



Supported Education

3.7.6 Information for mental health practitioners

What is Supported Education?

Supported Education is the provision of individualized, practical support and instruction to assist people with psychiatric disabilities to achieve their educational goals

What are the principles of Supported Education?

Supported Education is based on the following principles:

- Improvement of the educational outcome for persons with psychiatric disabilities
- Hope is an essential ingredient of the Supported Education process
- Self-determination: a focus on students making choices (setting their own educational goals) and accepting responsibility for their educational process
- Students are actively involved in all phases of their Supported Education process, determining the criteria for success and satisfaction, as well as evaluating their progress toward meeting their goals
- Partnership between participant and Supported Education professional
- Services match participant's preferences
- Equal/fair access for everybody
- Development of participant skills and of environmental support
- Bridging with mental health services
- Support as long as needed

What are the essential components of Supported Education?

Supported Education is based on the choose-get-keep model of the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation of Boston University.

- *Choose*: to select an educational or training course compatible with the participant's values, skills, aptitudes, career interests, finances and learning objectives.
- *Get*: to secure enrollment in a preferred course.
- *Keep*: to sustain enrollment and maintain an acceptable level of success and satisfaction until completion, through skills and support development.

What can you, as a mental health practitioner, do yourself to support consumers to choose, get and keep regular education?

Maintain hope and open communication with student resources if the student asks for dialogue. Keep track of available support systems, both national and local, both financial and educational, so you may provide relevant and up to date advice. To the best degree possible, allow for the student's own process, even in the face of short-term failure.

Who, besides yourself, can support consumers to choose, get and keep regular education?

The first thing to do is to check if the student you are helping qualifies for help by a local Supported Education program, if one exists in your community. If not, student health services and educational resources at the educational institution all play an important part in the daily endeavor of the student, but legislation and policy can also be salient for available support systems. Friends and family are often essential and user-driven organizations are often found in urban centers (Fountain House, for example).

What kind of resources are available to support consumers to choose, get and keep regular education?

Most higher educational institutions have student welfare offices providing a wide variety of resources. There one will find information and support. Some institutions have Supported Education services available for those with psychiatric disability. Examples of support are:

- extra time for the taking of exams
- oral instead of written exams (or vice versa)
- use of digital equipment
- resting accommodation and solitary exam accommodation
- audio recording of materials
- reduced student credit load
- individual counseling

For more information

Information about Supported Education can be found at www.supportededucation.eu