

Supporting Children and Family Survivors of Military Line-of-Duty Deaths

About this Module

Children who experience the loss of a parent or other family member through a military line-of-duty death are likely to face a number of unique issues. School professionals working with students in such circumstances will be able to provide more effective support when they understand the distinct aspects of this experience.

The [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#) is a unique collaboration of the leading professional organizations representing school professionals who have come together with a common conviction: grieving students need the support and care of the school community. The Coalition provides extensive information about children and grief at their website with materials specifically geared towards the roles and responsibilities of school professionals. You can use the videos and written materials on the Coalition's website as your primary resource for learning more about providing support to grieving children.

The materials in this module are designed as a supplement to the broader information at the Coalition's website. They are not intended to be a stand-alone resource. They were developed collaboratively with the national non-profit organizations Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), along with representatives of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).

Collaborators of this Module

[MCEC \(Military Child Education Coalition\)](#) is a national non-profit dedicated to ensuring that every military child receives quality educational opportunities and is fully prepared for college, workforce and life.

[TAPS \(Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors\)](#) is a national non-profit that provides services to families and loved ones of those who have served and died.

[DoDEA \(Department of Defense Education Activity\)](#) is a civilian agency of the U.S. Department of Defense that manages schools for military-connected students and provides support to military-connected students in public schools.

Are Your Students Affected?

There are almost 2 million military connected children—that is, children of active service members. This includes families with at least one parent in active duty military, National Guard or Reserves. These children live in almost every zip code in the country. More than three out of four military families live in civilian communities and over 80% of military-connected children attend public schools. There are also more than 100,000 students in schools managed by DoDEA on military bases in the U.S. and overseas.

When service members are killed in the line of duty, their deaths affect their children, nieces, nephews, younger siblings and other relatives. These children attend schools all across the country. Each of these deaths touches the families of other military service members. Educators can expect to find children affected by line-of-duty deaths in schools throughout the nation.

Line-of-Duty Deaths: Three Essential Points About Children and Family Survivors

1. *Most grief experiences of military survivors are similar to those of other grieving children and families.* In most ways, children and family survivors of line-of-duty deaths experience grief and coping with loss much as others do. They have similar thoughts, feelings, concerns and needs.
2. *Some grief experiences are distinct in important ways.* Survivors of line-of-duty deaths are coping with unique issues unfamiliar to most people outside the military.
3. *School professionals can make a difference.* When school professionals are aware of the distinct issues facing these families, they can plan and provide more effective support.

Take Steps to Make a Difference

To understand more about providing support to survivors of a line-of-duty death, read through the materials in this module. Each segment includes references to the [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#) website. Together, these materials will prepare school professionals to offer meaningful support to children immediately after a death as well as over time.

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1. Being Part of the Military

- See the module [Cultural Sensitivity](#) to understand how a general sensitivity to the unique backgrounds and needs of each family can help school professionals support grieving children from all cultures.

- See the module [Connecting With Families](#) for suggestions about how to effectively reach out to grieving families.

Within the world of military service, there is a shared duty and sense of purpose beyond oneself among service members and their families. These men and women serve a vital role that includes the readiness to put their lives on the line for their country at any moment. People outside the military community often have little understanding of the experiences of service members and their families.

This is a resourceful and adaptable culture, with many strengths and assets. Military families typically value loyalty, commitment, dedication and principles of service. They understand concepts of personal sacrifice. They are willing to take on extra responsibilities and risks for the welfare of their country. They believe in the value of a strong, prepared military to make a positive difference in the world.

Parents, spouses and children of service members understand their family member is at risk for injury or death. Living with this knowledge on a day-to-day basis requires some effort.

Many practice a type of healthy denial that helps them cope. “Nothing will happen to my mom because she isn’t working in combat situations.”

“My dad is smarter than the bad guys so I know he’ll be okay.”

Like other families, military families generally make assumptions that allow them to feel safe. We presume that the people we love who are in our lives in the morning will also be there for us in the evening. We assume that our friends and the social groups where we find comfort and support today will also offer us comfort tomorrow. Families whose service member is deployed learn to hold these expectations across the time and distance of deployment.

