



# SET TO GO

A JED PROGRAM

## Transition of Care Guide

**If you received treatment for a mental health condition while in high school or before, there are several things you can do to continue to stay healthy while transitioning to and attending college.**

This guide<sup>1</sup> walks you through what you need to know and do to take care of yourself. We'll walk you through what steps to take when you're:

1. In early high school
2. Beginning to apply for college
3. Starting college

You should keep in mind that while this document is primarily focused on mental health conditions, these considerations can also be applied to other chronic or ongoing medical conditions.

**Let's get started.**



[jedfoundation.org](http://jedfoundation.org)



# In early high school (9th - 11th grade)

**Your main GOAL: Try to learn the details of your condition and treatment.**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Talk to your family, care providers, and take as many notes as you need and organize them in a way that makes you feel comfortable. Focus on the following steps to inform yourself.

## IN GENERAL

- Know the name of your condition
- Be able to describe the problems or symptoms you have (e.g. anxiety, difficulty concentrating, poor sleep)
- Be able to describe how these problems affect your life
- Be able to describe the treatment you're receiving (group therapy, medication)
- Be able to describe your reactions and responses to your treatment (what's been helpful and what hasn't)
- Have the names and contact information of your treatment providers

## IF YOU TAKE MEDICATION

- Know the name of your medication(s)
- Know the dosage of your medication
- Know when you take your medication (mornings, bedtime)
- Begin to take responsibility for taking your medication (ask a parent or guardian to supervise you at first)
- Be able to describe how medication makes you feel
- Be able to describe any side effects or problems you've had with medicine (current and/or past)
- It's also helpful to have your medication history available: what did you used to take? Why was it changed?

## INTEGRATE YOUR TREATMENT AND EDUCATION PLANNING

- As much as possible, be a part of discussions about your treatment plans and goals so you develop a clear understanding of your treatment
- Be able to simply describe the goals of treatment
- Be a part of discussions about your IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and accommodations at school (if relevant). If you're not sure if you have an IEP, ask a parent or guardian.
- Be able to simply describe the purpose (what problems are being addressed) and goals of your IEP



# During the summer before you apply to college (summer before 12<sup>th</sup> grade)

**Your main GOAL: Discuss, discover, and define your personal needs to find the best college for you.**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Turn to the the “Finding Your Best Fit” section of Set to Go to begin developing a list of schools that fit your personal and academic needs.

**When you begin researching schools** there are various ways to find out about resources and services at colleges.

The more research you do, the better prepared you’ll be to narrow your choices. (NOTE: you might want to make a chart of the following information to stay organized)

- Find the college’s counseling services website
- See if you can find information about:
  - Services provided (therapy, medication)
  - Cost of care (most are free-but not all)
  - Length of care (are there limits to the sessions?)
  - Whether they recommend options for referral and care in the community for those needing longer term care
  - What support services are available through the college disabilities service (might require searching other links on the school’s website) and whether the service has experience supporting students with your condition(s)
- If this information is not available on the website, you can **call the counseling service or the admissions department** (say: “I’m a prospective student” if you don’t want to identify yourself) to find out how they handle referrals for students who need ongoing care (beyond what is provided by school counseling), or any other questions that might be wondering or worried about.
  - See if you can find out whether students who receive care in the community close to the school are able to use the school sponsored health insurance plan or whether the school has a list of community providers who accept common private insurance plans.

This research will give you a good idea of whether a particular school has the range of services necessary to support your health and success on campus. You can use this information to help you narrow the search for appropriate schools for you when you factor in schools that interest you and that meet your other need criteria (e.g. distance from home, size of campus, accessibility, etc.)



# Before you leave for college

## Your main GOAL: Manage the transition of care

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Use the information below to help you decide whether to continue with your clinician from home, transfer your care to the school's counseling center, or work with an off-campus clinician.

