# Chapter Seven:
# Impact of Grief, Loss, and Trauma

## I. Lesson Plan

A. Purpose: To learn about the unique issues impacting military families—particularly children and youth—and to identify behavioral and emotional reactions associated with grief, loss, and trauma.

B. Objectives:

1. Understand general child and youth reactions to grief, loss, and trauma at various developmental stages.
2. Identify academic, behavioral, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual impact of grief, loss, and trauma on youth.
3. Identify adult strategies to provide support and assistance.

C. Time: 120 minutes

D. Preparation/Materials Needed:

- ✪ Easel, flip chart, markers, PowerPoint slides, computer, and LCD projector

## II. Training Session Content

A. PowerPoint Slides

Slide 7-1: Chapter 7 Introduction Slide
Slide 7-2: Circumstances Impacting Military Families
Slide 7-3: What is a Casualty?
Slide 7-4: Casualty Statuses
Slide 7-5: Six Basic Concepts of Grief
Slide 7-6: The Grief and Loss Process (Kubler-Ross)
Slide 7-7: Adult Reactions to Grief and Loss
Slide 7-8: Children/Youth Reactions to Grief and Loss
Slide 7-9: Academic Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-10: Behavioral Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-11: Emotional Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-12: Social Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-13: Physical Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-14: Spiritual Responses of Grieving Child/Youth
Slide 7-15: Developmental Responses: Infants and Toddlers
Slide 7-16: How to Help: Infants and Toddlers

Slide 7-17: Developmental Responses: Preschool Child
Slide 7-18: How to Help: Preschool Child
Slide 7-19: Developmental Responses: Elementary School Child
Slide 7-20: How to Help: Elementary School Child
Slide 7-21: Developmental Responses: Middle School Youth
Slide 7-22: How to Help: Middle School Youth
Slide 7-23: Developmental Responses: High School Youth
Slide 7-24: How to Help: High School Youth
Slide 7-25: Coping with Death
Slide 7-26: Common Mistakes When Dealing with Death
Slide 7-27: Count on Grief, Loss, and Death to...
Slide 7-28: Brainstorm Strategies to Support Children and Youth (Group Activity)

B. Activity and Directions
   1. Review slides with participants.
   2. Allow them to share their experiences.

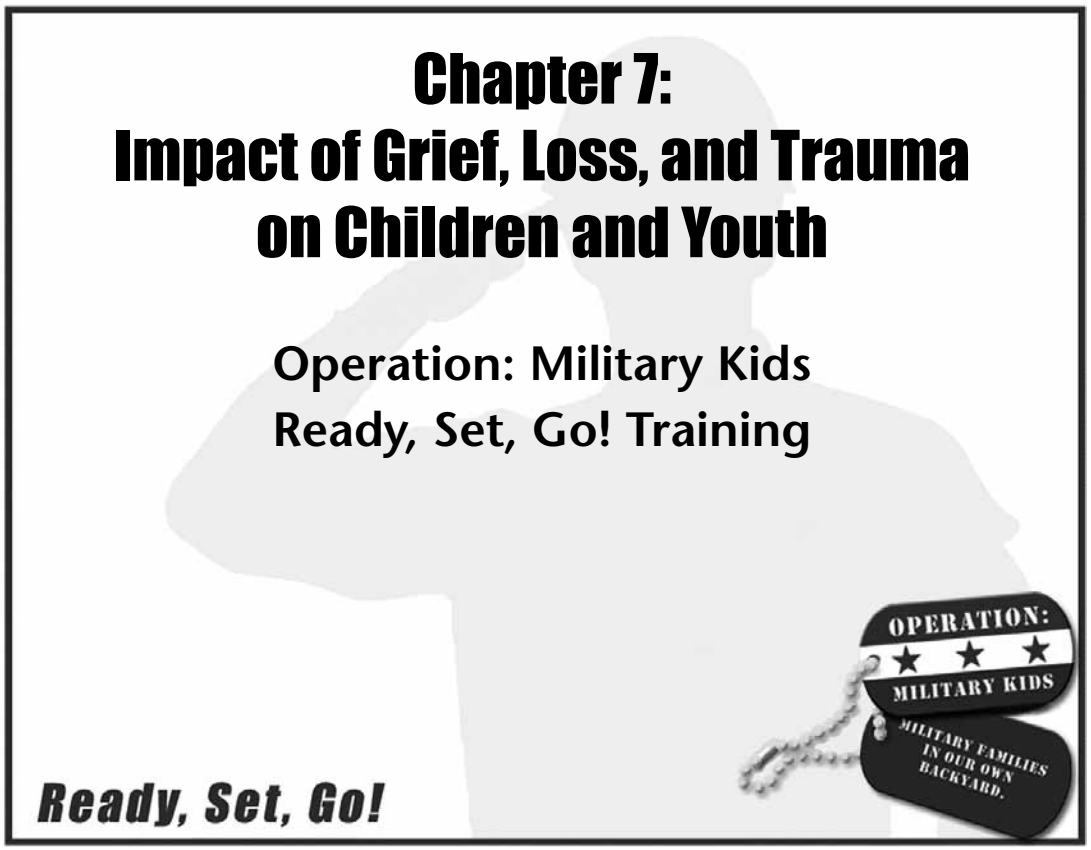
## III. Additional Resources on the Flash Drive

