



DEALING WITH DEPLOYMENT

A Small-Group Curriculum for Elementary and Middle School Students

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The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to professional school counselors around the globe. For more information visit *www.schoolcounselor.org*.

DEALING WITH DEPLOYMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Effect of Family Deployment on Children and Adolescents

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, there are 1.3 million active duty service members, and 37% of those have at least one child (Department of Defense, 2020). It is no surprise that children and adolescents who experience the deployment of a family member or significant other face several unique challenges and changes that may wreak havoc on their lives. With the potential for war abroad to continue indefinitely, school counselors are change agents who are in a critical position to help students face the geographical, emotional and familial changes that occur when a family member goes to war. This curriculum provides ways to work with students to address these challenges.

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT

Much of the research about children and deployment discusses the feelings that result from having a parent deployed. Cedarbaum et al. (2014) found that children in military families experience high rates of mental health, trauma and related problems. Further, nearly 37% of children with a deployed parent reported they seriously worry about what could happen to their deployed caregiver (Orthner, 2005). It is reasonable to assume that these issues may present themselves at school, so school counselors need the skills to respond to and help students develop coping mechanisms to deal with these feelings and behaviors.

A student's response to deployment may differ depending on whether the deployed member has been in the military full-time or as a reservist. Sahni (2005) found that when a reservist father is deployed, young males (ages 7–11) in the family take on the role of caretaker and that, as a result, there is cognitive dissonance and a discord in the sense of belonging as the reservist parent rotates between being present and then not present in the family. Full-time military members and families may be more adjusted to military life and the likelihood of deployment since it is their full-time job (Sahni). However, the reality is that when a family member is deployed for an indefinite period, it still causes angst for many students.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS

For many school-aged students, the United States has been engaged in war for the majority of their lifetime. “The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with longer and more dangerous deployments, have made military life even tougher for families left behind. Children’s grades suffer. Schools counsel students on anger management” (Zoroya, 2003, p. 09a).

Based on studies and information gleaned over time and with ongoing involvement in military operations, several sources offer a variety of strategies and interventions to use with students affected by military deployment. Programs such as Healthy Military Families 2020 (Yablonsky & Lamson, 2020), MilitaryKidsConnect (n.d.), and Military One Source (n.d.) are useful online resources to help school counselors in their efforts to support students and families experiencing deployment. Cole (2016) recommends both individual and small-group counseling support in schools to support students who may experience anxiety and stress related to a parent’s deployment. Paley et al. (2013) identified the need for the availability of protective relationships with adult caregivers who can support the use of effective coping strategies as children experience the stressors that come from having a deployed family member. School counselors are in a critical position to provide support through the implementation of direct counseling services (ASCA, 2019).

USEFULNESS OF THIS CURRICULUM

The curriculum in this book provides a variety of activities school counselors can use in small-group or individual counseling sessions. The advantage of group counseling is that students become aware of others who are having life experiences similar to their own.

Individual counseling might be more appropriate for students who are not as willing or ready to share their emotions in a group. Whether used in small-group or in individual counseling, the curriculum presented is detailed and aligned with the ASCA National Model and the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.

PRE-GROUP PLANNING

Group member selection: Group members will be chosen by self-, teacher-, parent- or administration-referral. Students in the small group will all have a family member or close friend who is currently deployed. Although these students may be at different stages, a well-rounded group curriculum will be provided to ensure students feel supported at school. The school counselor will meet with each student individually before the start of the group to find out each student's background information. This will give the school counselor the ability to understand how to address individual needs within the group.

Group members: This group is designed for six–eight students. The group is appropriate for both males and females.

Meeting: The small group will meet weekly for six–eight weeks in the school counselor's office. Meetings will last approximately 45 minutes, but depending on the depth of the conversations, more time may be needed. It is important to find a private place to meet since students will be sharing personal, and possibly emotional, stories. A variety of activities is provided to allow the school counselor to adjust lessons to meet the group's specific needs.

Parental support: Parental involvement is important for the group's success and goes well beyond simply getting the permission slip signed. Parents will be asked to help their child add items to an honor box that will be made during group for the deployed family member or friend. Students will be encouraged to share the group experiences with their caregivers as well as the deployed family member if possible.

School support: If honor boxes are going to be mailed, check if there are school funds available to cover the cost of mailing the boxes out of the country. Make sure to collect shoe boxes and old magazines just in case students do not bring their own materials.

Sample Parental Permission Slip

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The School Counseling Department organizes several small groups throughout the school year to meet students' needs. We will be starting a small group on Dealing with Deployment. Your child has been recommended for the group to have a chance to connect with other students who have a family member or close friend in the war. We will be discussing the following topics:

- Session 1: Wall of Honor
- Session 2: Patriotism
- Session 3: Where in the World?
- Session 4: Feelings
- Session 5: Anxiety
- Session 6: Talk About It
- Session 7: Resilience
- Session 8: Celebrate

Dealing with Deployment will begin on _____ during resource period. This group will provide students with a time to be able to talk about their deployed family members and will make them aware of the support they have in the school. During this group, we will be making an honor box that we will fill with several items to send to your family member or to save for the family member's return home. It would be most helpful if you could provide the deployed family member's address (if known) below.

Please indicate whether you give permission for your child to participate in this small group by signing below and returning to me by _____. If you have questions or concerns about the group, you can reach me by phone (_____) or by email (_____).

Thank you,

Name
School Counselor

Yes, I give permission for my child to participate in the Dealing with Deployment small group.

No, I do not give permission for my child to participate in the Dealing with Deployment small group.

Parent Signature

Date

Here is the address for our family member/friend in war:

Sample Referral Form

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

The School Counseling Department is starting a small group for students with a family member or close friend at war. We will be exploring topics such as patriotism, resilience and feelings regarding deployment during the eight weekly sessions. If you know of a student who would benefit from this group, please email me at _____ by _____.

This will be a beneficial small group for those students dealing with a family member's deployment. It will give students an outlet to talk about and express their thoughts about deployment in a caring environment so they will be more mentally available to participate in class.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Name _____
School Counselor _____

Sample Newsletter or Website Advertisement

Dear Parents,

The School Counseling Department is starting a small group for students who have a family member or close friend at war. We will be exploring topics such as patriotism, resilience and feelings regarding deployment during our eight weekly sessions. The main purpose of this group is to provide students with a safe and caring environment to talk about their thoughts and feelings, as well as to show students they have support at school. Arrangements will be made with the classroom teachers for any work missed in class. If you think your child would benefit from this group, please email me at _____ by _____.

