, medical provider, and for student athletes, the athletic department.

### Return to Learn CMT Training:

- is based on current research and best practices
- covers the educational impacts of concussion and specific CMT roles
- is a free online course for Colorado educators forming CMTs
- takes approximately 5.5 hours to complete (participants may stop and start at any point)
- provides a downloadable toolkit which includes separate symptom monitoring forms for elementary and middle/high school students, academic monitoring forms, and teacher/parent form letters.

### The Return to Learn Concussion Management Team

Building level Return to Learn CMTs are comprised of a *minimum* of two persons:

1. Academic Monitor: monitors the student's academics using a one-page tool one time per week
2. Symptom Monitor: monitors the student's symptoms using a student self-reporting tool one time per week.

In addition to monitoring the student's academics and symptoms, the two-person CMT assists teachers with implementation of academic adjustments for the student until recovery. The CMT serves as the "Concussion Coordinators" collecting data and gathering information.

If at the end of six weeks concussion symptoms are still impacting the student's learning, the CMT refers the student to the district's BrainSTEPS CO Brain Injury Consulting Team (or the district's student assistance team if the district does not have a BrainSTEPS CO team) for further evaluation and monitoring.

### WHY Should a School Establish a CMT to Monitor Symptoms and Academics?

- Districts must begin collecting appropriate student data to demonstrate why academic adjustments are needed, require fine-tuning, or may no longer be needed. Data should drive all decision making to protect both the district and student.
  - Using the CMT one-page Academic Monitoring Tool and CMT one-page Symptom Monitoring Tool, CMTs can easily gather decision making data.

- Districts should have a streamlined system for students returning to school following concussions, utilizing trained professionals within their district who understand the needs of students during the initial weeks post-concussion.
- **Colorado schools need to build the capacity of educators to handle the 70% of concussions that resolve within the first month (based on research and nationally recognized best practices). It is important that schools immediately accommodate student academics, to alleviate prolonged concussion recovery.**

### **Who should be the Monitors on Your Return to Learn Concussion Management Team?**

School-based professionals who are in the school building during the day and provide services to both non-athletes and athletes such as:

- School nurse
- School psychologist
- School guidance counselor
- School social worker
- School Administrator/supervisor...

Athletic trainers\* and coaches should not serve as the Academic or Symptom Monitors for the purpose of this Return to Learn CMT. CMTs must be available to all students, athletes and non-athletes. (\*The Athletic Trainer's role is crucial for recovering student athletes, so keeping them in the communication loop is vital.)

### **I want to form a CMT at my school, what should I do?**

Registration is a two-step process. Please be sure both steps are completed for your CMT.

**STEP 1:** Go to [www.brainsteps.net](http://www.brainsteps.net) and click on CO Concussion Management Team Registration (at bottom of page).

For your school team members to take the concussion training, you must have AT LEAST 1 Academic Monitor and 1 Symptom Monitor listed on your CMT. This list will be used by the BrainSTEPS Program Coordinator to APPROVE each member's registration on the official CMT Training site when they register to have an account. Additional persons who will serve on the team may also be added.

By participating, you are agreeing that your school will implement a return to learn process using the CMT members. A power point presentation will be provided to teams during the training, so they can present the Return to Learn CMT model to your school staff.

**STEP 2:** Each account will be validated. Once this validation occurs, each individual account holder will receive an automated email with their training log in information activation. This should occur within approximately 2 business days.

Questions contact:

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