A. Children and Grief: What They Know, How They Feel, How to Help
B. Resources for Wounded or Injured Servicemembers and their Families
C. America at War: Our Attitude Makes a Difference
D. America at War: Helping Children Cope
E. Fears
F. Drugs, Alcohol, and Your Kid
G. Reactions and Guidelines for Children Following Trauma/Disaster
   1. What to Expect after Trauma: Possible Reactions in Elementary School Students
   2. What to Expect after Trauma: Possible Reactions in Middle School Students
   3. What to Expect after Trauma: Possible Reactions in High School Students

## IV. Evaluation

A. Reflection Questions
   1. What did you learn (or re-learn) about the grief/loss process?
   2. What personal or professional experiences have you had in dealing with the grief/loss issues of children and youth?
   3. How have these experiences impacted you?

B. Application Questions
   1. What can you do in the future to be sensitive to the needs of children and youth dealing with grief, loss, and trauma?
   2. How can OMK teams support children/youth in our communities coping with the grief and loss associated with the deployment, injury or death of a parent or loved one?




## Slide 7-1 : Chapter 7 Introduction

**Content of this slide adapted from:** N/A

**Materials Needed:** Trainer and participant manuals
PowerPoint slides
Flip chart paper & pens

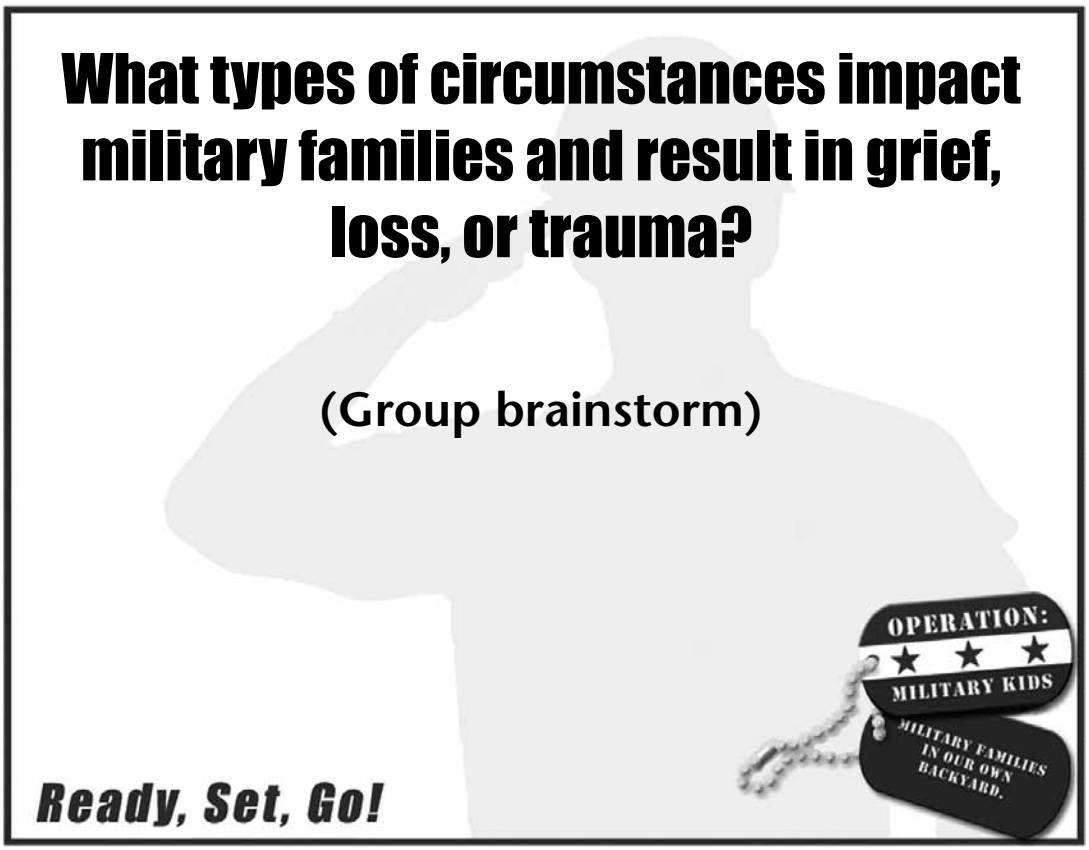
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**<u>What to *Do*, What to *Say*:</u>**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Share purpose and objectives of this chapter.

***Say:*** *The purpose of this chapter is to learn about the unique issues impacting military families, particularly children and youth, and to identify behavioral and emotional reactions associated with grief, loss, and trauma.*

*The objectives include: understanding general child and youth reactions at various developmental stages to grief, loss, trauma, and death; identify academic, behavioral, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual impact; and identify specific adult strategies to provide support and assistance to children and youth.*




## Slide 7-2: Circumstances Impacting Military Families

**Content of this slide adapted from:** N/A

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**<u>What to *Do*, What to *Say*:</u>**

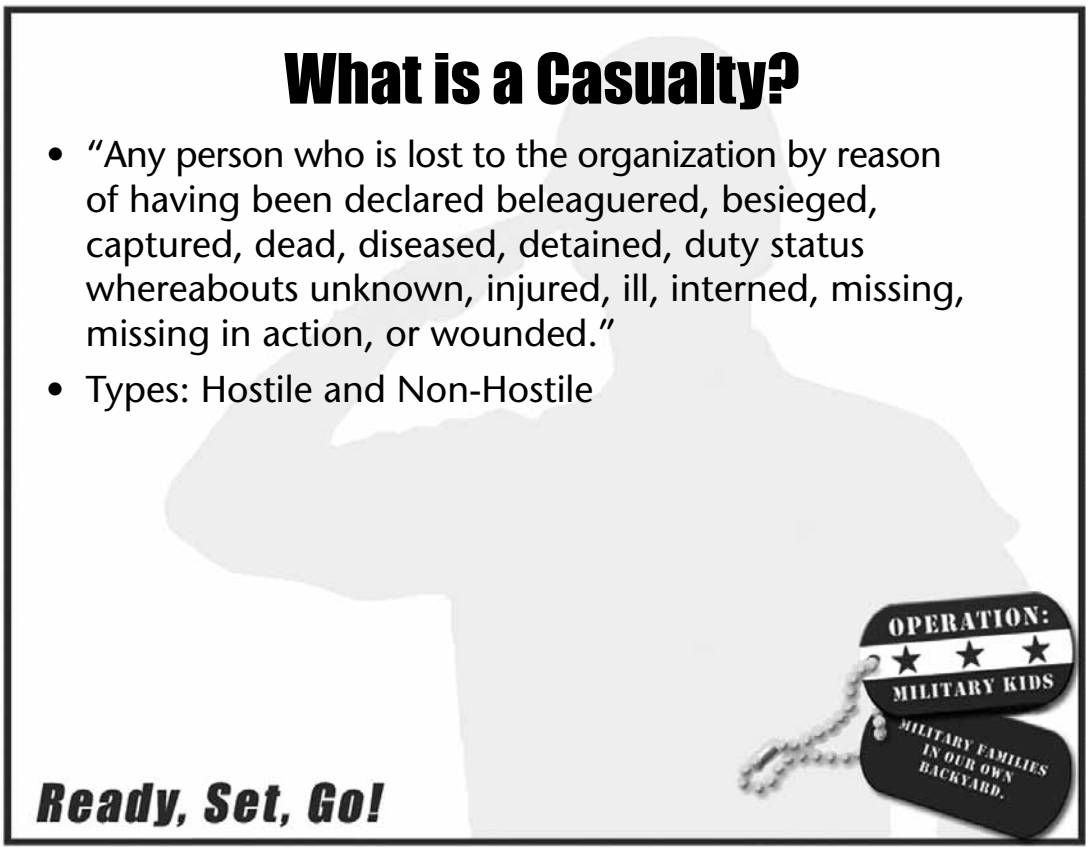
*Do:*
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