_____ . I am happy to answer any questions as well.

Thank you.
School Counselor _____

Elementary School Pre-/Post-Test

1. Name one positive and one negative feeling you have about your family member being at war.

2. List two people you can talk to you if you need extra support.

3. What is a solution if you start to feel anxious about your deployed family member?

4. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel right now? (1 = very sad, 10 = very happy)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about the person in your life who is deployed right now?
(1 = very sad, 10 = very happy)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Middle School Pre-/Post Test

1. What does deployment mean?
2. What is the capital of the country where your family member is temporarily living?
3. Name one positive feeling and one negative feeling you have about your family member being at war.
4. List five people you can talk to you if you need extra support.
5. What is a solution if you start to feel anxious about your family member being at war?
6. What does resilience mean?
7. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel right now? (1 = very sad, 10 = very happy)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about the person in your life who is deployed right now? (1 = very sad, 10 = very happy)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SESSION 1: WALL OF HONOR

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors:

- M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
- B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students
- B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy

Objectives:

- Students will meet others who have a deployed family member.
- Students will create rules for group (with the help of the school counselor) and get a brief overview of the group sessions.
- Students will learn about each other and the deployed family members.

Materials:

- Wall of Honor worksheet
- Markers/crayons
- Wall of Honor bulletin board already set up in the room or in the hallway
- Journal for each student (see journal pages in Appendix A)
- Pre-test
- Writing utensil

Activity:

- Begin by welcoming the students to group. Explain the group's purpose and students are in the group because they have a family member or close friend currently deployed. Let them know the group is being formed to allow them to support each other and to create a safe environment for learning about different topics related to deployment. Give the students a brief overview of the group sessions.
- Explain that rules are important to make sure everyone feels comfortable. Make a list of rules with the help of the students in the group. Explain confidentiality rules.
- Have students complete the pre-test.

- Hand out journals. Tell students they will have many opportunities to write and draw in their journals throughout the group, including work between group sessions.
- Make sure all group members, especially the younger ones, understand the word “deployment.” Deployment is the name given to the movement of an individual or military unit within the United States or to an overseas location to accomplish a task or mission. The mission may be as routine as providing additional training or as dangerous as a war. Allow students to ask questions about war/deployment/etc.
- Hand out Wall of Honor worksheet to students. Explain to students that this is an opportunity for them to honor their loved ones at war. Show the students the Wall of Honor and talk about what it means to honor someone.
- Ask students to fill out the information on the worksheet. Explain that this sheet will be put on the Wall of Honor so everyone can learn about each other and deployed family members.
- Give students time to draw a picture of themselves and their family member. If students want to bring a picture in to add the wall, encourage them to bring the photo to the next session. Assist students, as needed, to fill out the rest of the information.
- Ask students to share their Wall of Honor worksheet before posting it. Have them say, “My name is _____, and this is my family member I want to honor.”

Process:

- Ask students to name one thing they enjoyed about the group today.
- Ask the students how they feel about the group in general. Do they think it sounds like something they will like? Are they nervous? Excited?

Evaluation:

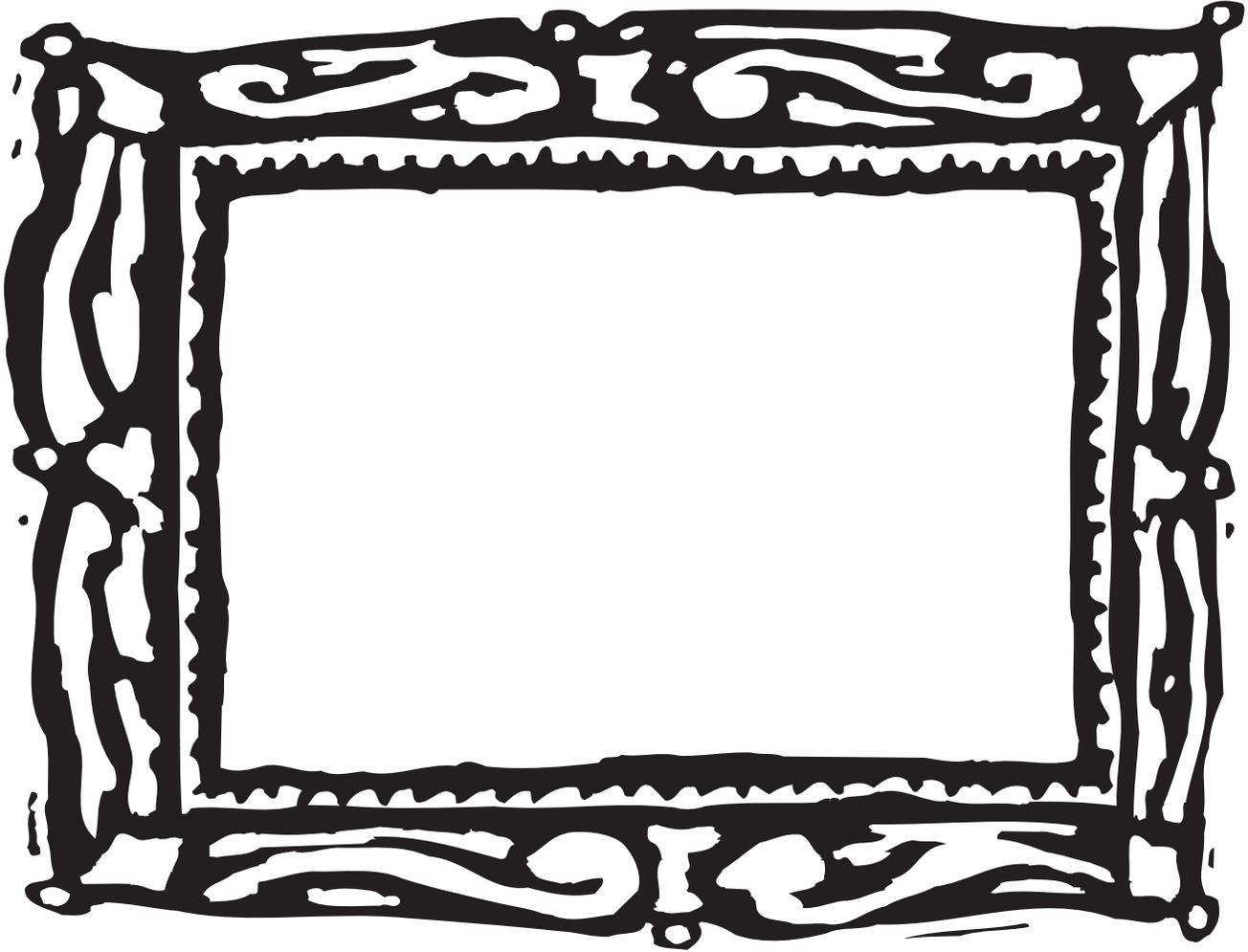
- Ask students to share something they learned today, whether it is about the group sessions, something specifically about one of the other group members or a new vocabulary word.

