

ly routines

Symptoms of Deployment Related Stress in the Classroom

- ▶ Difficulty concentrating in school
- ▶ Unable to resume normal classroom assignments and activities
- ▶ Continued high levels of emotional response such as crying and intense sadness
- ▶ Appearing depressed, withdrawn and non-communicative
- ▶ Expressing sad or violent feelings in conversation, writings or drawings
- ▶ Intentionally hurting self or at risk for hurting others
- ▶ Gain or lose a significant amount of weight in a short period of time
- ▶ Discontinue taking care of personal appearance
- ▶ Exhibit possible drug or alcohol use/abuse

Teacher Intervention Strategies

Focus on students and the classroom learning environment – Retain routines and emphasis on the importance of learning while always leaving room to tend to student needs.

Provide structure – Maintain predictable schedule with clear behavioral guidelines and consequences. If student is distressed about circumstances of deployment, find appropriate time for them to share feelings, needs and fears.

Maintain objectivity – Respond in a calm and caring manner, answer questions in simple, direct terms. Regardless of political beliefs, refrain from expressing personal opinions.

Reinforce safety and security – After classroom discussions, end with a focus on student safety and the safety measures being taken on behalf of their loved one and others.

Be patient and reduce student workload as needed – Expect temporary slow downs or disruptions in learning when a deployment occurs.

Listen – Be approachable, attentive and sensitive to the unique needs of students coping with deployment and family separations. Take time to acknowledge the deployment and answer student questions in a factual manner.

Be sensitive to language and cultural needs – Be aware of, knowledgeable about, and sensitive to the language, values, and beliefs of other cultures. Inquire about school, community, and military resources available to assist.

Acknowledge and validate feelings – Help students develop a realistic understanding of deployment. Provide reassurance that the feelings of loss, anger, frustration and grief are normal and all individuals adjust at a different pace.

Strengths resulting from deployment

- ▶ Fosters maturity
- ▶ Emotional growth and insight
- ▶ Encourages independence, flexibility, and adapting to change
- ▶ Builds skills for adjusting to separations and losses faced later in life
- ▶ Strengthens family bonds
- ▶ Promotes awareness and understanding of importance of civic duty

For more information: <http://www.k12.wa.us/OperationMilitaryKids/>