

***Supporting Children and Youth:
Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers***

Module 8

Providing Support to Military Families

*Supporting Children and Youth:
Mentor Training for Senior Corps
Volunteers*



**Providing Support to
Military Families**

Trainer:
Date:

1

Module 8. Providing Support to Military Families

INTRODUCTION

A military service member can be deployed to a different country at any time with little notice. When a volunteer mentor is matched with a child/youth in a military family, the parent may have already been deployed, or s/he may receive orders for deployment. Understanding the stages of deployment that military families experience and how this affects children and youth will enhance the volunteer's ability to become a more effective mentor.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion; **however, you do not need to present this workshop "as is"**. Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and interests, and the services available to families in your area.

Note: This workshop introduces the topic of grief but does not cover it sufficiently. Consider doing a separate session on this important topic, ideally with the assistance of a mental health professional as a guest speaker.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- How military families experience the stages of deployment
- How volunteers can support children and youth in military families before, during, and after the service member's deployment
- Additional support services in the community

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:



Handouts

The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1 -5 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: . The other two handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. Stages of Deployment
2. Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages
3. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress (optional)
4. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief (optional)
5. Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?
6. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families (optional)
7. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	20 min.		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Do You Know a Military Family?	15 min.	Large group discussion	3-4
II. Deployment Cycle and Effects on the Family	35 min.		
A. The Stages of Deployment  <i>Stages of Deployment</i>	15 min.	Lecture	5-8
B. Readjustment	10 min.	Lecture	9
C. Resilience	10 min.	Lecture	
III. Supporting Children and Youth Through Deployment Stages	45 min.		
A. Exercise  <i>Worksheet: Helping Children/Youth During Deployment Stages</i>  <i>Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress (optional)</i>	35 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Large group discussion	10-11
B. Grieving Families  <i>Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief (optional)</i>	10 min.		12
IV. Reflection: Community Support  <i>How Does Your Community Support Military Families?</i>	15 min.	Individuals, pairs	13
V. Closing  <i>Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families (optional)</i>  <i>Training Feedback Survey</i>	5 min.	Lecture	14

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS



If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

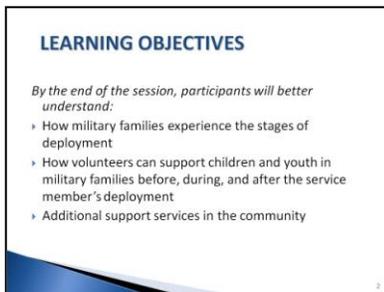
Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: “Almost half (43%) of active duty service members have children¹. These children and families must cope with the challenges of long separations and frequent moves. Many service members also return to their families profoundly changed by their war experience. Others don’t return at all. Today we will learn a little about how these families experience deployment and what we can do to support the children and youth.”

A. Learning objectives

Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- How military families experience the stages of deployment
- How volunteers can support children and youth in military families before, during, and after the service member’s deployment
- Additional support services in the community



B. Warm up: Do You Know a Military Family?

Show slide 3.

CALLOUT: “Take a minute and think if you know a family member, relative, friend, or acquaintance (e.g., neighbor, colleague at work) who has been deployed overseas due to recent conflicts, or who has talked about someone close to them who has been deployed. What did they say about how this has affected the service member’s family?”



Participants may say things like: the family felt pride; had difficulty adjusting; family became closer; service member was/was not able to stay in touch and alleviate worries; the family received/did not receive needed support; the family suffered a trauma and has not recovered...

Validate their responses and reiterate that a service member’s deployment affects the whole family– spouse/partner, children, siblings, and parents.

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2007 profile)



CALLOUT: “What do you think some of the needs of military families in our community might be?” Give an example from the list below if participants seem unsure. You may want to jot down some of their responses. Give participants a few minutes and then show slide 4.