Homework:

- Write in your journal about how you feel about being in the group. Write as if you are writing a letter to your family member about what you’re going to learn in the small group.
- Bring in a shoebox and old magazines for the next group session. (Note: Make sure to have extras in case the students forget.)

Wall of Honor Worksheet

Draw a picture of you and your family member:



This is _____

I am proud of my [family member] because:

I miss the following about my [family member]:

My favorite thing to do with my [family member] is:

An interesting fact about my [family member] is:

An interesting fact about me is:

SESSION 2: PATRIOTISM

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors

- B-LS 1. Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions
- B-SS 1. Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
- B-SS 5. Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility

Objective:

- Students will learn what patriotism is and how they can be patriotic.
- Students will discuss their family members and the significance of patriotism, especially during times of war.

Materials:

- Shoeboxes (one for each group member)
- Old magazines and newspapers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Flag pictures or stickers
- 20 Ways to be Patriotic in Your Own Community (see p. 13)
- Other optional ideas: flag/star stickers, glitter to decorate boxes

Activity:

- Open this activity by telling the students that today they are going to make honor boxes for their deployed family members. Check for understanding of honor (follow-up from first small-group session).
- Show students flag sticker/pictures you've gathered and explain that they can use the stickers to decorate their honor boxes, but they have to earn the stickers/coupons. Tell the students the topic of the day is patriotism. Explain that you will hand out a flag sticker to group members who contribute and take turns sharing.

- Ask some or all of the following questions about patriotism:
 - What is patriotism? (love of country and willingness to sacrifice for it)
 - What are some patriotic holidays?
 - How is our school patriotic?
 - Why is it important to be patriotic?
 - Who do you know who is patriotic? Why?
 - What are some things we can do to be patriotic in the United States? Pass out 20 Ways to be Patriotic in Your Own Community handout. Use this worksheet only if students are having a hard time thinking of ways to be patriotic or as a supplement.
- After discussing patriotism, explain or restate that one way to be patriotic is to honor and support those who are serving our country.
- Explain to students about the honor boxes they will make for their deployed family members. Students will use these boxes to store items from the small group for their family members. At the end of the group, students will either keep the box at home for their family member or mail it to their family member, depending on whether the school has the funds to mail the box, if the family member is able to receive mail, etc.
- Using the magazines and newspapers, ask students to cut out and glue words or pictures representing their deployed family member. Also, cut out anything that reminds them of the word “patriotism.”
- Tell students they will be able to share two or three pictures or words from their box with the group.
- While students are working, talk to them about what they are cutting out and its significance. This will promote discussion about their family members and patriotism.

Process:

- Ask students to share two or three items on their honor boxes with each other. Encourage students to talk to each other and find connections within the group. Make comparisons between boxes to help students feel connected with other students in similar situations.

Evaluation:

- Ask for a definition of patriotism.
- Ask students to talk about one thing they have done to be patriotic and one thing they would like to do to be patriotic.
- Ask students how they were patriotic today in small group.

Homework:

- Journal: Write a thank you letter to your family member, expressing your appreciation. Tell the family member about patriotic things you are doing here at home.

20 Ways to be Patriotic in Your Own Community

1. Tie red, white and blue ribbons on trees.
2. Attend rallies to show support for troops.
3. Distribute flags and put flags up at home and in your neighborhood.
4. Communicate with soldiers through letters or email.
5. Do a good deed on behalf of service members.
6. Visit a VA hospital or a nursing home.
7. Volunteer in your local community.
8. Reach out to families with a family member in the service.
9. Write a poem or create a piece of art about what America means to you.
10. Learn the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language. Visit the following Web site to learn ASL signs: <https://www.signingsavvy.com>
11. Learn a patriotic song (“America the Beautiful,” “The Star-Spangled Banner,” etc.)
12. Learn about other American symbols (other than the flag) and what they stand for.
13. Visit a historical site, museum, memorial or park in your community.
14. Plant a flower or tree to honor those serving in war.
15. Learn the first 10 amendments to the Constitution.
16. Find out the history of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”
17. Recognize patriotic holidays.
18. Say the Pledge of Allegiance.
19. Create a bulletin board at school honoring those at war.
20. Say “thank you” to those who serve our country.

What else can you do to show your patriotism?

SESSION 3: WHERE IN THE WORLD

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behavior:

- M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
- B-LS 5. Apply media and technology skills.
- B-SMS 10. Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities

Objective:

- Students will learn about the country where their family member is temporarily living.
- Students will teach each other in an interactive game.
- Students learn about their deployed family member's surrounding environment, thus feeling more connected to their deployed family member.

Materials:

- Where in the World? worksheet
- Map of the world or globe
- Computers for each student or books about the countries where each child's family member is located. If family members are in an area that cannot be disclosed, have the students find information about the main country in the war or the general area.
- Two Truths and a Lie worksheet (see p. 17)
- Writing utensil

Activity:

- Begin the group by asking students what they know about different countries in the world. What does it mean to have different cultures? What do you already know about other countries?
- Explain to the students that the place where their family member is living and working temporarily is different than the United States. Ask them if they know anything about the country. Use the map or globe to show students where the different countries are in relation to the United States.

