

HELPING A MILITARY CHILD HEAL AFTER LOSS

When a tragedy occurs, it's important to offer love, support and hope to children as they navigate the grieving process. While things may be difficult for a while, they won't always be. Try the following suggestions to support them as they begin to heal.

THE SIX C'S TO COPING WITH GRIEF

CREATE ROUTINE

Children respond well to consistency. Try maintaining a regular schedule for school activities and bedtime rituals. This can help a child feel more secure after a loss.

CHAT

Be there for support, but allow the child to open up when they are ready. Let them know you are always available to listen.

CHECK IN

Grief can affect how children express their feelings. Acting out may help them feel in control and can reflect anger or sadness. Share healthy ways for them to express emotion instead, like writing or drawing.

COMFORT

Remind them that any feelings they may have are okay, including happiness related to other life events. Sadness, anger, guilt and detachment are common as children move through the grieving process.

CLARIFY

Be direct when talking about death and avoid confusing terms like "went to sleep." If the child places blame on themselves or doesn't accept that the death is real, be patient and explain what happened to the loved one.

CONNECT WITH SUPPORT

Mourning a loss is painful. Building a support network with other families who have experienced loss, spiritual groups, school officials and psychological health care providers can help.

Visit health.mil/RealWarriors for additional tips.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Psychological Health Resource Center

Call/Chat with a health resource consultant 24/7 at 866-966-1020 or health.mil/PHRC

Sesame Street for Military Families

Visit sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/topic/grief for information to support families grieving, along with videos and activities for children

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