Death Challenges These Presumptions

When a line-of-duty death occurs, these presumptions can be profoundly challenged. There are a range of responses children and families might have.

For example:

- *The world becomes more dangerous.* Because the possibility of death is a fear the family has been coping with all along, the ability to go forward and use healthy denial or make presumptions about a stable world may be disrupted. Many things about the world that once felt safe and secure are now likely to feel dangerous or threatening.
- *Children regret not being “better.”* Children may regret not staying more connected with their parent or loved one. They often feel they should have been “a better kid,” more attentive or more available. They may think, “I should have known this would happen. I should have spent more time with my dad, and not gotten into trouble so much.”
- *Families may feel relieved.* In addition to shock and grief, some family members may actually feel a sense of relief when the constant worry about their loved one ends, just as people sometimes do when someone dies after a long illness. This can bring up feelings of guilt and shame.
- *Children may feel resentful.* Children understand that their loved one made a commitment to serve and protect the country. They may be resentful that because of that choice, the person is now dead. They may feel guilty about wishing he or she had not chosen to serve.

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- *Questions of honor can be confusing.* There are many causes of line-of-duty deaths, including deaths from accidents or natural causes that may occur while the service member is on duty. These may not seem particularly “heroic.” Children may sense they should feel proud of their loved one under any circumstances, but hear or feel conflicting responses to the cause of death. In cases where a service member dies by suicide, children are likely to sense the confusion and perhaps shame of adults around them. They may be told this death was not heroic, or that their loved one has done something wrong.

2. Military-Connected Students: Challenges and Resilience

Military-connected students face unique challenges as a matter of course. Most (80%) attend public schools. They typically relocate every one to four years. Many students will go through six to nine moves in their K-12 careers. The constant need to make new friends and adjust to new school rules and communities can heighten stress, increase risk for depression and anxiety and contribute to learning challenges.

These experiences can also help many children become especially resilient and better able to adjust to new and stressful situations. Children who are used to managing transitions and challenges may feel proud about their ability to cope independently with major life changes. After the death of a parent or other family member, they may find themselves overwhelmed in completely unfamiliar ways, yet uncomfortable seeking help from others.

Because these students are so often in transition, they may not have an opportunity to become known to teachers and support staff at their schools. If there is a change in their learning or social behaviors after a death, school professionals may not recognize it. As they move from one school to another, students with special needs may have difficulty qualifying for services or accommodations because of differences in regulations or a need for new evaluations. After a death, the absence of ongoing support services can be particularly difficult for such students.

Students with a deployed parent are typically living with a single parent or other relatives. An enduring part of their life is coping with the unique challenges and uncertainties of a parent who is far away and may be in harm’s way at any time.

3. Distinct Experiences: In the Immediate Aftermath

- See the module [Concepts of Death](#) to learn what children need to understand about death and how to discuss these matters with them.
- See the module [Social Media](#) for suggestions about dealing with social media after a death.
- See the module [Death and School Crisis](#) for guidelines about addressing a death that affects many members of the school community. The distinct features of a line-of-duty death affect both how the family learns of the death and how they are able to cope with the news of the deceased at the moment children learn of the death.

Nature of the Death

While each instance is unique, these are some of the issues family survivors may face:

- *These deaths tend to be sudden.*
News of the death is often sudden and shocking. The appearance of a military chaplain at the door, accompanied by another officer, often signals that a loved one is seriously injured or has died. There may be little or no time for survivors to prepare themselves emotionally. Their children may be at school or with friends, and the surviving parent or guardian must immediately consider how to reach them with the news.
- *The death is often violent and intentional.*
One of the most troubling things within human experience is to know that a person you loved and counted on was intentionally targeted and killed. An individual or a malevolent force made a conscious choice to end the life of a person who was hugely important to you.
This act is sometimes made in a deliberate and pre-meditated way. For example, a service member may be the target of a sniper, or ambushed in a planned attack in revenge for an earlier military action.
- *The death may occur after a long absence or multiple deployments.*
For children, a deployment of several months represents a substantial portion of their lives. For some, their parent has been deployed over more time than he or she has been present in the home. It can be difficult to understand and come to terms with the death of a parent who was already frequently absent.