*Say:* *What types of circumstances impact military families and result in grief, loss, or trauma-related responses?*

*Do:*
- Facilitate group brainstorming and record responses on flip chart.
- Emphasize key points of discussion below.

*Say:* *Along with deployment, reintegration, and other issues, casualties are one of the major events impacting military families when it comes to grief, loss, and trauma.*

*In the next few slides we will take a closer look at what is meant when the term casualty is used.*




## Slide 7-3: What is a Casualty?

**Content of this slide adapted from:** National Military Family Association www.nmfa.org, DoD Joint Publication 1-02, and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1300.18.

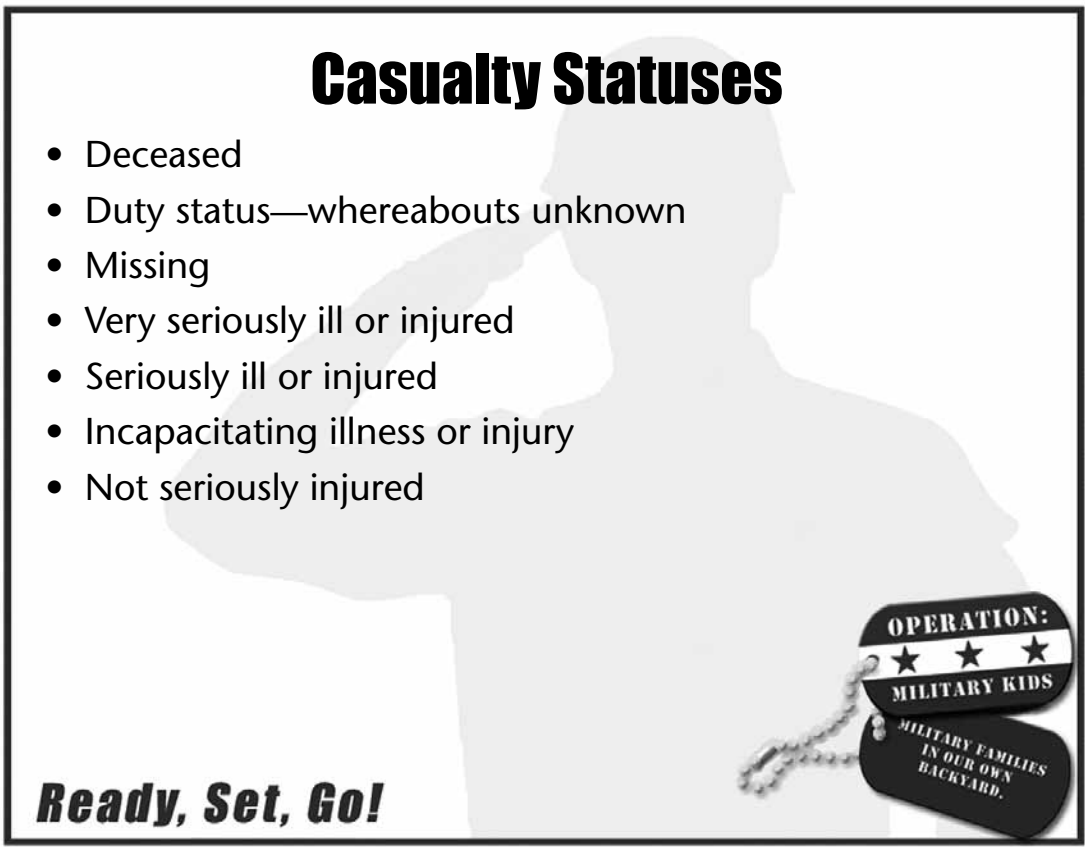
**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion below.