- Hand out the Where in the World? worksheet. Have the students look up the information on computers or by looking through books. Basic questions are listed to help them begin their search. Encourage them to find as many interesting facts as possible. The next activity will require a lot of facts.
- Once students finish working on the worksheet, have them come together into a circle.
- Explain the next game, Two Truths and a Lie. Each student will have a chance to lead the game. Hand out the Two Truths and a Lie worksheet, and give students time to fill out the information. Using the fact sheets, each student will write two true things they learned about the country where their family member is living. The trick is that they will also write one lie – something that isn't true about the country. Make sure they know they should read them in a random order. This activity will provide a fun way to learn facts about the countries the students researched.

Process:

- Ask students to share the most interesting fact they heard in group.
- Go over the main questions on the Where in the World? worksheet. Make connections between students.
- Ask how their family members' temporary living situation is different than the United States.
- Ask what they learned about different cultures in group today.
- Ask if they feel like they understand more about where their family member is because of this group.

Homework:

- Journal: Be an artist. Draw a picture of the country's flag and a picture of the country in your journal. Make sure to write about what you learned about the country where your family member is temporarily living.



Where in the World

Find out information about where your family member is temporarily living. Use the Internet or other books to find out information to help you understand where in the world your family member is living.

- In what country is your family member temporarily living? _____
- What is the country's capital? _____
- What is the country's main language? _____
- Is the weather hot or cold? _____
- What types of food do they eat? _____
- What is the population? _____
- In the space below or on the back of this worksheet, write down as many interesting facts as you can find about the country. Head's up - We'll be playing a game, and the more facts you have, the better.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- www.weather.com www.worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/nations.html
- <http://worldfacts.us/>
- www.encyclopedia.com

Questions reprinted from: Military Student's Trip Ticket About Deployment
www.militarystudent.org/k12images/upload/TripTicketAges11-12.pdf

Two Truths and a Lie

YES

YES

NO

YES

YES

NO

YES

YES

NO

SESSION 4: FEELINGS

Elementary

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors

- B-SMS 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem
- B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with students
- B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy

Objectives:

- Students will learn to understand their positive and negative feelings, both in general and regarding deployment.
- Students will brainstorm different solutions to deal with their feelings and form connections with other students based on these feelings.

Materials:

- Feelings cube (see p. 20). Note: The school counselor needs to make this ahead of time. Also, it works best on heavier paper.
- Feelings word search or Feelings “Sea Sick” word Scramble (see pp. 22-23)
- Writing utensil
- Crayons/colored pencils

Activity:

- Begin by discussing feelings in general. Talk about the difference between positive and negative feelings. Make a list of positive feelings and negative feelings on a visible wipe-off board or large piece of paper taped to the wall, or you may have a pre-printed feelings chart available. It is important for students to realize that it is fine to have both positive and negative feelings, but it is necessary to know how to cope with the negative feelings in a healthy way.

General Feelings:

- Ask students to take turns rolling the feelings cube and saying if the resulting feeling is positive or negative.
- Ask students to share a time when they felt the emotion on the feelings cube. Did they talk to anyone about this feeling? Help students connect emotions with behaviors, thoughts, etc. Each student should get two or three turns, depending on time.
- Make connections throughout the activity. Try to get students to open up and talk about different feelings in general.

Feelings About Deployment:

- After the feelings cube activity, pass out the feelings crossword, which deals more specifically with feelings concerning deployed family members.
- Give students time to complete the crossword puzzle. Make sure students understand the directions – to circle all of the feeling words and to color in those words they are feeling regarding their deployed family member.

OR

- Alternate activity: Feelings “Sea Sick” handout
- Give students time to unscramble the feeling words. Make sure students understand the directions. Once they have unscrambled the words, ask them to color in the arrows of the emotions they feel.

Process:

- Ask students to share their feelings from either the crossword or word scramble. Encourage students to explore different feelings.
- As before, try to make connections between group members to create a supportive environment where the group members feel comfortable sharing.
- After students share a feeling, ask others to volunteer ideas for what they do to express their feelings. Are there feelings they have that aren’t listed on the crossword or word scramble? Make sure all students who want to are allowed to share. Make a list as a group so the list of feelings is visible to all. In one column, write the feelings. In the next column, brainstorm what to do if you are feeling worried, grouchy, happy, etc.
- Use this time to really allow the group members to open up about how they are feeling. Brainstorm solutions to the way they are feeling, while also making sure they know they are entitled to feel upset sometimes. How can they turn negative feelings into positive feelings?

Evaluation:

Ask students for examples of positive and negative feelings.

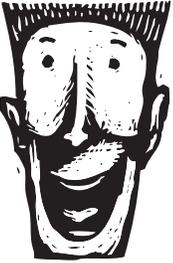
Ask students to share one of their feelings regarding deployment and how they are going to cope with this feeling.

If there is time, ask students to share a feeling that the person to their right shared. How can this person overcome this feeling?

Homework:

Journal: Write in your journal about your feelings regarding your family member being deployed. Keep in mind that it isn’t easy for anyone to deal with a parent being deployed. You are entitled to your feelings. Try to talk about your positive and negative feelings. If you do not feel like writing, draw a picture to express your feelings.

Feelings Cube

	Paste	
 Surprised	 Happy	 Proud
	 Angry	Cut on dotted lines
Fold on solid lines	 Scared	
	 Sad	

Word Search

It is normal to have lots of different feelings when your family member is deployed. Find some common feelings you may experience in this word scramble puzzle. Circle the feeling words. Color in the circles around the words you feel today.