Possible Needs of Military Families

- › Family may be very young or not financially stable
- › Family may not have a strong social support system
- › Children may be sent to live with another relative (e.g. grandparent) during parent deployment
- › Family may have experienced multiple or extended deployments
- › Returning service member may need extensive care

Examples of potential needs of military families:

- The family may be very young. The remaining parent may be solely responsible for caring for young children and running the household, which can quickly become overwhelming.
- The family may struggle financially. Because military families often must move on short notice, military spouses, 95% of who are women, frequently must seek new employment. As a result, military wives earn 25% less than their civilian counterparts, and have a 26% unemployment rate compared to the national average of 9%.²
- Families that do not live on/near a military base may not have a social support system due to frequent moves or living away from extended family. “Social support” can be family, friends, neighbors, agencies and services, community groups and organizations that can offer moral support and be called on for assistance as needed. (Families that live on or near a military base will likely have support.)
- If the family is single-parent, or both parents are deployed service members, children will be sent to live with another relative (e.g. grandparent) or friend. For children and youth, this could be a very difficult adjustment that might include leaving their hometown. This new caregiver may also already be caring for others and feel overwhelmed with the new responsibility.
- The family may have experienced multiple or extended deployments. This extended absence takes an emotional toll on the family as well as the service member, who can’t be there for important events and daily family life.
- The returning service member may need extensive care. Rehabilitation may involve physical therapy, psychological counseling, or long term care. In some cases, it may fall to the soldier’s aging parent to be the primary caregiver.

² “Military Spouses Face Especially Grim Job Prospects”, NPR (July 28, 2011).

TIP: Talk about your service population. How many are military families are in your community and what do you know about them? Do they tend to be young families or career military people? Is there a base nearby, or do they live throughout the community?

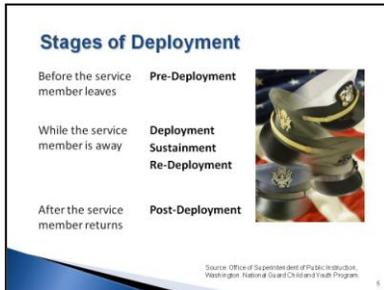
“Let’s take a look at the different stages of deployment so we can better understand the families’ needs at different times.”

II. Deployment Cycle and Effects on the Family

Tell participants: “Understanding the process of deployment and how the family must adjust will help you better assist the children of military families.”

A. The Deployment Stages

Show slide 5.



Distribute the handout, *Stages of Deployment*, as a reference for participants as you talk about the stages.

The deployment can be thought of as happening in stages:

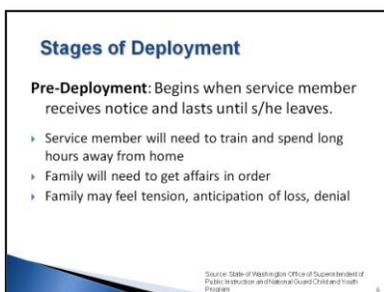
1. Pre-deployment: When the service member receives orders to deploy, to the day of departure
2. Deployment: When the service member leaves home through the first month of deployment
3. Sustainment: After the first month of deployment through the end of deployment
4. Re-Deployment: The month before the service member is scheduled to come home
5. Post-deployment: When the service member comes home and during their initial readjustment (at least 3-6 months)

Tell participants that deployment disrupts the family routine of all family members, but children and youth are especially vulnerable.

“Let’s look at each stage of deployment, and start thinking about the kind of support needed and what we can offer these kids.”

Pre-Deployment

Show slide 6.



Pre-deployment – when the service member receives orders—is the time when the family will need to get any remaining affairs in order. If the service member needs to train and spend long hours away from home, family routines will immediately be disrupted.

What Happens for Families

- Family members may feel tense and anxious during this time; everyone will be worried about the service member’s safety, and some may try to convince themselves that the service member won’t have to go.
- The parent who will remain at home may worry about handling new or additional responsibilities.

What Kids Need

- Ideally, parents will have good communication with the kids and be able to share age-appropriate information about the deployment: where the deployed parent is going, why they are going, and when they are expected to return.
- Children need to be reassured that the deployed parent is not leaving because of something they did; young children in particular think that bad things happen because of something they did.
- Kids also need to know that their parent will be as safe as possible—that they are part of a capable, trained group of soldiers who are all looking out for each other.

Deployment and Sustainment

Show slide 7.

When deployment occurs – the service member leaves-- all family members will go through a time of change and adjustment.

Stages of Deployment

Deployment: First month after service member's departure.

- › Family may feel mixed emotions: relief, disorientation, overwhelmed, numb, sad, alone

Sustainment: Second month after service member's departure until the end of deployment.

- › Family develops new routines, sources of support
- › Family may feel more confident, in control

Source: State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and National Guard Child and Youth Program.

