

NASBHC

National
Assembly on
School-Based
Health Care

Bringing Health Care To Schools For Student Success



Serving Suddenly Military Children

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Webinar Outline

I. What is ‘Suddenly Military’ and How do We Identify these Children?

II. Understanding the Culture

III. Unique Problems Faced by Children of Reservists

IV. Role of the SBHC in Serving and Supporting Children of Reservists

V. Resources

At the end of this webinar the participant will:

- 1) Understand what is meant by “suddenly military” and how to identify these children.
- 2) Develop basic understanding of difference between National Guard/Reservist vs. Active Duty service members and how these differences impact how a family copes with deployment.
- 3) Be able to describe common problems faced by children who are facing a parent’s deployment.
- 4) Identify various opportunities for SBH staff to identify and assist suddenly military students.
- 5) Have resources available to them to gain more information on suddenly military students.

Suddenly Military Children

“When one member joins, the whole family serves.”

Suddenly Military Children: Describes children whose lives are suddenly changed when their parent who is in the Reserve branch of the military (a National Guard or Reserves member) is activated, mobilized, and deployed.

Identifying Suddenly Military Children

- **Difficult to Identify**
 - Children may not live near a military installment
 - Families may not even identify themselves as a “military family”
 - Information often not collected by school

Identification Techniques

○ Ask

- Update enrollment/registration forms to include questions that relate to parents' reservist status
- Include as part of family history assessment during routine exams
- Engage school in discussion of how the SBHC can partner to identify these children

Identification Techniques

- **Observe**

- Are students suddenly experiencing physical, emotional, or behavioral changes?



Understanding the Culture

- **The Reserve component of the military is comprised of the National Guard and Reserves:**
 - Army Reserve & National Guard
 - Air Force Reserve & National Guard
 - Navy Reserve
 - Marine Corps Reserve
 - Coast Guard Reserve

Understanding the Culture

National Guard & Reserves

- Part-time military service
- At least one weekend a month and two weeks a year
- Members can be called up or “activated” to augment the active component of the military when necessary
- Reserves are “owned” by the federal government
- Each individual state “owns” its National Guard

Reserves vs. Active Duty

Reserve Component

- Part-time military work = full benefits only during deployment
- 1 weekend a month, 2 weeks a year
- Can be activated to augment Active Duty component
- Distance from military bases
- “Citizen soldiers”

Active Duty Component

- Full-time military work = full-time military benefits
- On-call 24hrs/day, 365 days a year
- Permanent force of the military
- Live on or close to military bases
- “Full-time service members”

Military Culture

Culture: The knowledge, experience, values, ideas, attitudes, skills, tastes, and techniques that are passed on from more experienced members of a community to new members.

Service

Commitment

Self

Respect

Loyalty

Duty

Integrity

Courage

Honor

Excellence

Experiences of Suddenly Military Children During Deployment

- **Unique to each child and family; however, there are common experiences:**
 - Changes in eating and sleeping habits
 - Mood changes (anxiety, sadness, guilt, fear, anger)
 - Regression
 - Anger outbursts
 - Changes in academic performance
 - Behavioral problems
 - Reduced concentration
 - Physical/somatic complaints

Experiences of Suddenly Military Children During Deployment

- **Pay attention to family dynamics**
 - How is the deployment affecting the child? How is it affecting the family as a whole? Gender roles during deployment?
- **Emotional cycle of deployment**
 - Pre-deployment
 - Deployment
 - Post-deployment

“I think the hardest part for my family was the fact that as a Guard family, we had never been through a deployment before. I knew nothing about that life, the phases, anything. I felt very unsure about where my resources were and who to call for help.”

-Air National Guard Spouse



*Risk and resiliency factors
will impact the student's
experience during
deployment*

Risk Factors

- Young families
- Boys and school-age children
- First deployment
- History of poor adapting skills
- Additional stressors
- Pre-existing mental health condition that has required treatment

Resiliency Factors

- Family readiness
- Active coping
- Social support
- Individual and family factors including optimism and self-reliance
- Flexible gender roles

Role of the SBHC

- Serving and supporting the student
- Serving and supporting the family
- Collaborating with the school to serve the student and their family



SBHC Should:

1) Train

- Learn more – participate in available trainings, engage experts in your community
- Raise awareness within the SBHC and the school community

2) Identify

- Ask! Utilize enrollment forms and ask questions during exams
- Risk assessment

SBHC Should:

3) Collect

- SBHC enrollee and family data
- Resource collection for school and families

4) Observe

- Observe all students for sudden changes
- Observe students throughout the stages of deployment
- Be aware of both risk and resiliency factors

SBHC Should:

5) Link

- Mental health services (on-site or referral)
- Community resources, mentor programs, and parental trainings
- Support groups for students and their families

Resources

NASBHC's Webpage: SBHCs Address the Needs of "Suddenly Military" Families

<http://www.nasbhc.org/site/c.jsJPKWPFJrH/b.2564543/apps/s/content.asp?ct=8388411>



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SBHCs Address the Needs of "Suddenly Military" Families

This webpage provides tools, resources and information to assist school-based health center (SBHC) personnel better address the needs of children of "suddenly military" families. The term "suddenly military" is used to describe reservists from all branches of the military and National Guardsmen

who are suddenly deployed from a civilian job and life into full-time military service. As many National Guardsmen and reservists from all military branches have been called up for multiple tours of duty, their family members (children, parent, and/or extended family members back home) are increasingly in need of services and resources to support them during these times. Unlike children whose parents and/or family members live and serve on military bases, children of National Guardsmen and reservists do not regularly have access to the same resources to deal with a parent or other family member being deployed, dealing with grief and trauma, and

MILITARY FAMILIES

ORGANIZATIONS

RESOURCES

Questions ???

