

Module 8 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

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



Stages of Deployment

Deployment can be thought of as a series of stages that the military family experiences as they anticipate the soldier's departure, adapt to the separation, and readjust afterward. Below is a short description of each stage and how the family may experience it.

Stage of Deployment		What the family may experience
Before the service member leaves	Pre-deployment begins when the service member receives the deployment order, and lasts until s/he leaves home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service member will need to train and spend long hours away from home • Family will need to get affairs in order • Family may feel tension, anxiety, or even denial • There might be more arguments as family members push each other away, anticipating the loss
While the service member is away	Deployment is the first month after the service member leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family may have mixed feelings: relief, disorientation, numbness, sadness, and loneliness • Family members may feel suddenly overwhelmed or unsafe
	Sustainment begins after the first month until the end of deployment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family develops new routines and sources of support • As they readjust, family members may feel more confident, in control, and independent
	Re-deployment is the month before the service member is scheduled to return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family may feel both thrilled, excited, and a little worried after the long separation
After the service member comes home	Post-deployment lasts <i>at least</i> 3-6 months after service member returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family "honeymoon" period at first • Service member is readjusting and will need some time and space • Family is working out new routines, roles and responsibilities for each member

Source: State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Operation Military Kids.

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

PRE-DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent is getting ready to deploy and the family is preparing.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Terrell. You are talking with Terrell, 4 years old, at the preschool where you serve. You know Terrell's father is getting ready to deploy. During your conversation, you realize that Terrell believes his dad is leaving because he is angry at him.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort Terrell?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist?* _____

B. Emma. Emma is 10 years old and you are her mentor at the elementary school. You know that her mother is getting ready to deploy next week, and Emma will be moving in with her grandparents. Emma has been unusually anxious lately. She gets very upset over little things and wants to be sent home because she has a stomachache again.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort Emma?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist?* _____

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent is deployed and the family is adjusting.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Jayla. You are helping 3-year old Jayla to develop her language skills by asking her questions about her family. You know her father has recently been deployed. As you talk with her, you realize that Jayla is afraid that her mother will leave, too.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort Jayla?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist?* _____

B. Alex. You have been 14-year old Alex's mentor for about six months and you know him pretty well. He is usually a very easygoing boy, but his father has been deployed (again) and Alex is not taking it so well this time. He resents that he must look after his two younger brothers most weeknights while his mother is at her new job, including making sure they do their homework and eat dinner. He wants to go out and have fun with his friends.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort or advise Alex?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this youth's situation to better assist?* _____

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

POST-DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent has returned and the family is readjusting.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Allie. Allie is an 8-year old girl that you have assisting with homework. You know her father recently came home with serious injuries. Allie's dad needs a lot of care right now and her mom does almost all of it. Allie tells you she feels sad. She is a little scared of her dad because he seems so different, and she misses the time she used to spend with her mom.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort Allie?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist?* _____

B. Rodrigo. You are starting to develop a good relationship with your mentee, 16-year old Rodrigo. He confides in you that his father, who has recently returned from a long deployment, is not the same. He is much stricter, he wants to "take over and tell everyone what to do," and the two of them argue a lot. Rodrigo is clearly hurt and disappointed because he idolizes his dad.

1. *What are two things you could say to comfort or advise Rodrigo?*

2. *Do you have ideas about what you can do to help?* _____

3. *What more information would you want about this youth's situation to better assist?* _____

Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress

Children and youth who are coping with the stress of a deployed parent (or any stressful situation!) can benefit from the support and understanding of a caring adult like you. As you get to know the child/youth, you will know how best to help that individual. Here are some typical reactions to stress, by age level, and suggestions for how you might help.

BABIES (AGE 0-2)

Babies are sensitive and often react to their caregiver's mood, or changes in their schedule and environment. This stress can cause feeding or sleeping problems, irritability and fussiness.

How you can help:

- Speak calmly, quietly, and warmly.
- As much as possible, provide a soothing environment and activities.
- Give names to feelings; help them start to develop a vocabulary for their feelings.

TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS (AGE 2-5)

Toddlers and preschoolers may become overly clingy, cry more often, act aggressively, or change eating or sleeping habits. Preschool children may believe the deployed parent had to leave because "I was bad", and they may worry about the safety of the parent at home, or that the parent at home will leave, too.