What Happens for Families

- For the parent who stays behind, in addition to missing and worrying about the service member, s/he will be handling more (if not all) family and household responsibilities. The parent may feel overwhelmed and alone.
- The parent who is raising a teenager may be having the hardest time dealing with the day-to-day challenges and changes.
- Children and youth will react to their parent's deployment in different ways. Some common reactions include feelings of fear, anger, confusion, helplessness and longing for the deployed parent.
- The kids will want to know when the parent is coming home, especially young children who have no real sense of time.
- For young children, the remaining parent's mental health influences their own stress levels. Young children can develop separation anxiety, regress developmentally (bedwetting, thumb-sucking, tantrums), or change eating and sleeping habits suddenly.
- Children who are old enough to understand will be worried about their parent's safety.

- Older children’s academic performance may decrease; they may become moody, or have physical complaints (e.g. stomachache) with no apparent cause. They may feel angry at the deployed parent for not being there for birthdays and important events in their lives. They may act aggressively and get into fights with other youth, or they may react to the stress by withdrawing – losing interest in activities and becoming quiet.

What Kids Need

CALLOUT: “Let’s brainstorm: what would you do or suggest to the kids who feel stressed during this early period of a parent’s deployment? What ideas did you have as we were talking about what happens in families?” Give participants a few minutes to call out examples. Validate or clarify participants’ suggestions as needed.

Participants may say things like:

- Help the child write letters and send them to the deployed parent.
- Encourage the child/youth to get involved in after school activities, and stay busy.
- Make sure the youth knows I am here if s/he wants to talk.

TIP: Focus on the age groups your volunteers will be serving. You may want to spend more time talking about how stress affects certain age groups. For example, if your volunteers serve preschoolers only, talk about how development can sometimes be affected by family stress. If your volunteers are serving teens, remind them of the kinds of changes and pressures teens are already experiencing, without the added strain of having a parent overseas.

Tell participants that deployment is a major burden on the whole family; however, military families are resilient. They develop new routines and strategies for handling responsibilities and caring for each other. This adaptation is referred to as the **sustainment** stage. Families develop ways to cope until the service member returns.

“We’ll talk more about how to help children and their families in a bit, but let’s talk about what happens when the family gets word that the service member is coming home.”

Re-Deployment and Post-Deployment

Show slide 8.

Stages of Deployment

Re-Deployment: The month before the service member is scheduled to return

- › Family may feel mixed emotions: apprehension, excitement, burst of energy, difficulty making decisions

Post-Deployment: Lasts at least 3-6 months after service member returns

- › Service member reintegrating
- › Family “honeymoon” period at first
- › Renegotiate routines, responsibilities, need for space

Source: State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and National Guard Child and Youth Program

Re-Deployment starts about a month before the deployed parent is scheduled to return. During this time, the family may feel a mixture of excitement and nervous anticipation. Excitement because the long wait is over and the family can finally be together again; nervousness because of the long separation – will that person be changed? Will s/he still love me even though I have changed?

Post-Deployment begins when the service member comes home and during the first few months that s/he is back. At first there is a “honeymoon” period when everyone is just happy to be back together. Afterward, the family will need to pull together as everyone readjusts and learns to settle into a new routine.

What Happens for Families

Children and youth may have trouble readjusting at first:

- Very young children may not remember the service member; they may cling to the other parent until they get used to the returning parent again.
- Younger children may have developed separation anxiety and are now afraid to let their parent out of sight; they may be very clingy and needy.
- Children may have felt abandoned and now they are reluctant to reconnect; they are worried that the parent will leave again.
- Older children and teens may rebel and feel the returning parent is interfering with their lives and set routines. They may resist that person’s authority because s/he has been absent for so long.

B. Readjustment

Show slide 9.

Readjustment

- › The deployment experience changes everyone:
 - Spouses have learned to adapt to new responsibilities
 - Children have grown and changed
 - Service members have changed and may be injured and need care
- › Families need time to get used to each other again, develop new routines, roles and expectations



During the time the service member was deployed:

- Spouses/partners may have become more independent.
- Children have grown older and changed.
- Service members have changed, and many may be injured and need care.

For these reasons, the family will need time to readjust to each other again, develop new routines, and possibly new roles and expectations.

What Happens for Returning Service Members

“Let’s take a minute and look at the situation from the service member’s point of view, especially those who are returning from a combat zone, because this transition is the most dramatic.”