A	R	Y	M	K	R	F	G	D	I	H	A	P	P	Y
C	N	S	A	D	Z	E	A	Y	H	J	W	Q	P	L
U	I	X	S	A	O	M	N	D	P	R	O	U	D	T
W	Q	K	I	S	G	Y	G	R	C	V	F	U	E	W
B	C	X	R	O	P	K	R	Y	X	N	H	Q	D	J
S	S	A	P	W	U	Y	Y	D	L	S	G	U	S	P
A	T	G	F	I	V	S	M	W	O	R	R	I	E	D
E	X	R	N	D	K	F	A	I	N	W	O	P	B	S
U	N	J	K	I	O	W	M	R	E	S	U	X	B	I
W	F	K	A	N	Q	Y	A	S	L	P	C	X	N	Y
V	A	N	M	S	G	Z	D	I	Y	O	H	G	H	U
C	T	Y	K	D	F	E	X	L	J	B	Y	N	K	R
P	O	K	S	N	B	W	M	N	O	T	W	A	K	Q
E	C	O	N	F	U	S	E	D	N	C	H	I	O	P
W	N	B	R	O	F	R	U	S	T	R	A	T	E	D

Proud

Strange

Angry

Worried

Mad

Lonely

Grouchy

Sad

Confused

Frustrated

Unhappy

Anxious

What feeling words would you add? _____

Sea Sick Word Scramble

It is important to be aware of your feelings and be willing to share your feelings while your parent is away. If you don't talk about the thoughts and feelings that you are experiencing, you may feel like things are scrambled on the inside.

Directions: UNSCRAMBLE the examples of different types of emotions you may have when your parent has military duties and write your answer on the line by the arrow.

Example:
Tired _____

irdte

dxtceie

pllhssee

gnrya

daifra

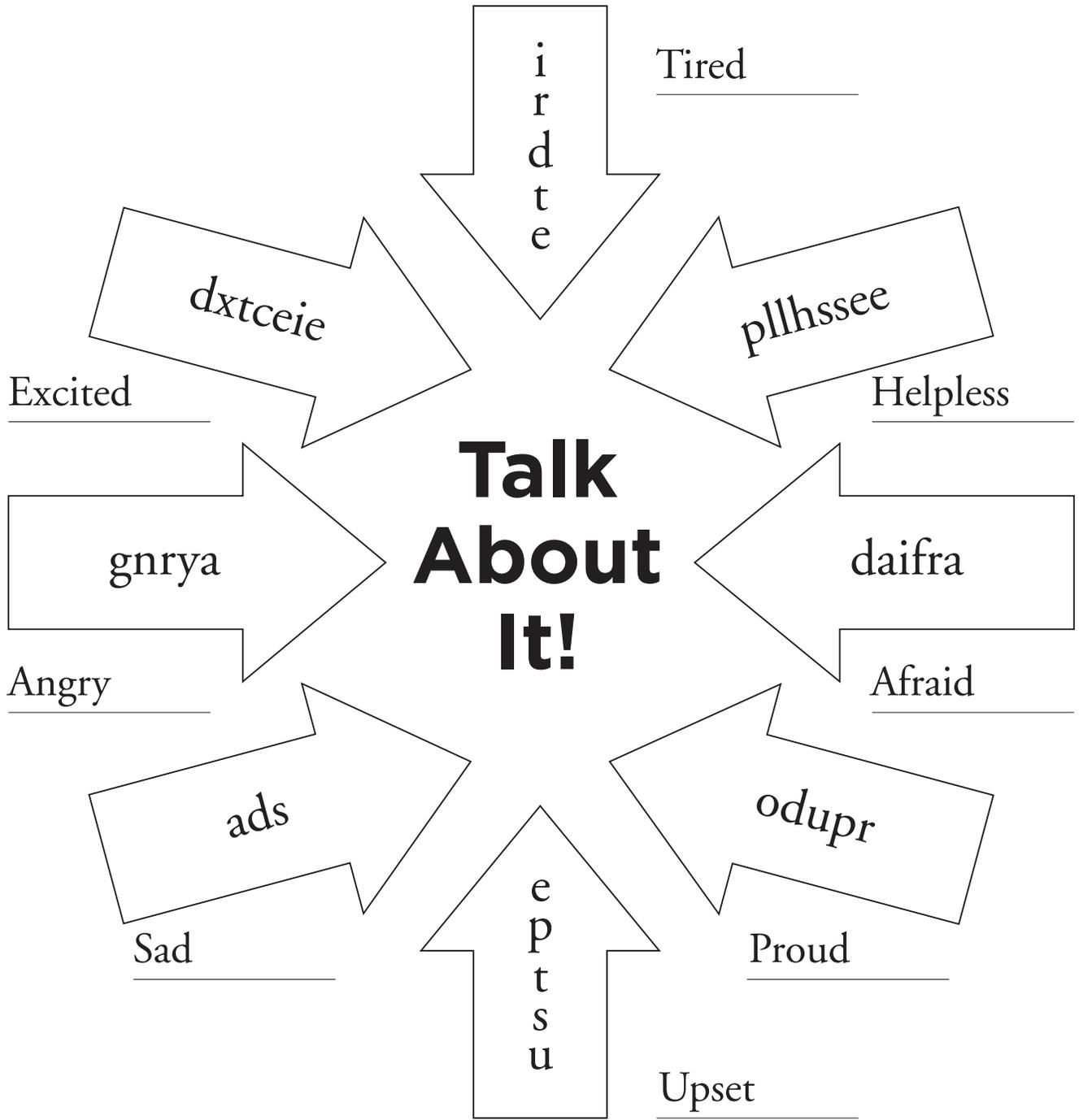
ads

odupr

eptsu

Talk About It!

SEA SICK ANSWER KEY



SESSION 5: ANXIETY

Elementary School Students

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors

- M 1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
- B-SMS 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem
- B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy

Objective:

- Students will discuss their specific fears and anxieties.
- Students will learn healthy responses to dealing with fears and anxieties.

Materials:

- Bowl or basket labeled “worry well”
- “Worry well” stories (see p. 25)
- Craft glue
- Two small clean rocks for each student
- Craft eyes
- Markers
- Cotton filler/cotton balls
- Index cards

Activity:

- Begin the group time by explaining rules to the “worry well” activity. Ask students to draw a card out of the “worry well” without peeking. The cards should have brief stories about something people might worry about. (See sample stories or use your own stories.)
- Let students read the stories aloud. Ask them to say whether they would be worried or stressed out in the same situation. If so, what would they do to stop being anxious? If not, what would they tell other people to stop them from being anxious? Make a list as the students brainstorm so they see solutions to dealing with anxiety.