How you can help:

- Encourage children to express themselves, including sad or worried feelings, in their own way. For younger children, this might be drawing, making faces, or playacting.
- Never belittle children's fears, but help them work through it. Allow them to retell the same story over and over if they want to. Help them name strong feelings and find the words to talk about their feelings. If they want to cry, make sure they know it is okay and you are there for them.
- Help them write letters to the deployed parent. Ask them questions about the parent and say how proud they must be.
- When the child is nearby, don't talk about war news with others or have it on the TV or radio; children may be listening before you even realize it. Younger children especially are not able to put things in perspective and may become frightened.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (AGE 6-11)

Children may believe their world has suddenly become unsafe and unpredictable. They may worry that the deployed parent will get hurt or die, and they will also worry about the safety of the parent at home. Children may complain of stomachaches or headaches, become moody, have problems in school, or change eating or sleeping habits.

How you can help:

- As always, respect children's feelings, including negative ones, and reassure them that their feelings are normal. Help children express their feelings in a healthy way.
- Remind the child that the parent is well-prepared and working with others who are also prepared; they are all looking out for each other and know what they're doing.
- Help the child focus on positive things and stay busy. For example, you might suggest the child keep a journal or scrapbook of things happening in his/her life that can be sent to the parent periodically.
- Encourage the child to participate in activities that will help to build self esteem, master a talent or skill (e.g. sports, art, music, or other interests).

ADOLESCENTS/TEENS (AGE 12-18)

Adolescents and teens may deal with stress by engaging in risky behaviors. They might also be angry or moody more often, or lose interest in activities they used to enjoy, or act like they don't care what happens.

How you can help:

- Reassure the youth that strong feelings are normal, including "bad" ones (anger, guilt). Encourage them to share their feelings, but don't push if they are not ready.
- Youth may resent the fact that they have to take on additional responsibilities to help out. Remind them that they are a vital part of their family "team", and that accepting new responsibilities will ultimately help them to become more independent.
- Physical activity helps to relieve stress and anxiety. Encourage youth to exercise and eat healthy foods to help feel physically alert and well.
- Encourage youth to take up new hobbies and stay busy. Suggest constructive activities that can help them to regain a sense of mastery and control. Find information about youth groups that share their interests.
- Encourage the youth to spend time with supportive people who understand their situation. There may be a peer support group for military teens, in the community or online, where they can talk to other kids who are in the same boat.
- Encourage youth to express their feelings in creative ways such as music, drawings, journals, scrapbooks, photographs, drama, storytelling, and videos.
- Remind them that it is okay to tell an adult when you are feeling bad. Asking for help when you need it is the smart thing to do, not a sign of weakness.

FOR ALL AGES:

- Be sensitive to the painful separation the child/youth is experiencing. Don't expect the child/youth to adapt quickly.
- Encourage the child/youth to express feelings, but be patient. Don't push if they are not ready.
- Listen to the feelings behind the words. Validate feelings of loss, anger, worry, and grief, which are normal reactions.
- Tell kids their feelings are normal. Be prepared to tell them many times.

SIGNS THAT THERE MAY BE A MORE SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE:

- Difficulty or inability to concentrate in school, complete assignments, and participate in school activities
- Frequent intense emotional responses (crying, outbursts)
- Complaining of nightmares or sleeplessness
- Regression, loss of developmental milestones (young children)
- Withdrawn and not communicating
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight in a short period of time
- Not taking care of personal appearance
- Frequent physical complaints (e.g. stomachaches)
- Hurting oneself or others, expressing violent feelings, fighting with others
- Sudden change in behavior or personality
- Signs of possible drug or alcohol abuse

As always, if you feel the child/youth is in trouble, tell your supervisor!

Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief

All children and youth are individuals, and they cope with loss in their own way. Keep in mind that the grief may be due to the loss of a parent (deployment, death), or the loss of what the parent used to be like (physical or mental changes due to service). As a caring adult in that person's life, you can offer emotional support.

HOW CHILDREN AND YOUTH REACT TO GRIEF

How children/youth grieve depends on their developmental stage. In general, you may see:

- Distancing or detachment: The child/youth may seem as if they are not affected but this could be a sign of shock or a way to ward off intense and painful feelings.
- Difficulty accepting it: Children and youth may have a hard time believing the loss and talk about the person as if they were still alive.
- Acting out/misbehaving: Children and youth may act out as an expression of anger, a way to gain control.
- Physical reactions: Children and youth may complain of aches and pains, have low energy, or increased illness, accidents, and injuries.
- Regression: Young children may be clingy or regress in their development (seem to lose what they have learned or behave younger than their age).
- Guilt: Young children may believe they are at fault for doing something "bad".

