

Treating school avoidance to help students thrive

"I don't want to go to school today."

Every student has experienced feelings of anxiety about school. For many adolescents, school can become a constant struggle, and a place they would rather avoid.

In response to this growing problem, Northwestern Medicine Behavioral Health has created a special track within our hospital outpatient program to help students, ages 13-18, successfully return to school after a prolonged absence, maintain consistent attendance, and renew their engagement.

What issues contribute to avoiding school?

Issues may include:

Peer relationships	Learning problems
Bullying	Performance anxiety
Family issues	Depression

Who benefits from the School Avoidance track?

School Avoidance is for students who:

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- Consistently refuse to attend school
 - Have difficulty staying in school all day
 - Have difficulty tolerating or adjusting to a school environment
 - Have a number of absences that jeopardize academic success

Treatment Overview

Treatment addresses avoidance behaviors, as well as how the student is functioning physically, emotionally and interpersonally in family and other relationships.

A thorough evaluation is done to determine the issues that significantly contribute to the school avoidance behavior.

Treatment may include:

Individual and group therapy

Family therapy

Psychiatric evaluation and follow-up

Cognitive behavioral therapy

Relaxation skills education

Gradual exposure therapy

Coordination with school staff

Discharge planning, including re-entry into school

For more information about our School Avoidance track, please call 630.933.4000. TTY for the hearing impaired 630.933.4833.

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