

# Mental Health, Hospital & Young People

## (For young people)

Being in and out of hospital can be really stressful. We see this in the play through all of the characters who cope with this in different ways - such as humour, distraction and social media.

**Being in Hospital:** Hospitals can be anxiety-inducing environments. There can be lots of different noises and uncertainty. Patients can feel a loss of control over how their days go. For people in hospital, there may be long periods of time where they are waiting for updates on their health or feel too unwell to do the things they want to. Being empathetic and understanding can be really helpful for someone who is going through it.

**School & Learning:** For many young people with medical or mental health conditions, being in school can really help with recovery and overall wellbeing. Being away from friends, and the school routine can be an isolating experience.

Staying connected to school life (for as much time as feels manageable) can be an important part of feeling better, both physically and mentally.

Some hospitals have schools which can be helpful for routine and continued learning in a way that works for the unwell student.

**How to support them:** Sometimes we can feel uncomfortable when someone is going through something we can't imagine. Although we might not always know what to say, it's really important to stay in touch and let them know that we're there.

- Stay in touch (with no pressure). Your friend may not be communicating like they normally do. They might be taking longer to reply or writing shorter messages. Let them know there's no rush to reply if you check in with them and that you want them to know you're thinking of them.
- They might not always feel like talking about hospital or how they are feeling. Why not send them a playlist, video they'd like or share a memory or photo to make them smile?
- Check if they'd like to still be included in group chats and making plans. They may not feel up to it, but will appreciate you thinking of them.
- Treat them as you normally do and don't disappear even if it feels awkward.

Remember that you're their friend, not a medical professional. If they say anything that worries you, you must let a trusted adult know as soon as possible.

# Mental Health, Hospital & Young People (For adults)



For many reasons, hospital stays can have a big impact on a young person's mental health. For adults supporting them, it can be really useful to have an understanding of different factors, helping them to readapt as easily as they can.



**Quiet spaces:** After being in hospital, places like schools and extra curricular groups may feel busy and overwhelming. Check in with the young person ahead of time and ask if a quiet space would be helpful. Let them know where it will be and how they can access it.

**Fatigue:** Young people may experience fatigue after hospital. They may wish to be back involved in activities but be anxious about their abilities to do them like before. Is there a way activities could be adapted? Or for the young person to take breaks or take part in part of the session?

**Returning to school:** If a child or young person has been away from school for a while, it's important to think about a gentle and gradual return.

Starting with shorter visits to school and slowly building up their time over several weeks or months can make the transition feel safer and more manageable.

Try to include enjoyable social parts of the day like assemblies, break-times, or time with friends. These moments are just as valuable in helping them reconnect and feel part of the school community again.

**Adaptations in the classroom:** Take a look at their classroom environment too. Where they sit can make a big difference. Has their hearing, sight, or movement been affected? If so, small adjustments can be really helpful. For example, changing their seat, providing extra space, or using visual supports could help them feel more comfortable and included.

Sources:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/helping-young-people-manage-their-online-identity/>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/young-peoples-digital-lives-and-well-being>