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- *Accidental or “friendly fire” deaths sometimes occur.*

Coping with an accidental line-of-duty death is complicated. It raises extremely challenging questions about loyalty, trust, belonging and forgiveness.
- *Information about the death may be unclear, conflicting or incomplete.*

Depending on the nature of the death and the mission during which it occurred, the family may have little information about what happened, where it happened, or when their loved one’s remains will be returned to them. They may hear different versions of the event from different sources. Additional details may be offered in pieces over time. This process can extend and amplify the experience of acute grief for everyone in the family.
- *Information about and reactions to the death are sometimes extremely public.*

Families must deal with a range of public reactions and information about the death. Judgments may be made about the service member’s choices, actions and intentions. Sometimes the death is glorified. Sometimes it is harshly criticized.
- *Survivors may be troubled if they perceive a lack of meaning in the death.*

Line-of-duty deaths may not be classically “heroic.” They may have a random quality. Someone might die in a car crash on the base. A death might occur from illness or a fall. A service member might die during a training activity. Survivors can be devastated by the sense of “waste” in such a death, a feeling that it has made no measurable positive difference in the world.

Notification

The military will withhold public identification of the deceased until families have been reached. Depending on the nature of the death and the mission during which it occurred, some time may pass between the death and the family notification.

However, military families are often tuned in to both traditional news sources and social media. They may hear of a battle or a death and then communicate with friends of their service member who are also deployed (“I think that might be where his section has been operating”). They might talk with other military spouses, or follow along on conversations on Facebook.

Social media sometimes passes along information without regard to the sensibilities of survivors. Images of a battle in process may be posted long before military representatives

can reach the family.

This creates particular challenges in the school setting for children of a fallen service member. During a classroom break, or even within the classroom itself, news of a line-of-duty death may come to light and spread quickly throughout the school community. School professionals should have plans in place to quickly identify and reach out to children of service members in the event of a line-of-duty death.

Heightened Vulnerability

A line-of-duty death often creates a heightened sense of vulnerability for survivors. For example, children who have been reassured repeatedly of a parent’s training, skill and preparation to carry out military and combat duties are now left to wonder, “If this could happen to my dad, who was trained, armed and ready for any crisis, what could happen to everyone else I love—people who are not trained at all?”

The malevolent forces that caused the loved one’s death are still out there in the world. This can be quite frightening to children, who may worry about their own safety or that of their family. This is especially likely to be true for children when their surviving parent or guardian is also part of the military.

After being informed of the death, children may experience a high level of separation anxiety and fear. For example, if their surviving parent leaves their side they may become anxious. They may find it difficult to spend time by themselves even if that was something they enjoyed before the death occurred.

Talking with Children

The military has particular ways to refer to a death—statements that reflect values of honor and respect for the person who has died. People will talk of a service member who has “made the ultimate sacrifice.” They will often describe the person as a “fallen hero.” They describe this as “selfless service,” the “last full measure of devotion,” and an extraordinary offering of “giving one’s life in service to one’s country.”

These military expressions are powerful and meaningful. They can also be confusing to children, particularly younger children. For this reason, it is also important to use clear words and expressions to clarify what is meant. For example, one might say, “When people say your father made the ultimate sacrifice, they mean he died protecting his country and our freedoms. His death helps everyone here be safe.”

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Traumatic Aspects

Line-of-duty deaths often carry three qualities that are likely to make the death of their family member more traumatic for all children.

- *Violent.* Deaths that involve mutilation or great suffering, or are gruesome in some way, are most disturbing. Children may have direct information about the violent nature of the death (e.g., because of press photos or social media posts), or powerful fantasies about what it was like.
- *Intentional.* The death was deliberately caused by a malevolent force with malicious intent.
- *Violating conventions.* The death was caused by someone choosing violence over conventional and more constructive ways to address differences and conflict.