Of course, all people are different, but there are some common reactions that many combat veterans have when they first get home. For example,

- They may be especially alert and watchful of their environment, always “on guard” and concerned about safety.
- They may be a little on edge, flinching or jumping at sudden loud noises.
- It may take some time before they let go of the normal precautions they took when they were deployed (e.g. they may automatically watch rooftops, drive aggressively or steer toward the middle of the road).
- Many service members, understandably, may want to “cut loose” for the first few weeks. For some, this may lead to risky behavior such as binge drinking and drunk driving.
- For service members who do not live on or near a base, they no longer have the constant camaraderie and support from fellow soldiers with shared experiences. Some veterans may feel alone and alienated, and may be trying to cope with bad memories and the loss of friends alone.

What Happens for Families

How does this affect the service member’s relationship with his/her family? Some will adjust well; for others, it may take a while to “let go” of the role and life of an active service member and come back home. For example:

- They may not want to talk about their experiences; they may feel no one would understand, or they don’t want to upset anyone, or they don’t want to think about it. This means keeping a lot inside rather than unburdening to a spouse, as they would with other important matters.
- They may feel detached from their families, friends, and day-to-day events.
- They may distrust people and not want to confide in anyone.
- They might be over-controlling or overprotective with family members. Service members are used to rigid discipline during deployment and it may take some time to readjust to shared decision-making.

- They may be short tempered and have more conflicts with others, including family members.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, many Iraq and Afghanistan veterans will need more than just time and patience: “Studies of these returning service members and Veterans have found rates of 4% to 14% for depression, 12% to 25% for PTSD, 11% to 19% for traumatic brain injury, and 18% to 35% for any mental health risk or concern.”³

What Happens when a Parent Returns with Injuries

CALLOUT: “Let’s consider injured service members for a minute. How do you think children experience a parent’s injury, especially if it is something they can’t see, like a serious brain injury that makes the person tired, dizzy, or forget how to do things they used to do?”

Tell participants that injuries that children can’t see (e.g. post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and mental health issues) will be difficult for them to understand, and they will be confused by the change in their parent.

What Kids Need

CALLOUT: “How would you reassure a child in this situation?”

Participants may say things like:

- Remind the child that the injury is what causes the parent’s change in behavior or ability, and that the parent cannot help it.
- Remind the child that the parent still loves them.

Tell participants that visible, physical injuries may be easier for children to understand, but they are difficult as well. The service member may be in pain, may have a long rehabilitation and need extensive medical care, and/or be permanently disabled. Children and youth may:

- Be frightened at first to see a parent who looks different.
- Feel sad that the parent can’t do the things they used to do
- Feel angry that the parent was hurt (“why my dad?”)
- Be worried that the parent won’t recover

³ http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/pro_deployment_stress_children.asp, accessed 8/8/11.

In these situations, children/youth might be given age-appropriate information about the parent's injury and be included in helping the parent when possible, but not pushed. It may be very hard for children to adjust to changes at first so patience is essential.

TIP: If you have the time and capacity to show videos to the group... you may want to show some of the short "for grownups" videos from Sesame Workshop.
<http://www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/>. In this excellent series, military families share their stories of deployment and how they helped their children to cope.

C. Resilience

"We've talked about some of the challenges that families experience because we want to understand their situations so we can help, but military families also develop *strengths* from this experience."

Resilience is the ability to survive, adapt and recover from difficult times. Military families are often described as resilient because they learn to cope with changes and uncertainty such as frequent moves and deployments on short notice. Family bonds may be strengthened as a result of the experience.



CALLOUT: "What kinds of strengths do you think children or youth in military families might develop through their experiences?" (You may want to jot down their responses on easel paper.)

Tell participants that some strengths military kids develop include: independence, flexibility, ability to adapt to change, emotional growth/insight, and maturity. Some have a greater awareness and appreciation of civic duty.

TIP: Explore the topic of resilience further. Module 6 of this series, *Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs*, has an exercise designed to help mentors work with children and youth to build their resilience. You may want to adapt the exercise to use with your participants serving military kids.

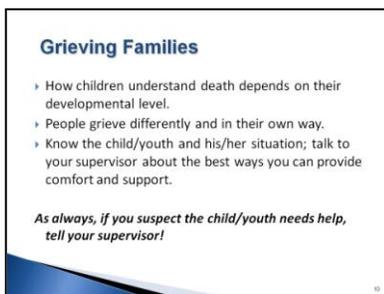
III. Supporting Children and Youth through Deployment Stages

A. Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants think through strategies to assist children and youth whose families are going through different deployment stages. The worksheet has three sections: page 1 has two pre-deployment examples; page 2 has two deployment examples, and page 3 has two post-deployment examples.