- Tell students they are going to make two worrywarts: one for themselves and one to put in their honor box. Pass out glue, rocks, craft eyes, index cards and markers. It would be helpful to have the materials divided into individual baggies for each student.
- Copy the following poem on an index card:
*Worry, worry, worry
It makes your thinking blurry!
When you can't change a worry of any sort
Just give that worry to the worrywart!*
- Put glue on the index card where you want to place the worrywart.
- Glue the rock to the index card.
- Place two small dots of glue on the rock where you want to place the eyes.
- Glue the eyes to the rock.
- Glue the cotton to the rock to look like hair.
- Draw a mouth and color the hair.
- Repeat for the second worrywart to send to the student's family member.

Process:

- Talk about specific fears, both in general and in regard to deployment/war.
- Brainstorm about healthy responses to being fearful.
- Talk about figuring out solutions to feeling anxious or worried. Ask students what they do when they are afraid.

Evaluation:

- Ask students to share one thing they feel anxious or worried about. Go around the circle, and have other students list solutions on how to overcome the worry. Hand out index cards, and have the students write an idea for the student to their left.

Homework:

Take your worrywart home and share what you learned with someone at home.

Journal: Write about your fears. How do you cope?

Worrywart Activity: Wittmer, J., Thompson, D.W., & Lorsch, L. (2000). *Classroom guidance activities: A sourcebook for elementary school counselors*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

WORRY WELL STORIES

Write the following on index cards (or make up your own) and put into a basket or bowl. Ask students to draw a card and read the story aloud. Discuss whether they would be worried in a similar situation. Why or why not? What are the solutions?

- Ben lost his homework because his room is a mess. It is getting close to his bedtime, but he knows he needs to do the work before he goes to school tomorrow.
- Catherine invited Mary, the new student from class, over to play video games, but she does not really know Mary and is a little nervous that they will not have anything to talk about. She wishes she had invited one of her good friends over, too, just in case, but now it is too late because Mary is supposed to arrive in five minutes.
- Andrea is moving to a new school next year. She has many friends at her current school and doesn't want to leave them. She is a little bit excited to live in a new place, but she feels she is going to miss out on things by leaving.

- Henry has a basketball game tonight. He has always been the star of the team, but the team they are playing tonight has two tall, athletic guys. He has heard that the team they are playing is unstoppable, and he is losing confidence that his team will win.
- Laura's mom is a good cook, but tonight she is making meatloaf. Laura does not want to be rude, but she does not think she will like the meatloaf at all. The thought of it grosses her out.
- It is the first day of school, and Kathleen is ready to start a new year. She has a book bag filled with school supplies ready by the door. She leaves home with plenty of time to get to the bus stop. She is hoping this year will be a lot better than last year because she really did not enjoy her teacher last year.
- Robert is really sad these days. His grandmother is sick in the hospital, and he does not ever get to see her. His parents tell him that she is fine and not to worry, but that is all he can seem to think about right now. He wishes he could visit her more often.
- Brian's mother is about to have another baby. Brian has always been the only child, but now he is going to have a little sister. He doesn't know what to think because it is a new situation for him. He has heard that little sisters can be a pain, but part of him is excited to have someone else in his family.
- Sarah is on the fastest roller coaster ever. She has always heard about Thunder Road but has never gotten to ride it. She usually avoids roller coasters because they scare her, but today her friends talked her into riding it. The roller coaster is slowly creeping up the steep hill, and she can see that it is a long way down.

Alternative Session - Feelings (Middle School Students)

Session Time: 45 minutes. You may take one or two sessions to talk about feelings with middle school students. It depends on how open they are to talking.

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors;

- B-SMS 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem
- B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students

Objectives:

- Students will identify their feelings about deployment.
- Students will brainstorm different solutions to deal with t
- heir feelings and form connections with other students based on these feelings.

Materials:

- Jenga® (Buy Jenga and color the ends of the blocks.)
- Game cards
- Paper
- Crayons

Activity:

- Begin by discussing feelings in general. Brainstorm about the difference between positive and negative feelings. Talk about the students' feelings about deployment.
- Play Jenga® according to the instructions included with the game.

- Each time students choose a block, they must pick up a card that coordinates with the color on the ends of the game piece. Each color has a different feeling theme:
 - Red = Angry
 - Orange = Proud
 - Yellow = Sad
 - Green = Lonely
 - Blue = Anxious
 - Purple = General Feelings
 - Heart = Student Choice
- Have students follow the instructions on the card and allow discussion.

Process:

- Help the students process throughout the game by asking questions of the group members and forming connections.
- Ask students what part of this activity was most helpful to them and why.

Evaluation:

- Ask students what they learned about themselves today.
- See if there is an emotion discussed in today's group that the students might not have experienced. Ask if there is an emotion they might not have realized they were feeling until this activity.
- Ask students to share one of their feelings regarding deployment and how they are going to cope with this feeling.
- If there is time, ask students to share a feeling that the person to their right shared. How can this person overcome this feeling?

Homework:

- Journal: Write in your journal about your feelings regarding your family member being deployed. Keep in mind that it isn't easy for anyone to deal with a parent being deployed. You are entitled to your feelings. Try to talk about your positive and negative feelings. If you don't feel like writing, draw a picture to express your feelings.

Lesson plan and game cards adapted from: Seaberg, G.C. (2005). *S.M.A.S.H.: Small group meetings about self-harm: A Small group curriculum designed for middle school girls*. Marymount University.

PU the cards from previous version. I didn't make any changes to the cards themselves, just to the title of the cards to make the feelings all consistent terms

Red Cards - Angry

<p>Draw something that makes you angry, and have the group guess what it is.</p>	<p>Describe another emotion you feel when you are angry.</p>
<p>Define anger.</p>	<p>Make your best angry face.</p>
<p>Take three deep breaths.</p>	<p>How can you cope with your angry feelings while your family member is away?</p>
<p>Count backward from 10.</p>	<p>What makes you the most angry about your family member being deployed?</p>
<p>Do 10 jumping jacks.</p>	<p>Describe how you feel physically when you are angry.</p>