Children may find themselves experiencing recurrent, intrusive images of a horrible death. This can make it difficult for them to create and cherish positive remembrance of the deceased—an important part of grieving.

4. Public Matters Affect Personal Responses

- See the module [Guilt and Shame](#) to understand more about these common reactions among grieving children and identify steps that can help children cope.
- See the module [Peer Support](#) for steps that can create an environment of positive support among the peers of a grieving child.
- See the module [Funeral Attendance](#) for practical advice on funeral attendance that school professionals can share with families.
- See the module [Commemoration and Memorialization](#) for important guidelines about policies and practices within schools that ensure these activities are appropriate and supportive.

A line-of-duty death is inevitably a public event. Often, an entire community is profoundly affected by the death. The highly visible quality of the public's reactions can provide solace and support to a grieving family, but it can also create special pressures.

For example, public responses often call out the heroic and noble quality of the service member's death. Many people make public comments about this idealized figure they did not

actually know. This can be confusing to grieving children—they are grieving a parent, not a hero. They are grieving someone real, not an idealized notion of a superhero. They weren't looking for someone to save the world. They wanted a parent who would be there for them, to protect and support them, to help them grow.

In some cases, this “hero” figure may not fit children's picture of what their parent was like. It can be difficult for children to reconcile public perceptions with personal experience if the parent was neglectful, absent or abusive. If an adolescent was struggling with issues of autonomy and independence, there may have been considerable friction with the parent.

Public reaction can also be critical and negative, which can be particularly wrenching to the family. The service member may be portrayed as a perpetrator, or as someone who “got what she deserved.”

It is not unusual for children to respond to these conflicting experiences with confusion or feelings of guilt and shame. They may believe that if they had done things differently, their family member would have avoided the dangerous situation, tried harder to return home or chosen to stay at home rather than go into combat.

Grieving without Privacy

In the immediate aftermath of a line-of-duty death, many people typically come to the family's home. In addition to family and close friends, other military families may appear. Local and state politicians may show up. Reporters may be present.

At one level, all of this attention can be gratifying. Children appreciate the recognition of their parent. On the other hand, the lack of privacy is challenging for the entire family. The constant flow of people can be exhausting and overstimulating. Children may not know how they are expected to respond. They may feel they are supposed to “buck up” and be strong when they actually feel like falling apart and crying. They may be told their loved one is a “hero who died for freedom,” and that they should be proud, not feel sad about this sacrifice.

Military Funeral Traditions

Service members who die abroad in service to their country are honored with a process called *dignified transfer*. Their remains are flown to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

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A carry team solemnly moves the remains from the aircraft to the military mortuary. From there, arrangements will be made to return the remains to the family.

The family is invited to participate in the process, though this is voluntary. Chaplains and counselors are present. There are play areas for young children and opportunities for families to talk about their loved one. Many families find this a healing and uplifting experience.

Military funeral rituals are sometimes confusing or uncomfortable to children. These include:

- *Flag-draped casket.* An American flag is draped over the casket.
- *Playing of “Taps.”* “Taps” will be played, sometimes by a live bugler, sometimes as a recording.
- *Flag folding and presentation.* The flag is lifted from the casket, folded carefully into a tri-cornered shape, then presented as a keepsake to a family member.
- *Military fly-over.* Rare now, but sometimes requested by military leadership.
- *Gun salutes.* Honor guards may fire three volleys from their rifles or, more rarely, fire a 21-gun salute. Hearing gun shots shortly after a death caused by gunfire may be upsetting.

It is helpful to prepare children for the things they are likely to see and hear at their loved one’s funeral, or any part of the ritual in which they may be asked to participate. For example, sometimes a surviving parent or guardian asks that the folded flag be presented to a child.