### OPTION A: CONTINUE CARE WITH CLINICIAN(S) FROM BACK HOME

- You and your family should discuss with your care team whether this is an option
- Things to consider include:
  - Will you be too far from home?
  - Will phone calls and infrequent face-to-face visits be sufficient?
  - If you take medication, how will you get it?
- Even if you choose this option, you will still want to have a connection with the counseling center and disabilities office because
  - You might have an urgent need that they can help with
  - You may need them to help with academic accommodations or planning your specific transition to college experience
  - There should be an arrangement to share information as needed between your home clinician and campus-based providers

***This option might be best for you if:*** your school or the local community do not have resources that are ideal or adequate for your care or you have a complicated problem and are very comfortable working with your current treatment team and it is possible/convenient to be in regular contact

### OPTION B: SCHOOL COUNSELING CENTER

- This option makes sense if you require face-to-face visits
- You should make sure that your treatment team from home has shared necessary information and records with the campus counseling service (See below)
- This option may make it easier to coordinate accommodations with the disabilities office

***This option might be best for you if:*** the counseling center is able to provide ongoing care and has the full range of services you need or you need only intermittent visits (make sure your home treatment team is ok with this)

# Before you leave for college, continued

## OPTION C: OFF-CAMPUS CLINICIAN NEAR THE SCHOOL

- The campus counseling center should be able to help with referral suggestions that fit your clinical needs
- Make sure you have insurance and/or adequate funds to pay for this private care
- Many times, local clinicians will see students at reduced rates or will be participants in the school-sponsored insurance program. Make sure clinician referrals you see are affordable and/or accept your insurance
- Make sure there is an adequate hand off of clinical information (see below) between your home clinician and your new local clinician
- If you choose to keep in touch with your clinician from home for advice, you should all work out parameters for communication with home clinician and your new clinician.
- Even if you obtain care off campus, you should still establish relationships with the campus counseling service and disabilities offices, in case of emergencies.
- If possible, you and your family can try to meet the off-campus clinician before going to school and have a plan set up in advance.

***This is the best option if:*** you need long term and regular face-to-face visits and your campus service has care limits

## SOME KEY THINGS TO DO REGARDLESS OF THE OPTION YOU CHOOSE:

- Make sure everyone involved is clear on all the details for your follow-up care.
- Make sure there is agreement all around about specific parameters of care: how often, who is lead clinician, how will changes in treatment be handled, etc.
- Make sure a communications plan is agreed to and clearly spelled out (***Starting the Conversation: College and Your Mental Health***)
  - Make sure proper **releases of information** (available in ***Starting the Conversation: College and Your Mental Health***) are filed with necessary clinicians and offices. Be specific as to when, under what circumstances and how information will be shared in the event of a problem or emergency. These should also lay out when family or other guardians will be contacted.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency.
  - In addition to a general communication there should be a clearly written out plan for managing crises should they emerge. Who will make clinical decisions, who is primary family contact and when should they be called should all be clearly agreed upon? These plans are called **advance directives** and you can read about them by **clicking here\***
- Make sure you know how to describe your prior care, current needs, medications, and that your records are sent at least to the offices and clinicians with whom you'll be working.
- Make sure whatever documentation is necessary is shared with the disabilities office on campus.
- Make sure to know what insurance you have and how to use it.
- Learn on-campus emergency services phone number, counseling center phone number and put into your phone. Also, add Crisis Text Line (741 741) to your phone.

\* <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/psychiatric-advance-directives-taking-charge-your-care>



# After you've been in college for a while

**Your main GOAL: Continue to evaluate the plan you've made.**

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Check in with your family and care providers, and discuss whether the plan has been working well for you and everyone else who is part of your treatment/care network. Be open to discussing any adjustments you think might be needed – you can revisit this tool and use it as a guide to pinpointing what, if anything, needs to change.

Managing your healthcare is an important part of growing up and going to college. This tool-while focused on mental health care can also be applied to guidance around transfer of general medical care for chronic medical conditions.

If you take an active role in managing your care you can do a lot to stay healthy and promote your success in school.