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages*, one section/page with two examples for each group. You will also need easel paper or black/whiteboard and markers for jotting down participants' ideas during the "debrief."

"Let's look at some examples of children and youth whose families are in different stages of deployment."



Show slide 10.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to get into small groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to identify a recorder to take notes.
2.  Distribute one page of the handout, *Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages*, to each group. Divide it out so that some groups get page 1 with the pre-deployment examples, others get page 2 with the deployment examples, and others get page 3 with the post-deployment examples.
3. Ask the groups to take 15 minutes to read and discuss the two examples on their worksheet page. The recorder should jot down notes to the questions under each example.
4. After 15 minutes, bring the whole group back together for discussion.

TIP. Customize this exercise. You know best what the participants need to be thinking about. If needed, revise the examples to reflect what you think they will most likely encounter at their assignments-- issues that you want them to discuss and ages that reflect the children/youth they are serving. If there is a scenario in the worksheet that you feel is inappropriate for this group, delete it prior to copying the worksheet for distribution. If you do revise the examples, don't forget to jot down a few "debrief" notes for yourself – points you want the participants to remember from the discussion.

DEBRIEF

On the worksheet, question 1 asks the group to think about specific things they could say to comfort or advise the child/youth, question 2 asks for ideas they have on how to help, and question 3 asks them to think about what else they would want to know about the child/youth's situation. (See facilitator notes on page 20-22 for examples of responses.)

Ask the groups to report out by deployment stage (e.g. ask the groups that are working on the pre-deployment examples to share their ideas first). For each example:

1. Read it aloud first so everyone hears the scenario.
2. On the easel paper, write the child/youth's name at the top. Put a line down the middle and on one side, write "Things I can say"; on the other side, write "Things I can do/ideas on how to help".
3. Ask the small group(s) that worked on that example to share the two things that they came up with to comfort or advise the child/youth (question 1). Note the two ideas on easel paper under "Things I can say." Validate and clarify as needed.
4. Ask the group for any other ideas they came up with to help the child/youth (question 2). Add these ideas to the notes on the easel paper under "Things I can do/ideas on how to help."
5. Ask the group what other information they would like to have about the child/youth's situation so they can better assist (question 3). Emphasize that volunteers should talk with supervisors whenever they have questions or concerns about a child or youth.
6. Ask the larger group if they have ideas to add, or if they have had experience in a similar situation. Add the group's ideas for this scenario on the easel paper.



Once you have gone through each example assigned, note that participants may have similar experiences that they can share with a child/youth, regardless of whether they have had a family member in the service (e.g. dealing with added family responsibilities like Alex, having to temporarily live with other relatives like Emma, difficulty communicating with a strict parent like Rodrigo).

Show slide 11.

Exercise: Supporting Children/Youth During Deployment Stages

Instructions:

- › Get together in small groups (3-4 people)
- › Choose one person to record notes
- › Read through the examples and discuss the questions.
- › Jot down notes to the questions and be ready to discuss.
 - What can you say to comfort or advise?
 - What more information would you want?
 - What other ideas do you have to help?

Tell participants that, regardless of the child's situation, here are some general things that they should keep in mind:

- Be sensitive to the pain the child/youth is experiencing. Don't expect them to adapt quickly, but reassure them that things will get better. It takes time to adjust and this is okay.
- Encourage the child/youth to express feelings, but don't push; they may not feel comfortable or be able to articulate their thoughts. For some kids, creative expression helps (e.g. writing, drawing, music, playacting).
- Listen for the feelings behind the words or behaviors. Reassure children/youth that their feelings are normal. You may need to reassure them repeatedly.

 Optional: Distribute the handout, *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress*. Many of these ideas you will have already discussed during the "debrief".

B. Grieving Families

Show slide 12.

Tips for Helping Kids Work Through Their Feelings

- › Be sensitive to the pain or mixed feelings the child/youth is experiencing. Don't expect them to adapt quickly.
- › Encourage the child/youth to express feelings, but don't push. For some kids, creative expression helps (writing, drawing, music, playacting).
- › Listen for the feelings behind the words or behaviors. Reassure children/youth that their feelings are normal.

Tell participants that some service members who are parents are not going to come home. This is when children need the most love and support from caring adults.

