Return to Learn After Concussion:
Why Every Pennsylvania School Should Have a Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT)
Why Your School Should Participate in the Free, Online, On-Demand Official Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT) Training Course

Current research demonstrates high levels of cognitive activity (thinking) following concussion prolongs recovery for up to 100 days in students, compared to 20-30 days for students who are provided accommodations immediately (Journal of Pediatrics, 1/6/14). Therefore, it is important for schools to implement appropriate academic accommodations upon notification of a student’s concussion, to alleviate prolonged concussion recovery.

Approximately 70% of students should recover within 4 weeks.
30% of students may have a prolonged recovery.

Return to Learn CMTs monitor both student athletes and non-athletes.

The Return to Learn Concussion Management Teams (CMTs) are trained to support students returning to the demands of school while promoting recovery for the initial 4-6 weeks post concussion. For those students who do not recover at that time, schools agree to make an online student referral to the local Intermediate Unit BrainSTEPS team at www.brainsteps.net.

The Return to Learn CMT consists of 2 team leaders + up to 8 additional team members per CMT. The team leaders are:

- **1 Academic Monitor**: monitors student academics using a 1 sided page tool, 1 time per week
- **1 Symptom Monitor**: monitors student symptoms using student self-reporting 1x per week

- The CMT assists teachers with implementation of academic adjustments through recovery.
- Some districts establish several CMTs per school building, while others establish CMTs for each high school grade. You can determine what works for your district. One CMT Monitor can serve on several CMTs (ie., a school nurse can sit as Symptom Monitor on more than one CMT)
Should we take the new CMT training if we trained already through the old CMT training (between 2013-2016)?

*Why should PRIOR CMTs attend the NEW, updated CMT Training?*

The Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT) training is HIGHLY recommended for prior CMTs for multiple reasons:

- The last training was 3 hours, the new training is 5.5 hours, so there are two additional hours of content.
- We are not using the prior CMT master list anymore. We are starting a brand new CMT listing for the state reporting purposes. Therefore, none of the prior CMTs can be grandfathered in.
- The last CMT training was created in January 2013. The new one was created summer of 2017.
- Concussion research has changed.
- Return to learn processes have changed.
- The return to learn protocol has changed. The concussion monitoring toolkit has been updated.
- The rest recommendations have changed.
- The last training did not include anything on the psychological impacts of a concussion.
- The frequency of Symptom and Academic monitoring has changed.
- This training includes the 1st National Concussion Return to Learn Consensus statements.
- This training allows for the FULL concussion team to be trained, not just the Academic and Symptom Monitors.
- Ensure that your school building CMTs have received the latest up to date concussion training available, in case your school is ever pulled into a litigious situation. It happens!

By registering your Concussion Management Teams (CMTs) at www.brainsteps.net:

- CMTs partner with their regional Intermediate Unit-based BrainSTEPS Team.
  - Return to Learn CMTs are not BrainSTEPS Teams.
- The Return to Learn CMT training is based on current research and national consensus-based practices.
- BrainSTEPS offers training and additional consultation to the student’s team of teachers when a referral is made at 4-6 weeks, based entirely on that student's individual needs.
- BrainSTEPS facilitates the communication loop between medical professionals, families, and schools, and offers families concussion resources and support.
- BrainSTEPS offers CMTs ongoing information through monthly Community of Practice CMT Online Meetings & Intermediate Unit BrainSTEPS Team hosted annual networking meetings.
- BrainSTEPS has strong partnerships with concussion clinics across the state, facilitating in smoother student referrals and communication between school and medical teams.

Students following a concussion are referred to BrainSTEPS at 4-6 weeks if not recovered.

- BrainSTEPS trains the school-based CMTs to manage concussions for the initial 4-6 weeks only.
- BrainSTEPS Teams have experience, training and resources that go above and beyond the 4-6 week mark, to manage concussions that are complex and/or prolonged.
- BrainSTEPS works with the school team at 4-6 weeks to create a unique “Brain Injury Support Framework” for accommodations that will create an even more individualized plan for students following concussion.

WHY should a district set up a CMT to monitor symptoms and academics?

- Progress Monitoring: Districts must collect appropriate student data to demonstrate why accommodations are needed, need adjusted, or may no longer be needed.
  - Data should drive all decision making to protect both the district and student.
  - Using the 1 page Academic Monitoring Tool and 1 page Symptom Monitoring Tool, teams can easily gather the necessary data to justify all of educational decisions.
- Districts should have a streamlined system for students returning to school following concussion, utilizing trained professionals within their district who understand the needs of students during the initial weeks post-concussion.
  - Having a trained CMT will save schools time and effort when managing student concussions.
- The purpose of the Return to Learn CMT model is to work with PA school districts to build educators’ capacity to handle the 70% of concussions that resolve in the first month, based on research and nationally recognized best practices.
  - It is important that schools immediately accommodate student academics, to alleviate a prolonged concussion recovery.
BrainSTEPS

Student Referral Process

- **Student experiences a Concussion**
  - School Concussion Management Team (CMT)
  - CMT Symptom Monitor
  - Weekly Monitoring
  - CMT Academic Monitor
  - Symptoms Resolve
  - Symptoms Do Not Resolve

- **Referrals from Parents for all severities of Acquired Brain Injury**
- **Referral from School CMT at 4-6 Weeks Post-Concussion**
- **Referrals from Schools= All severities of Acquired Brain Injury**
- **Referrals from Healthcare Providers=All severities of Acquired Brain Injury**

**BrainSTEPS Program**

Management of concussion by school-based Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT)

Referrals of all Acquired Brain Injuries that include both traumatic brain injuries and non-traumatic brain injuries (including concussions that do not resolve within 4-6 weeks), to the BrainSTEPS Program

To make a student referral go to: www.brainsteps.net
Steps to Register School-Based Teams

Official Return to Learn Concussion Management Team (CMT) Training Course

STEP 1: One person from the school building (preferably the administrator) must go to:

- www.brainsteps.net
- Click on the appropriate state’s orange button: “Concussion Management Team Registration”

Enter the names of each individual team member who will be serving on the Concussion Management Team (CMT). Only add one name per line. Do not list multiple people in one slot.

If a school building has more than one CMT, this form will need to be filled out separately for each team.

Each separate school-based CMT must consist of at least 1 Academic Monitor and 1 Symptom Monitor per team (only 1 of each monitor per CMT). (i.e., If you have several Academic Monitors, they must be registered on separate CMTs).

Team members will not be approved for the training course unless their name is on this CMT list.

The CMT training course is intended to provide training and processes specific to CMT members so they understand how to monitor and academically support students following a concussion.

- The course is not intended for district wide-in-services.
- The course must be viewed individually. It can be viewed over multiple sessions.
- There is no deadline to complete this training.

STEP 2: Next, each individual team member must register at concussions.brainsteps.net to view the online 5.5 hour interactive Official Return to Learn CMT Training Course.

*Only school district email addresses will be approved.

STEP 3: Within a few days, the BrainSTEPS Program will cross-check each team member’s name with the school provided list of CMT members from STEP 1.

- An automated email will be sent to each CMT member when their account has been approved (typically takes 48 hours).

**IMPORTANT—->An automated email will come from notifications@encour.se

*Please ensure this email address is unblocked from your district’s firewall prior to registering or you will not receive the log-in notification email that contains the link.