The funeral of a slain service member is sometimes a public event. It may focus more on what the community is looking for, not what the family wants. Depending on how much notice the death has received, hundreds or even thousands of community members may attend. The event may be televised. News media may be present. The family’s grief is publicly displayed, in the moment of the funeral or memorial, and forever after online.

Every aspect of such services is planned and performed under great scrutiny. A family’s, or a child’s, personal wishes may not be taken into consideration. For some families, there is a sense that the process is honoring the job as much as or more than it honors their loved one.

Peers: Supportive or Challenging

Peers can have a range of reactions when a classmate loses a parent or family member through a line-of-duty death. In our culture we do not generally talk about death, so children, like many adults, often have no idea what to say to a grieving peer.

These deaths can also cause anxiety among all students—they are unexpected, violent, and frightening, and they represent a threat to the nation’s safety. Some students may cope with their discomfort by teasing or harassing the grieving child.

This might include classmates making jokes about the deceased service member, circumstances of the death, changes in the grieving child’s behavior or changes in the child’s family situation.

5. Grief Over Time

- See the module [Grief Triggers](#) to understand what triggers are and how to offer support to children experiencing a grief trigger.
- See the module [Providing Support Over Time](#) for practical guidelines on offering support to grieving children beyond the immediate aftermath of a death.
- See the module [Secondary and Cumulative Losses](#) to understand more about additional losses grieving children experience in the months and years after a death.

Grief is not a one-time or short-term event. Children who have lost a parent or other close family member will experience that loss over their lifetime. School professionals can offer support that helps children stay on track academically, emotionally and socially.

Military Survivors: Constant Reminders

Survivors of line-of-duty deaths are constantly reminded of the death and their loss, even more so than most other bereaved families.

News and commentary about the death may be present in conventional and social media for weeks or months. For years to come, whenever similar events occur locally or nationally, the story may be repeated and images posted. Families are likely to be reminded of their loss when they hear news reports of current combat, statistics about war-related deaths in history class, or human interest stories on Memorial Day.

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The sight of the American flag, a drive past a military cemetery or hearing “Taps” played may also bring up powerful memories.

At online newspaper sites or in social media, posted comments about a conflict where a loved one died, or even about the specific service member can be quite horrible. Even if a family chooses not to view such comments, they may filter down to conversations within the community, and sometimes to conversations on school grounds.

Other line-of-duty deaths reported in the news are likely to remind the family of their own experiences.

Families who watch TV or movies of any type are likely to see previews and promotionals of wartime dramas. Many of these scenes may remind them of the death or other aspects of their loss. This can also be painful for families.

Memorial Day is a solemn day for military families, particularly those who have lost a loved one in the line of duty. Many families spend the day at military cemeteries, religious services or other memorial events. We encourage educators to be sensitive about classroom activities addressing Memorial Day or other patriotic calendar days. Some children who are military survivors talk about Memorial Day reports in their classes where peers describe barbecues or trips to the beach. Their own mention of a visit to a parent’s grave sometimes feels uncomfortable or awkward.

Many people do not fully understand the distinction between Memorial Day (a national day of honoring those who have died in the Armed Forces) and Veterans Day (a national day of honoring all who have served in the Armed Forces). Students who experienced a military line-of-duty death of a family member may be particularly sensitive to this distinction. Schools should be conscious of this when planning events or when holding discussions relating to Memorial Day to be sure that the unique purpose of this holiday is clearly conveyed.

Talking with Others

Children who have lost a parent in a line-of-duty death may find it difficult to discuss their loss over time. They may wish to keep the experience private. They may feel embarrassment or shame about the incident, especially if there were accusations that the service member made poor choices or acted inappropriately or the death was by suicide. Children may be uncertain about how others will respond and whether people will be judgmental about the incident.

It is not unusual for children and youth who attend a new school or college to avoid talking about the experience altogether.

This emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for children and youth to speak about their experiences in a judgment-free setting, such as the [TAPS Good Grief Camp](#) (see “Resources,” below).