***Say:*** *The military definition of casualty encompasses more than injury and death. The next slide will outline the seven casualty statuses as defined by the Department of Defense.*




## Slide 7-4: Casualty Statuses

**Content of this slide adapted from:** National Military Family Association www.nmfa.org, DoD Joint Publication 1-02, and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1300.18.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

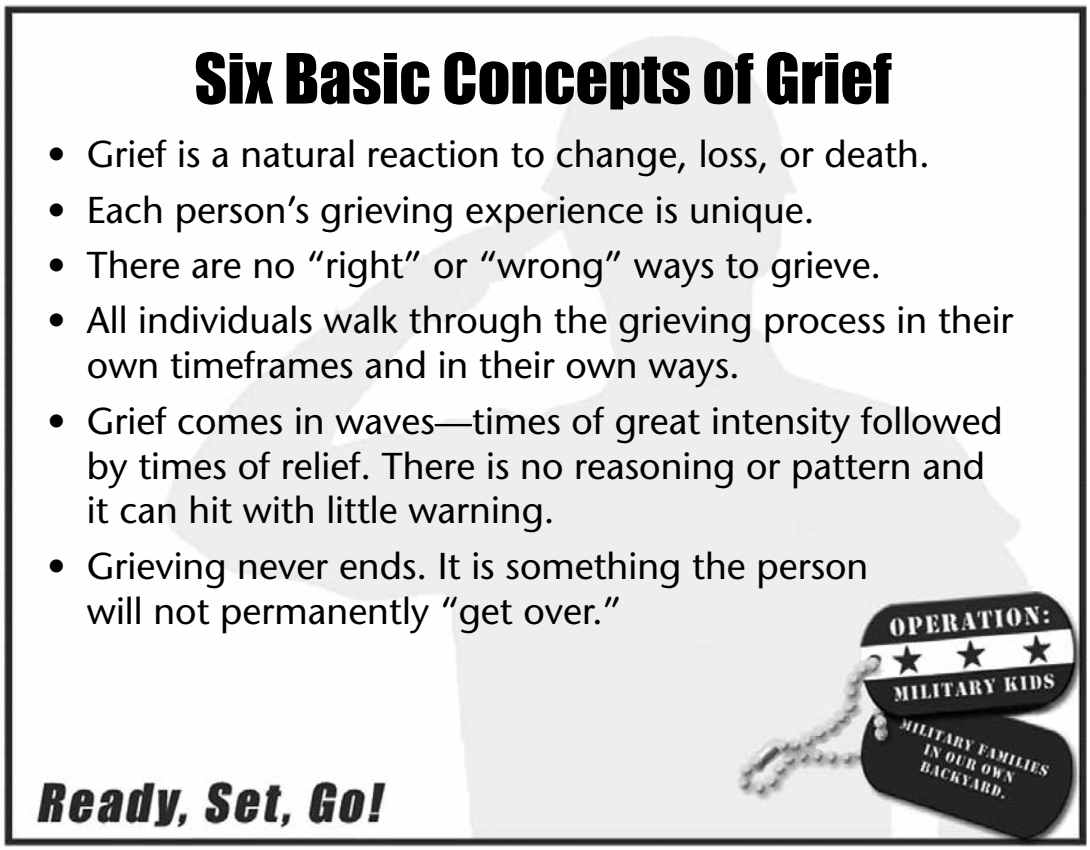
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion below.