Orange Cards - Proud

<p>Draw something that makes you proud, and have the group guess what it is.</p>	<p>How can you express the feeling “proud”?</p>
<p>How can you let your family member know you are proud of him or her?</p>	<p>Say three things you are proud of (in general or in regard to your family member).</p>
<p>What does proud mean?</p>	<p>Draw a picture of something patriotic, and have the group guess what it is.</p>
<p>Stand up and say, “I am proud of myself because....”</p>	<p>Think of someone else in the group. What are you proud of him/her for? Tell that person.</p>
<p>True or false: It is okay for me to be proud of my family member but also feel angry at the same time.</p>	<p>What do you think your family member would say that he or she is proud of you for?</p>

Yellow Cards - Sad

<p>Draw something that makes you sad, and have the group guess what it is.</p>	<p>When was the last time you felt sad?</p>
<p>What is a positive way to express your sad feelings?</p>	<p>What is a negative way to express your sad feelings?</p>
<p>Define sadness.</p>	<p>Tell the group what makes you most sad about your family member being away.</p>
<p>Ask another group member what makes him or her sad.</p>	<p>When you are sad, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork?</p>
<p>What are some solutions to dealing with sadness?</p>	<p>What do you think your family member would say to you about your sadness?</p>

Green Cards - Lonely

<p>Draw something that makes you lonely, and have the group guess what it is.</p>	<p>When was the last time you felt lonely?</p>
<p>Define lonely.</p>	<p>What is a solution to when you feel lonely?</p>
<p>What do you miss about your family member?</p>	<p>Tell the group what makes you most lonely about your family member being away.</p>
<p>Ask everyone in the group, "Do you feel lonely sometimes?"</p>	<p>When you are lonely, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork?</p>
<p>Who can you talk to if you are feeling lonely?</p>	<p>What do you think your family member would say to you about your lonely feeling?</p>

Blue Cards - Anxious

<p>Draw something that makes you anxious, and have the group guess what it is.</p>	<p>When was the last time you felt anxious?</p>
<p>Define anxiety.</p>	<p>What is a solution to when you are worrying about your family member?</p>
<p>In general, what makes you anxious?</p>	<p>Tell the group what makes you most anxious about your family member being away.</p>
<p>How do you feel when you feel anxious? Answer and then ask someone else in the group how he/she feels, too.</p>	<p>When you are anxious, is it hard to concentrate?</p>
<p>How many times a week do you feel anxious?</p>	<p>What is something you are anxious about at school? At home?</p>

Purple Cards - General Feelings

<p>Draw a picture that expresses an emotion. Have the group members guess what the “feeling” is.</p>	<p>If you had to rank your feelings regarding your family member’s deployment, what would the top three feelings be?</p>
<p>Talk about a feeling you have regarding your family member’s deployment. How does the feeling affect your day?</p>	<p>On a scale of 1-10, how does it feel to talk about your emotions? (1 = very difficult, 10 = very easy)</p>
<p>How are you positively dealing with your family member’s deployment?</p>	<p>How are you negatively dealing with your family member’s deployment?</p>
<p>Ask each group member to share how he or she is feeling right now.</p>	<p>Do you feel like others understand you right now?</p>
<p>What is the hardest thing for you to deal with while your family member is away?</p>	<p>Free card: Ask the group any question you want to help you to feel more connected.</p>

SESSION 6: LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Session Time: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors:

- B-SS 1. Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
- B-SS 3. Create relationships with adults that support success
- B-SS 8. Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert self-when necessary

Objectives:

- Students will have the opportunity to share what they miss about their deployed family member.
- Students will identify people in their lives they can turn to during a difficult time or if they just need someone to listen.

Materials:

- Blank puzzles that can be bought at a craft store or craft website
- Crayons/markers/colored pencils
- One plastic sandwich bag for each student
- People in My Life worksheet (see p. 36)
- Writing utensil

Activity:

- Begin the group by asking the students to draw a picture of one thing they miss most about their deployed family member on the puzzle letter sheet or blank puzzle.
- Have students share their drawing with the group. How does it feel to talk about your family member, especially now that the group has met for six weeks? Ask group members if they talk about their deployed family only in group, outside of group, in class and/or at home.
- After students have shared their drawings, ask them to cut along the lines of the picture puzzle or break apart the blank puzzle. Put the pieces in a baggie and put in the honor box for the student's family member.

- Explain that it is important they feel comfortable talking to someone they trust about their feelings and thoughts. When they miss something about their family member, it is a perfect opportunity to think, “Who can I talk to?” It is healthy to want to share what you are thinking and feeling.
- Have the group brainstorm about some people they can talk to about their family members. Hand out the People in My Life worksheet to all group members.
- Ask students to make a list of people they can turn to if they need someone to listen by using the People in My Life worksheet as a guide. Give students enough time to write down names and really think about their resources.
- Once students are finished with their lists, come back together as a group. Generate a list that is easily viewable by the whole group. Let students share who they can turn to. Make sure the students list you (the school counselor) and the other students in the group. This is an opportunity to make sure the students realize they are not only attending group for themselves but also to be a support to each other.

Process:

- Have students think about the list of people they know they can talk to. Have them discuss examples of times when they might need to talk to these people. Ask if they feel comfortable talking about their feelings; refer to previous lessons on feelings and anxiety.
- Ask students who the first person on the list is that you would turn to if they needed someone. Ask why they chose this person.
- Ask the students for examples of times the people on their list helped them (regarding deployment or any other time).
- Ask the students to come up with additional people they would talk to.
- Discuss the benefits of talking about thoughts and feelings.
- Ask the students to think of something they have kept inside their head regarding their family member’s deployment. Pass out index cards so students have a chance to write if they feel more comfortable writing vs. talking.

Homework:

- Journal: Tell your deployed family member what you miss most when they aren’t. Tell your deployed family about who you can turn to for support and a listening ear. Tell your deployed family member what you have been doing in school and at home while the person has been gone.

People in My Life

Who wants to listen? Who cares how I am feeling? Make a list below.

Family:

Friends:

Teachers, School Counselors and Other School Staff:

In the Community:

Other:

SESSION 7: RESILIENCE

Session Time: 1 hour

This session will probably take longer than the other sessions because it focuses on how to take all the information already discussed and use it to positively affect the student's life, despite the deployment. For younger students, it may need to be simplified. It can also be stretched into two lessons, especially for older students.

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors:

- B-SMS 2. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control
- B-SMS 10. Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities
- B-SS 9. Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment

Objectives:

- Students will look at specific life events and discuss control as related to these events.
- Students will look at ways to be in control of their own lives, despite their family member's deployment.
- Students will talk about how they can bounce back from hardships by being resilient.