It helps to understand how children grieve and what they understand about death. All children are unique, but in general:

- Very young children, toddlers and younger, may know that the adults around them are sad, but they won't understand what "death" means.
- Preschool-age children may not understand that death is permanent and that the person will not come back. They might also believe that they caused the person to go away because they were bad.

- Early elementary school-age children may understand that death is permanent, but may not believe it can happen to their family.
- Middle school-age youth know that death is final, and have an understanding of how the body dies and life ends.
- Teenagers better understand death and may try to understand the meaning of life in that context.

Remind participants that it is important to remember that there is no right way to grieve; everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time.

CALLOUT: “Has anyone comforted a child or youth that has lost someone close? What did you do or say to offer comfort and support?”

Participants may say they talked to the child about their memories of that person; let the child know they were there if they wanted to talk; visited the person’s grave or lit a candle with the child, said a prayer, etc.

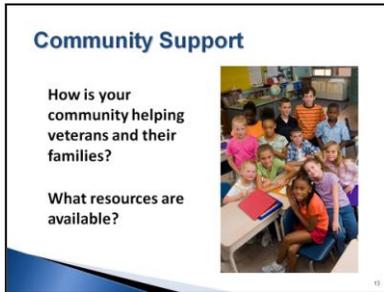
Tell participants that the best way they can help a grieving child/youth is to know that person and his/her situation. “Talk to your supervisor about the best ways you can provide comfort and support. As always, talk to your supervisor if you feel child/youth is in trouble.”

 Optional: Distribute the handout, *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief*.

TIP: Consider doing a separate session on this important topic. This topic cannot be covered in any depth in the time allotted here. Ask a mental health professional to be your guest speaker. Regardless of whether they have lost loved ones in war, your volunteers may serve children and youth who have lost friends and family members to other violence, accidents, and illness. Some of the volunteers may be in mourning themselves and want to talk about it.

IV. Reflection: Community Support

Show slide 13.



Tell participants that there are resources out there from all branches of the military to prepare families before, during, and after deployment. For example, families that are coping with deployment can join Family Readiness Groups.

- These groups are sponsored by the U.S. Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard and include family members, volunteers, and service members or civilian employees associated with a unit.
- The purpose is to build the resiliency of military families by giving them practical information and resources.
- Support includes regular meetings, telephone trees, newsletters, and different group activities.
- Family Readiness Groups help families during each stage of deployment, including help for injured soldiers.

However, this doesn't mean that military families can't use some help from the community now and then. Neighbors and volunteers are often the first ones to step up and offer a helping hand to families in need, whether they are in the military or not.

You have already talked about some of the ways volunteers will assist children and military families during their service. Ask participants to think about other ways the community pitches in for these families, or if appropriate, something they might do with their child/youth. It can be very empowering for children and youth to feel they are making a contribution, especially during uncertain times.

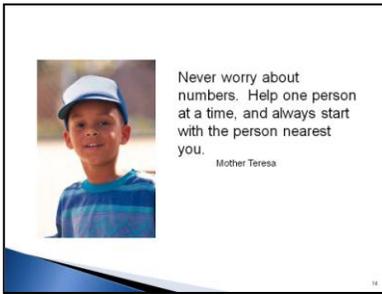
 Distribute the handout, *Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?*

Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about some of the other services that military families might need. Give some examples: care packages to service members, respite or childcare, handyman services for the house or yard, transportation, etc. Note some of the organizations in your community that provide services to families in need, including military families.

TIP: Educate your participants on the other support services in your community. If you haven't already, put together a list of resources for military and other families in your area and distribute this to participants. Include contact information and whether the organization needs volunteers. Indicate which organizations/groups support military service members and their families in particular, and a few sentences about what they do specifically.

V. Closing

Show slide 14.



Let participants know that their dedicated service working with military kids is truly supporting the troops.

 Optional: Distribute the handout, *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families*.

TIP: Customize the handouts or add your own. You may want to add your own tips and recommendations to the handouts, or highlight the tips and resources that you feel are most appropriate for your volunteers' assignments. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites listed in the *Recommended Resources* handout if participants don't usually have internet access (e.g. the T.A.P.S. Program is a resource for grieving families).

 Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

TIP: Leave them with something uplifting.

- Mention any public shows of support for returning service members in your community (e.g. "welcome home" signs or billboards).
- Show a video clip of military family reunions; go to www.youtube.com and search "surprised by dad returning home from war" or "surprised homecoming from soldiers."