HOW YOU CAN HELP

First, know the child/youth and their situation. Talk to your supervisor about the best ways you can be supportive as s/he goes through the grieving process. In addition:

- Children and youth grieve in different ways and in their own time. Follow the child/youth's lead about when/if they want to talk about it. Don't push but let them know you are there for them.
- When the child/youth does want to talk, ask them to share stories and happy memories. Remembering the person who died is an important part of the grieving process.
- Children and youth need to know that their feelings are normal. Help them work out strong feelings in healthy ways (e.g. talking it out, writing, drawing, or playacting).
- Be patient with challenging behavior and mood swings. Look for the feelings behind the words and behaviors so you can respond appropriately.
- Watch for extreme behavior and signs that the child/youth may need professional help.

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS

As always, if you feel the child/youth is in trouble, tell your supervisor! If these behaviors persist, professional help may be needed:

- Sleeping or eating problems
- Avoiding school, not wanting to go to school, loss of interest in activities and friends
- Wants to be alone all the time, or is afraid of being alone
- Talking about joining the dead person, imitating or identifying with the dead person in unhealthy ways
- Ongoing physical symptoms without apparent cause
- Anger, hostility

Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?

How does your community offer a helping hand to military families? For example, there may be opportunities to send care packages to soldiers overseas, or put together back-to-school backpacks with school supplies for other children. Take a few minutes to think about how your community supports these families and jot down a few notes. (It's okay if you don't finish.)

1. What are 3 areas of assistance that you think military families in your community could use?

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

2. What are one or two organizations that might provide these services (e.g. agency, church, community group)? Give the names if you know them.

3. Where would you go to find more information, or even start something yourself?

Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families

Below is just a sample of some of the many resources available and organizations dedicated to supporting veterans and military families.

Sesame Street Family Connections

Sesame Workshop has a website for military families that helps explain how young children experience deployments, homecomings, changes due to family members' injuries, and grief. The website includes information and resources on how trusted adults can help children cope and adjust. The resources include videos to watch with children and one-page printouts for children to help them express their feelings.

<http://www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/>

Separations Happen: A Booklet for 13, 14, and 15 Year Olds Whose Families are in the Military

"Separations Happen" (1993) is a booklet for teens about military separations that includes advice from other teens who have been there. This is one of a series of four booklets developed under Operation R.E.A.D.Y. It talks about what to expect during the deployment phases and offers advice on how to cope.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/operationmilitarykids/pubdocs/SeparationsHappen13-16.pdf>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Military Youth Deployment Support

The AAP Military Youth Deployment Support Website contains information, videos, worksheets, and other resources to help military youth and their families cope with deployment.

<http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/index.html>

Operation Homefront

Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit that provides emergency support to veterans and military families. They provide financial assistance, emergency food, home repairs and household, moving assistance and baby supplies, and sponsor community events supporting military families. www.operationhomefront.net

Afterdeployment.org

This website, developed by the National Center for Telehealth & Technology and the Defense Centers of Excellence, is designed to be a wellness resource for the military community. Topics include common post-deployment issues from traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress, and anxiety to work adjustment, resilience, and family concerns. Each topic contains self-assessments, short videos, workshops, and resources.

www.afterdeployment.org

Coalition for Iraq + Afghanistan Veterans

The Coalition for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans (CIAV) is a partnership of organizations provides services and support to veterans, families, and survivors of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. www.coalitionforveterans.org

National Center for PTSD

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Center for PTSD conducts and publishes research on traumatic stress. The website also includes fact sheets and videos for the general public and information on where to find help. www.ptsd.va.gov

TAPS – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

TAPS mission is to provide comfort and care to people who have lost loved ones in the military. TAPS offers services and programs including peer based emotional support, case work assistance, crisis intervention, and grief and trauma resources. TAPS also provides regional military survivor seminars for adults and national Good Grief Camps to children and teens. www.taps.org

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name: _____ Date: _____

Lead Facilitator: _____

Program you serve with: Foster Grandparent RSVP Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

10. What would have improved this session?

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!