Secondary Losses

Secondary losses are the changes in relationships, finances and lifestyle that often accompany a death in the family. In addition to these common changes, there are some distinct issues common in military line-of-duty deaths.

The military community is a strong one, and belonging is important for service members and their families. The community is likely to be deeply supportive at the time of the death, but this can change over time.

For families of living service members, the survivors of a service member killed in the line of duty are a painful reminder that their loved ones are also at risk every day of their lives. These are difficult issues to discuss, and many people do not feel skilled enough to talk about such matters.

For survivors, spending time with families who have not experienced a loss such as theirs can also be difficult. Children may feel resentful that their parent died and other children’s parents did not.

Families living on base are usually able to stay in their quarters for one year following the service member’s death. However, families both on-base and in-community often relocate to be closer to parents, grandparents or siblings. They may need to move to regions with more job possibilities or a lower cost-of-living. They may decide to return to their home towns.

Once families relocate, their grief may be compounded in a variety of ways. They have lost friends, resources and their identity as a military family. Children often express great sadness over having to leave pets behind. They have lost status and a sense of belonging, and they often become the newcomers in a community once again.

TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp

Each Memorial Day, the non-profit Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers support for family and friends of those who have served and died in the military. The TAPS Good Grief Camp is a weekend experience where children share experiences, learn coping skills, connect with peers and pair up with a military mentor.

Many families and children look forward to the sense of community and belonging of these events. They may find it a great benefit to attend every year.

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They receive unique assistance and support themselves and have the opportunity, over time, to provide support for others.

Others feel they are “memorialized out,” and prefer not to attend.

Regardless of how they feel about these programs, survivors of line-of-duty deaths often experience an anniversary effect during May. Both on the anniversary of the actual death and during Memorial Day events, they are reminded of the death and often re-visit the intense grief of that time.

We encourage schools to arrange appropriate leave time for children and teens who wish to attend Military Survivor events. This can be one of the most important resources for support over time.

6. Giving & Getting Support

- See the module [Providing Support Over Time](#) for suggestions about supporting grieving children in the years after a death occurs.
- See the module [Professional Preparation](#) for a discussion of professional development resources addressing student bereavement.
- See the module [Professional Self-Care](#) for guidelines that address the challenges of offering support to grieving students.

Professional Self-Care

Supporting grieving children is a rewarding endeavor for school professionals. Indeed, there are few ways to have a more meaningful and lasting impact on children. However, this can also be painful and challenging work. Most educators have experienced losses of their own. Some have lost family or friends through line-of-duty deaths. Some are themselves veterans.

The website of the [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#) offers practical suggestions for professional self-care.

7. How Schools and School Professionals Can Support Children Coping with a Loved One’s Line-of-Duty Death

- See the website of the [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#) for information about talking with and supporting grieving children.

Here are some steps that will help school professionals provide meaningful support to children who have lost a parent or other close family member through a line-of-duty death.

1. *Be informed about supporting grieving children generally.* In most ways, children’s grief experiences are similar whatever the cause of a loved one’s death might be. Whenever possible, take steps to support professional development about children and grief within your school or district.
2. *Be informed about the unique issues of military survivors.* Reading the material in this module will help.
3. *Speak up and offer support to children and families.* Do more listening than talking. Listen “neutrally.” For example, avoid describing the deceased as a hero. This gives children the chance to describe their own memories and experience and allows them to express themselves more honestly and openly.

See the modules [Talking With Children](#), [What Not to Say](#), [Other Reactions](#).

4. *Take proactive steps to educate all students about death and teach skills about how to support a grieving peer.* This will lower anxiety for all students. It will also decrease incidents of teasing or other insensitive peer reactions when a student is grieving.

See the module [Peer Support](#).

5. *Watch for incidents of teasing or harassment of a grieving child and step in to intervene when necessary.* The death of a classmate’s parent or close family member can be difficult for peers. Line-of-duty deaths may be particularly disturbing. They represent a disruption of safety and security that can be frightening. Teasing is not an unusual reaction—it is a way some children manage their anxiety or confusion. In most cases, children do not intend to be cruel to a classmate. They usually respond positively to opportunities to ask questions of a teacher or other school professional, along with guidance on how to express appropriate condolences.