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF

Facilitator: Below are some examples of responses the group may bring up during the exercise “debrief” discussion.

Pre-Deployment Examples

Terrell (4 years old)

Facilitator Note: Terrell should be reassured that his father is leaving because of his job, not because of anything Terrell could have done. This is a common reaction among young children; they often blame themselves for things beyond their control.

What are two things you could say?

- *“Sometimes dads get frustrated just like everybody, but your dad loves you no matter what.”*
- *“Your dad is going away because of his job. I know he would rather be home with you if he could.”*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Terrell that he is loved and everyone is proud of him and his family.*
- *Continue to encourage him to express his feelings in healthy ways (e.g. help him build a vocabulary for emotions, encourage creative expression).*

What more information might you want?

- *What is going on at home? Is Terrell’s family feeling a lot of stress? If yes, what support is available?*

Emma (10 years old)

Facilitator Note: Emma is understandably anxious about the upcoming changes in her life – separation from her mother and moving to a new home. Emma will need a lot of love and reassurance. She may also need more help than a mentor can provide if her anxiety is prolonged or worsens.

What are two things you could say?

- *“You have a lot on your mind and it must be a little scary sometimes. How are you feeling?”*
- *“It’s not easy to deal with these kinds of changes. Your mother and grandparents must be very proud of you.”*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Emma that I am here for her.*
- *Encourage her to talk to me about what’s going on in her life after her mother deploys and she moves in with her grandparents.*

What more information might you want?

- *Is Emma’s anxiety worsening?*
- *Is there some other reason for Emma’s anxiety?*

Deployment Examples

Jayla (3 years old)

Facilitator Note: Jayla will need continued reassurance that her mother is not leaving (if this is the case – it could be that her mother is an active duty service member as well). Jayla is expressing a common fear among children about separation from parents.

What are two things you could say?

- *“Tell me about your mother. What is your favorite thing to do together?”*
- *“Your mother loves you and will take care of you.”*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Jayla that she is loved and everyone is proud of her and her family.*
- *Continue to encourage her to express her feelings (e.g. help her build a vocabulary for emotions; encourage creative expression).*

What more information might you want?

- *Is Jayla’s mother also a service member? If yes, is there a chance that she will be deployed as well?*

Alex (14 years old)

Facilitator Note: Alex is at the age where he wants to be out with his friends and resents the added responsibility. A mentor could remind Alex of the important role he is playing to keep the family going while his dad is away. A mentor could also tell Alex that accepting these kinds of responsibilities will help him become more independent.

What are two things you could say?

- *“Your family is very lucky to have you to depend on while your dad is away. Your parents must be very proud of you. Still, I can see why you are frustrated. You miss out on being with your friends. Have you talked to your mom about it?”*
- *“I know this is hard at times, but you are already more independent than most kids your age. The fact that you are able to handle these kinds of responsibilities says a lot about you. Hang in there.”*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Find out what kind of support is available for teens in military families (e.g. peer support groups).*
- *Encourage Alex to talk to me when he is frustrated, or if he doesn’t want to talk to anyone, let his feelings out in healthy ways (e.g. exercise, listen to music, journaling or art).*

What more information might you want?

- *What support is available in our community to ease the burden on military families?*

Post-Deployment Examples

Allie (8 years old)

Facilitator Note: Allie, in a sense, is grieving for her father and mother. Her father has changed and her mother can't give her as much attention as she used to. A mentor could remind Allie of how important she is to her parents, especially at a time like this, even though they may seem preoccupied. Hopefully Allie's mother will figure out ways for Allie to help with her father's care. Many veterans say their families gave them the strength to get through hard times.

What are two things you could say?

- *"It sounds like you have a lot on your mind. I am here for you anytime you want to talk."*
- *"You are a brave girl and I know your parents are very proud of you."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Reassure Allie that her feelings are normal. Let her know that I am here for her and she can confide in me.*
- *Encourage her to express her feelings in healthy ways.*
- *Encourage Allie to get involved in activities that will keep her busy and build her self esteem. Suggest school activities, if appropriate.*

What more information might you want?