Materials:

- My Lifeline worksheet
- Blank paper for brainstorming
- Writing utensil
- Note to parents

Activity #1 - My Past and Present

- Tell students they will be telling their life stories and writing about their futures.
- On a blank piece of paper, have students list significant life events that have happened from birth to present. For younger students, it may be important to brainstorm these events: births, deaths, awards, moves, sicknesses, family changes, deployment, etc.
- Ask students to transfer the information to the My Lifeline worksheet on the side labeled "Events."

- Once all of the life events have been listed, go back and have students write their feelings about each event. Also, who had control over each event (self, mother, father, no one, etc.). The goal is to have students see that some of the adverse events in their life (such as parental deployment) have been out of their control.

Process #1:

- What kinds of feelings do you have when you see the things
- What things did you have in common with other group members? What things were different?
- If there were things you could have controlled, what would you have done differently to change things?

Activity #2 - My Future

- Now, on a scratch sheet of paper, have students brainstorm what they would like to have happen in their lives from today until the “end of their story.” Have students be specific (age, place, event, etc.)
- Give each group participant another My Lifeline worksheet. Ask students to transfer their future life events to the lifeline on the side labeled “Events.”
- Once all the life events have been listed, go back and have students write how they would feel for each event if it occurs and who would have control over each event (self, mother, father, no one, etc.).

Process #2:

- Discuss what the students will need to do to achieve future events. Emphasize the importance of what students can do now to promote future success.
- Have students compare their future lifeline with the one from the past. Ask: “What do you notice about the control of these events in your future?” Guide students to see that their future is hopeful and that they have control over what happens to them in many circumstances in their lives. Help students realize that despite the deployment of their family member, they have choices for their future. They are in charge of their lives.

Homework:

- Ask group members to share their future lifeline with someone they feel comfortable with outside of group. Make a copy to include in their Honor Box so they can share with their deployed family member.
- Let students know next week is the last session and that you will be mailing out the honor boxes. Talk to students briefly about things that can be included in the boxes other than those items that will already be included from group time. Have them take a note home to their parents (see p. 40).

What's Your Story? My Lifeline

Events

Feelings/
Control

Reprinted with permission from Davis, T.E. (1997). *Telling life stories and creating lifebooks: A counseling technique for fostering resilience in children*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 58(11A).

Sample Letter to Parents

Send home after Session 7

<<date>>

Dear Parents,

I have enjoyed having your child in small group over the past several weeks. I hope you have had an opportunity to talk with your child about what we have been discussing in small group. As I mentioned in the original permission letter, we made an Honor Box for your family member. Next week is our last session, which is where we will be gathering additional items to include in these boxes. Although we have several items from our small-group sessions to include, your child might want to bring additional items to include in the box. Talk to your child about the following:

- Cookies
- Candy
- Drawings
- Tapes (audio tapes of messages to your deployed family member, a story, etc.)
- School papers, copies of tests, report cards, etc.
- Letters
- News clippings
- Photographs
- Crossword puzzles/brainteasers/jokes

I have talked to the students about these possibilities. Keep in mind that we are only filling a shoebox. Please help your child remember to bring any or all of these items to group for our last meeting on _____.

Please contact me with any questions. I appreciate your participation in the success of this project.

Thank you,

Name
School Counselor

SESSION 8: CELEBRATE

Time needed: 45 minutes

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors:

- M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
- B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with students
- B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy

Objectives:

- Students will celebrate their time together in group.
- Students will put together their Honor Boxes.
- Students will celebrate and honor their family members.

Materials:

- Refreshments
- One piece of construction paper for each student (write their name in the middle ahead of time)
- Markers
- Packing tape
- Address labels
- Post-test

Activity:

- Have students write encouraging messages to each other on the individual pieces of construction paper. Have students pass the construction paper with their name on it to the right. Continue until everyone has had a chance to write on everyone's paper. This will be a reminder to the students that they have a group that supports their situation.
- Gather materials to put in Honor Boxes: journals, copies of worksheets the students want to send, thank you letter, puzzle letter, worrywart and items students bring from home.
- Compose a letter with the help of the whole group to include in each box. Ask students what they want the letter to say. Have all the students sign it. Make copies and include in the boxes.

Dealing with Deployment

- Serve refreshments, preferably something patriotic to go along with the theme. Talk to students about the group and how they are feeling about the group being over. Allow time for general processing of the group. Let students know that you will be bringing them together in about a month to check in with them.

Evaluation:

- Hand out the post-test and the small-group evaluation form. Ask students to turn both forms in before they leave small group.

Homework:

- Continue to be patriotic. Use what we have learned in group to cope better in your situation. Constantly provide support to each other.

POST-GROUP FOLLOW-UP

With students: Periodically check in with students to see how they are doing and to make sure the students know you're available to talk. After two–three weeks, consider organizing a post-group reunion to make sure students still feel the group's support. During this meeting, group members can process their progress since the group ended.

With parents/teachers: It is important to send a post-group follow-up letter to both parents and teachers. This letter should explain the general progress you noticed in group. It should also ask parents and teachers to continue to watch the students' behavior. Many times, parents and teachers will be the first to know to refer students to you. Teachers should be made aware of the benefit of the small group in contributing to the students' overall success. Send individual letters, e-mails and/or make phone calls to parents and teachers to ensure the best service for the student.

Summative Group Evaluation Form

Did you feel like you were supported in this group? Yes No

Did you like the activities? Yes No

Were the topics helpful? Yes No

On a scale of 1-5, how did you like the group? 1= Disliked, 3=Neutral, 5=Loved

1 2 3 4 5

What was your favorite activity?

What was your least favorite activity?

How did the group help you deal with the deployment of your family member?

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RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DEPLOYMENT

Books: There are many books for all ages that address deployment; there are several blogs as well. Explore Google or Amazon for options.

- Pavlicin, K.M . (2003). *Surviving deployment: A guide for military families*. St. Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishers
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www.survivingdeployment.com
www.anysoldier.com
<https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/>
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
www.militaryresource.com/
www.ourmilitarykids.org
<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/>

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