See the module [Peer Support](#).

6. *Monitor exposure to media coverage on military actions or military deaths, particularly soon after a child experiences a loss.* It may be useful to limit children’s exposure to media about or coverage related to deaths of other service members.

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Children may appreciate a “check-in” when media coverage is quite heavy (e.g., have they seen the coverage? How does it feel to hear these kinds of things?)

7. *Support students' attendance at TAPS events.* This is a source of significant and meaningful support for many children.
8. *Work as a team over time.* A school team might include educators, administrators and support staff familiar with a student's personality, academic performance, social connections and family. Coordinating efforts over time can help students at vulnerable moments, such as transitions to new grades or schools, anniversaries of the death, and other events that may bring up feelings of grief (e.g., graduation; parent-child events; concerts, athletic events and science fairs).
9. *Make a special effort to work through transitions to a new school or a new community.* Ask the family for permission to check in with the new school and share helpful information about the child's strengths and challenges with counselors, administration or teachers.

See the modules [Coordinating Services & Supporting Transitions](#) and [Grief Triggers](#).

10. *Accommodate grieving students' challenges with learning.* Academic challenges are extremely common among grieving children. It is appropriate and helpful for schools to make adjustments in assignments and exams, arrange for makeup assignments or provide tutoring or other support.

See the module [Impact on Learning](#).

11. *Get support for your own responses and feelings.* Supporting grieving children is rewarding but can also be difficult. Seek support from colleagues, friends or professionals.

See the modules [Professional Preparation](#) and [Professional Self-Care](#).



Resources

MCEC (Military Child Education Coalition)

Programs supporting children, parents, educators and other professionals, helping military children cope with transitions and prepare for excellence and leadership in their educational endeavors.

militarychild.org

TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)

Good Grief camps for child and teen survivors, military mentorship program, survivor seminars for adults.

taps.org

DoDEA (Department of Defense Educational Activity)

A civilian agency of the U.S. Department of Defense that manages K-12 schools for military-connected students in the U.S. and at military bases overseas. It also provides support to more than one million public school students in the U.S. who are part of military families.

dodea.edu

The Coalition to Support Grieving Students

A coalition of leading organizations representing education professionals who have come together with a common conviction: grieving students need the support and care of the school community.

grievingstudents.org

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

A national center dedicated to helping schools support their students through crisis and loss.

schoolcrisiscenter.org





Additional Modules Available at grievingstudents.org

Conversation & Support

- [Talking With Children](#)
- [What Not to Say](#)
- [Providing Support Over Time](#)
- [Peer Support](#)

Developmental & Cultural Considerations

- [Concepts of Death](#)
- [Connecting With Families](#)
- [Cultural Sensitivity](#)

Practical Considerations

- [Funeral Attendance](#)
- [Secondary and Cumulative Losses](#)
- [Coordinating Services & Supporting Transitions](#)
- [Social Media](#)

Reactions & Triggers

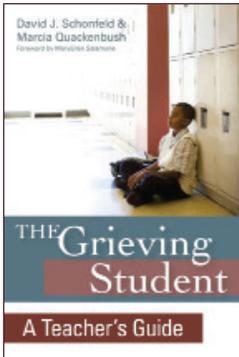
- [Impact on Learning](#)
- [Guilt and Shame](#)
- [Other Reactions](#)
- [Grief Triggers](#)

Professional Preparation & Self-Care

- [Professional Preparation](#)
- [Professional Self-Care](#)

Crisis & Special Circumstances

- [Death and School Crisis](#)
- [Suicide](#)
- [Commemoration and Memorializations](#)
- [Potentially Life-Limiting Conditions](#)



For more information on supporting grieving students, refer to *The Grieving Student: A Teacher's Guide* by David Schonfeld and Marcia Quackenbush.

LEAD FOUNDING MEMBERS



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