- *What is the situation? How is Allie's mother coping? Does she have help? Is her father going to get better, or are there permanent adjustments the family will need to make?*
- *What support is available in the community for military families in this situation?*

Rodrigo (16 years old)

Facilitator Note: Rodrigo is readjusting to having his father home at a time when he is becoming more independent. His father may also be having difficulties adjusting from a rigid, highly disciplined military atmosphere to a more cooperative family life where people need to listen to each other and discuss disagreements. A mentor can help by validating Rodrigo's feelings and suggesting (or role-playing) constructive ways he can communicate with his father. A mentor could also remind Rodrigo that it will take time for everyone to readjust and this is normal.

What are two things you could say?

- *"It sounds like you miss the good times you had with your dad before he deployed. Maybe it is strange for him to see how much you've grown as well..."*
- *"Can you tell me about the kinds of things you argue about? Maybe we can think up a compromise that you can suggest to him."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Practice (role play) conversations with Rodrigo to help him prepare to talk to his dad without getting angry or upset.*
- *Remind him that I am here for him; I don't judge him; and he can talk with me confidentially when he needs to.*

What more information might you want?

- *What is the family situation? Are others having difficulty?*
- *How long has Rodrigo's dad been home? Does it seem like he is having a lot of trouble adjusting? Is he suffering from injuries?*
- *Is there support in the community for military families/teens in this situation?*

MODULE 8 REFERENCES

Cudaback, Dorothea, Ph.D. and Knox, Jo, Ph.D. (February 1993). *Separation Happens: A Booklet for 13, 14, and 15 Year Olds Whose Families are in the Military*. University of California Cooperative Extension.

Fort Hood Family and U.S. Army MWR. *Children and Deployment: A Parent's Guide to Deployment*. Retrieved 7/29/11, from: http://www.hoodmwr.com/cys_cd_afc_understanding.htm

Goodman, Robin F., Ph.D.; Judith A. Cohen, M.D.; and Stephen J. Cozza, M.D. *Helping Bereaved Military Children*. Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: <http://www.dcoe.health.mil/ForFamilies/HelpingBereavedMilitaryChildren.aspx>

Johnson, Mona, MA, CPP, CDP - State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instructions. Operation Military Kids Tough Topics Series Learning and Teaching Support. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: <http://www.k12.wa.us/OperationMilitaryKids/Resources.aspx>

- *Supporting Military Kids During Deployment* (Issue 1)
- *Helping Kids Cope with Stress* (Issue 2)
- *Impact of Grief and Loss* (Issue 3)
- *Military Kids, Homecoming and Reunion* (Issue 5)
- *Dealing with Death* (Issue 7)

Keith, Tamara (2011). Military Spouses Face Especially Grim Job Prospects., NPR (July 28, 2011). <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/28/138588958/military-spouses-face-especially-grim-job-prospects>

Military.com Benefits, Deployment Center. *Deployment: Your Children and Separation*. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: <http://www.military.com/benefits/resources/deployment/your-children-and-separation>

National Center for PTSD, United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (www.ptsd.va.gov)

- (2010) Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Military Personnel
- (2009) How Deployment Stress Affects Children and Families: Research Findings

Pincus, Simon H. LTC, USA, MC; House, Robert COL, USAR, MC; Christenson, Joseph LTC, USA, MC and Adler, Lawrence E. CAPT, MC, USNR-R. *Family Matters, The Emotional Cycle of Development: A Military Family Perspective*. My HOOAH 4 Health. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/emotionalcycle2.htm

Real Warriors Campaign. Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

- *Taking Care of You –Taking Care of Your Children*. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: <http://www.realwarriors.net/family/children/managingstress.php>
- *Helping Children Through the Grieving Process*. Retrieved 7/29/11, from: <http://www.realwarriors.net/family/children/grieving.php>

Reece, Tamekia (2009). *When Parents are Deployed: Helping Children Deal with the Stress*. Healthy Children.

Uniformed Services University of the Health Services, Bethesda, MD. *Courage to Care: Helping Children Cope During Deployment*. Retrieved 8/12/11, from: <http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/CTChildrenCopeDuringDeployment.pdf>

Williamson, Vanessa, and Erin Mulhall (2009). *Invisible Wounds Psychological and Neurological Injuries Confront a New Generation of Veterans*. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Issue Report, January 2009.

Willow Center, Inc. for Grieving Children. *How to Help a Grieving Child*. Retrieved 8/5/11, from: http://www.willow-center.org/How_Help_Grieving_Child.html

Yeoman, Barry (2008). *When Wounded Vets Come Home*. AARP July/August 2008.