***Say:*** *These seven casualty statuses illustrate levels of severity ranging from mild forms of injury and illness, to more severe forms of injury and illness, to, ultimately, death.*

*Military families dealing with any casualty-related circumstances or situations will find themselves directly impacted by the emotions and behaviors associated with grief, loss, and trauma.*

***Say:*** *It is important for professionals working with military families to be able to identify grief, loss, and trauma related emotions and behaviors—particularly with children and youth—and in turn connect them with available support systems to help them cope effectively with these emotions and behaviors.*




## Slide 7-5: Six Basic Concepts of Grief

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org and *Discovering Permission to Grieve* in the *Special Care Series* by Doug Manning, insightbooks.com.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** Some participants may be uncomfortable talking about this topic. Trainer empathy and understanding should be kept in mind at all times when facilitating these discussions.

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion below.

***Say:*** *All human beings, regardless of age, experience these six basic concepts of grief. This, of course, is also true for military families and youth coping with these issues.*

*Numerous studies indicate that grieving can last up to two years for any individual dealing with a significant change, loss, or death.*

***Do:*** • Encourage participants to respond to the following questions.

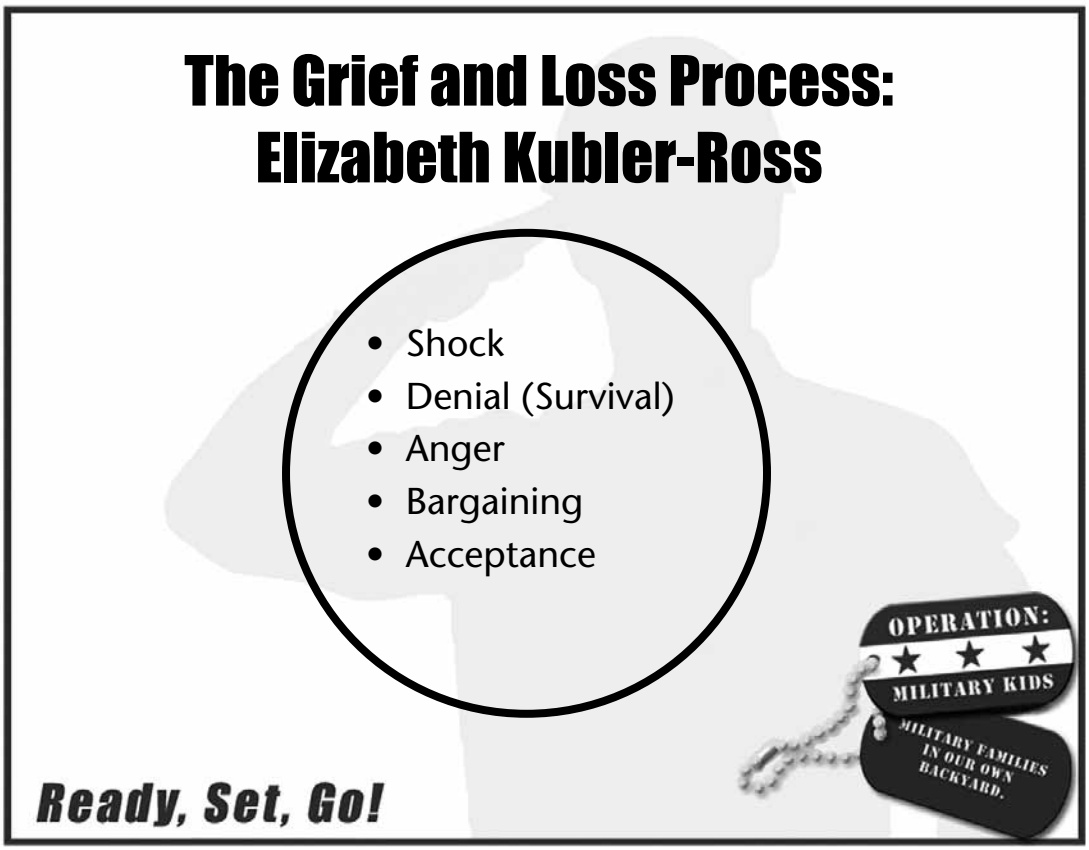
***Say:*** *Let's take a closer and more personal look at these issues for a moment. Raise your hand in response to the following questions. Have any of you…*

*— Experienced a change in which you experienced grief?*
*— Experienced a loss?*
*— Experienced a death?*

***Do:***
- Note the similarities and differences among the group as a whole when it comes to their experiences with grief, loss, and trauma.
- Upon conclusion of brainstorming session, emphasize the following points.

