

Supporting Students after Concussion

A concussion is a mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) that can affect a student's thinking, learning, behavior, and school performance. A coordinated, multidisciplinary school-based approach ensures the student has a safe, supported, and successful transition back to the classroom. Concussion Management Teams (CMTs) help schools streamline communication, monitor recovery, and implement effective Return-to-Learn supports.



What Is a Concussion Management Team (CMT)?

A Concussion Management Team (CMT) is a group of school professionals who support a student's gradual return to school following a concussion. The team works together to address the student's academic, medical, emotional, and social needs while providing consistent guidance to the student, family, and teachers. The CMT's primary goal is to help the student safely and gradually re-engage in school without worsening symptoms. Regular meetings ensure timely support and a shared understanding of the student's needs.

A CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT TEAM HELPS TO:

-  monitor symptoms and academic challenges during recovery
-  recommend, implement, and adjust academic accommodations (may be based on physician referral)
-  coordinate communication among families, healthcare providers, and school staff
-  support both Return-to-Learn and Return-to-Play (or return to other school activities)
-  promote a seamless reintegration into school without worsening symptoms

Leadership and Coordination

The school nurse or another related medical professional often coordinates the Concussion Management Team. They may:

- communicate regularly with families, teachers, and healthcare providers
- track symptoms and evaluate how post-concussive symptoms affect school performance
- lead the team in implementing Return-to-Learn strategies on a case-by-case basis
- develop an Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP) when the student has prolonged symptoms, medical complexity, or mental health concerns and make referrals to appropriate professionals as needed
- consider including other school resource professionals as needed (counselors, athletic directors, etc.)



The **Concussion Management Team Coordinator** helps to ensure that the student's recovery plan is both medically informed and educationally appropriate.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Who Might Serve on the Concussion Management Team?

ACADEMIC TEAM

School Counselor or Guidance Counselor
Social Worker
School Psychologist
Classroom Teachers
Special Education/CST Staff
Administrators

MEDICAL TEAM

School Nurse
Physician or School-Affiliated Medical Consultant
Rehabilitation Professionals (OT, PT, speech-language specialists)

ATHLETIC TEAM

Athletic Trainer
Coach
Athletic Director
Physical Education Teacher

STUDENT AND FAMILY

The student and family are central members of the team. They participate in planning, report symptoms, and help put recommendations into practice. Their perspective is essential at every step.

What Supports Do Students Need During Recovery?

Students may need short-term accommodations as they return to school, including but not limited to:

- modified workload or reduced assignments
- breaks for rest throughout the day
- limited screen time
- reduced exposure to light or noise
- extra time for tests and homework
- a gradual increase in school and cognitive activities
- eating lunch in a quiet environment
- not being allowed in the school gymnasium, pool, or fields

A CMT ensures these supports are properly implemented and adjusted as symptoms improve.



How can BIANJ Help Your School?

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey offers training, guidance, and ongoing support to help schools develop and maintain effective Concussion Management Teams. We provide:

- training on concussion in youth sports and Return-to-Play guidelines, as well as Return-to-Learn strategies for the classroom
- assistance in creating or strengthening school-based Concussion Management Teams
- workshops for student-athletes, coaches and teachers
- support and resource facilitation for students and families



Contact BIANJ to learn how your school can establish or strengthen a Concussion Management Team.

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