



## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS with PSYCHOSIS RETURN to SCHOOL**

### **Dispel myths and stigma**

- Likelihood of violence is not greater in a student with psychosis.
- Keep hurtful words like 'psycho' or 'crazy' out of the classroom.

### **Remember that brain diseases cause psychosis**

- Difficulties learning and socializing are often because of illness, rather than poor character, attitude, or parenting.
- Motivation, thinking, fitting in, confidence, and spontaneity are all affected.
- Improvement will be gradual, with temporary set-backs.

### **Allow for difficulties with concentration and thinking**

- Reduce homework demands if possible, especially initially.
- Provide a quiet room and/or more time for exams.
- Allow the student enough time to respond to questions or instructions.
- Use varied instructional techniques and modalities.

### **Provide breaks**

- Modify schedules, if possible, to allow for 1 or more study blocks.
- Find a low-stimulation 'safe place' where the student can take breaks.
- Strike a balance between encouraging the student to stay in the classroom and also providing a refuge if he or she is very overwhelmed or anxious.

### **Consider the effect of medications**

- Most students will take psychiatric medications that are very helpful.
- Medication side-effects are often troublesome, usually lessening with time.
- Using gum or hard candy can help with dry mouth side-effects.
- Drowsiness may not be from late nights or lack of interest, but from side-effects. Suggest the student/family talk to their doctor if extreme drowsiness lasts for more than a few weeks.

### **Support re-integration**

- Have a designated staff person, such as a counsellor or youth worker, check in with the student; do not expect the student to take the initiative.
- Anticipate that the student may be embarrassed about psychosis.
- Remind the student that he or she does not need to discuss the psychosis experience with everyone who asks; help the student with what to say to maintain privacy.
- Suggest that the student confide in trusted friends, if comfortable.