***Say:*** *Grieving is a natural human response. It is experienced by all human beings some time during our lifetimes. It is a topic we often don't feel comfortable talking openly about or know how to deal with effectively.*

*It is an issue that directly impacts many military families, children, and youth.*




## Slide 7-6: The Grief and Loss Process: Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *On Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

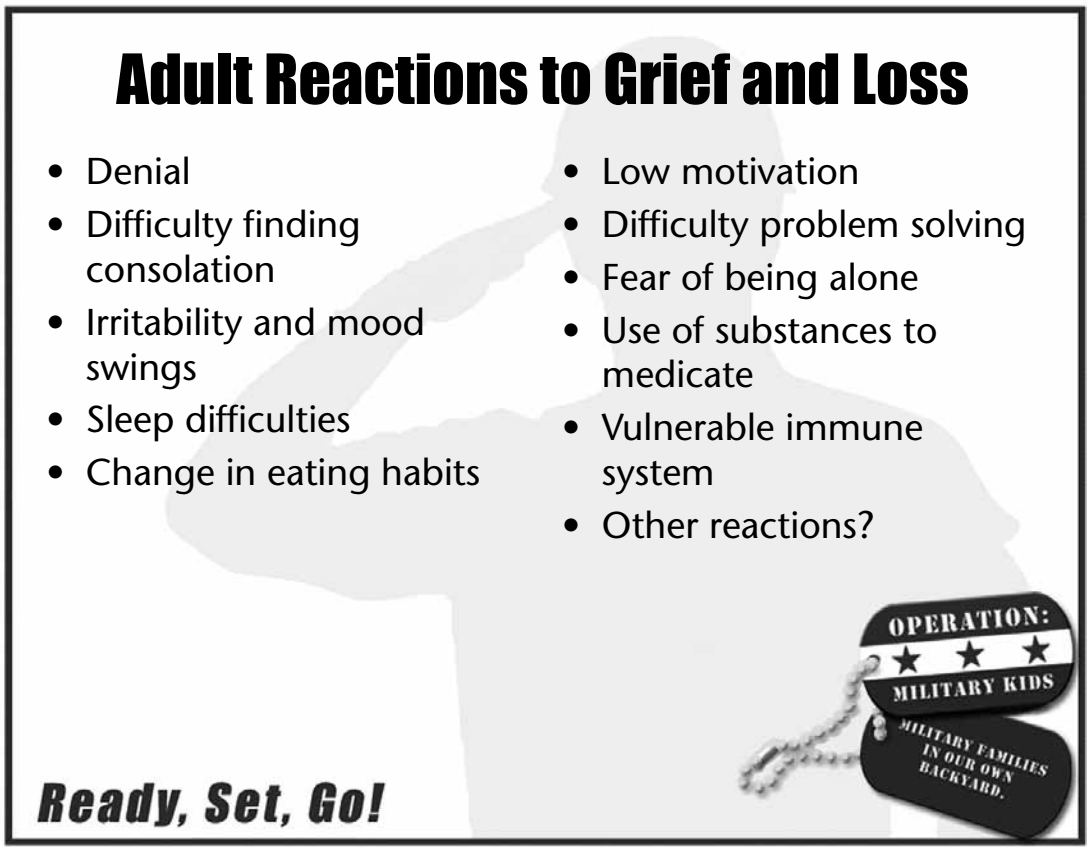
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion below.

***Say:*** *The grief and loss process is unique to each individual—like a thumbprint.*

*Children and youth have different reactions based on their ages and stages of development. The following slides will explore this further.*

*It is important to understand grief and loss issues because they are often experienced to some degree by Service Members, families, children, and youth when dealing with issues related to deployment and reintegration.*




## Slide 7-7: Adult Reactions to Grief and Loss

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Life After Loss: How to Help Others Through the Grieving Process* by Theresa McIntier, Carondelet Management Institute.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

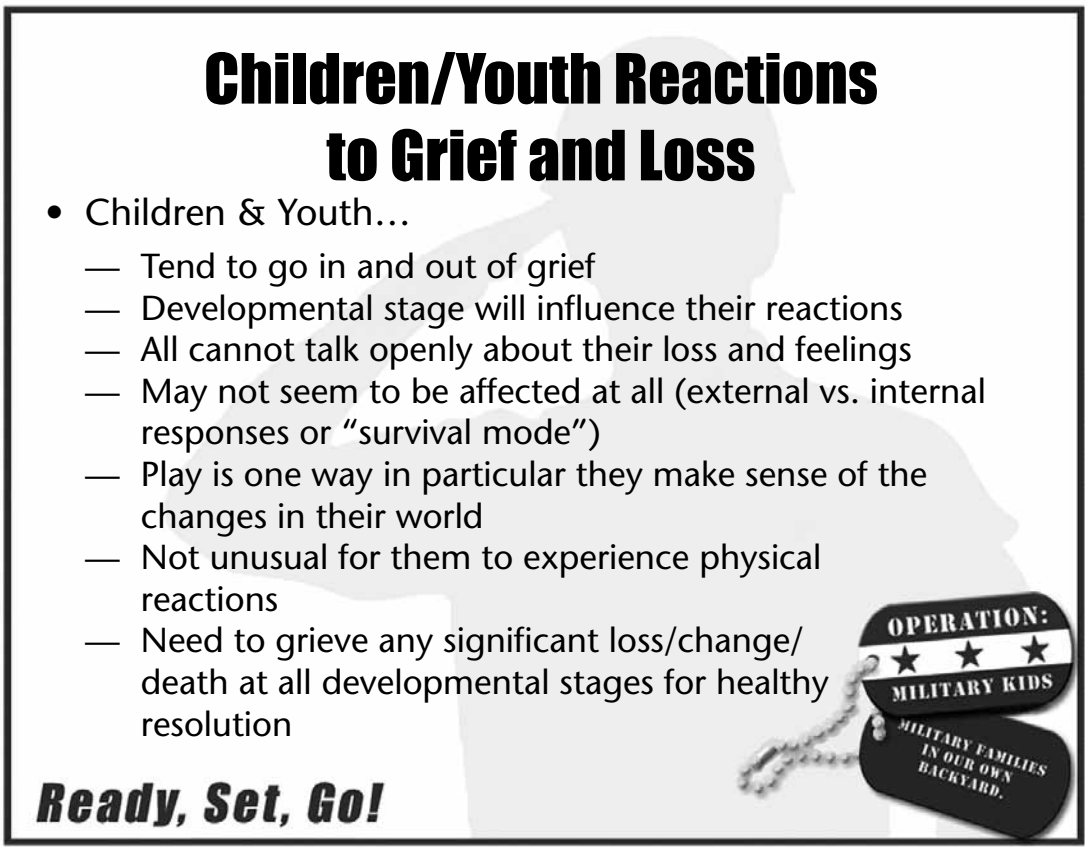
***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participation in the discussion below.

***Say:*** *Please share any additional ways, not listed on the slide, in which you have witnessed grief or loss reactions by adults.*

***Do:***
- Emphasize the key points of the discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *It is important to remember that adults may be grieving at the same time as children and youth. This may make them physically and/or emotionally unavailable to provide the necessary support for the children and youth.*

*This is why our understanding of these issues and the support we can provide professionally to children and youth is so critical.*




## Slide 7-8: Children/Youth Reactions to Grief and Loss

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to participate in the following discussion.

***Say:*** *Please share any additional ways, not listed on the slide, that you may have witnessed grief or loss reactions by children and youth.*

***Do:***
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

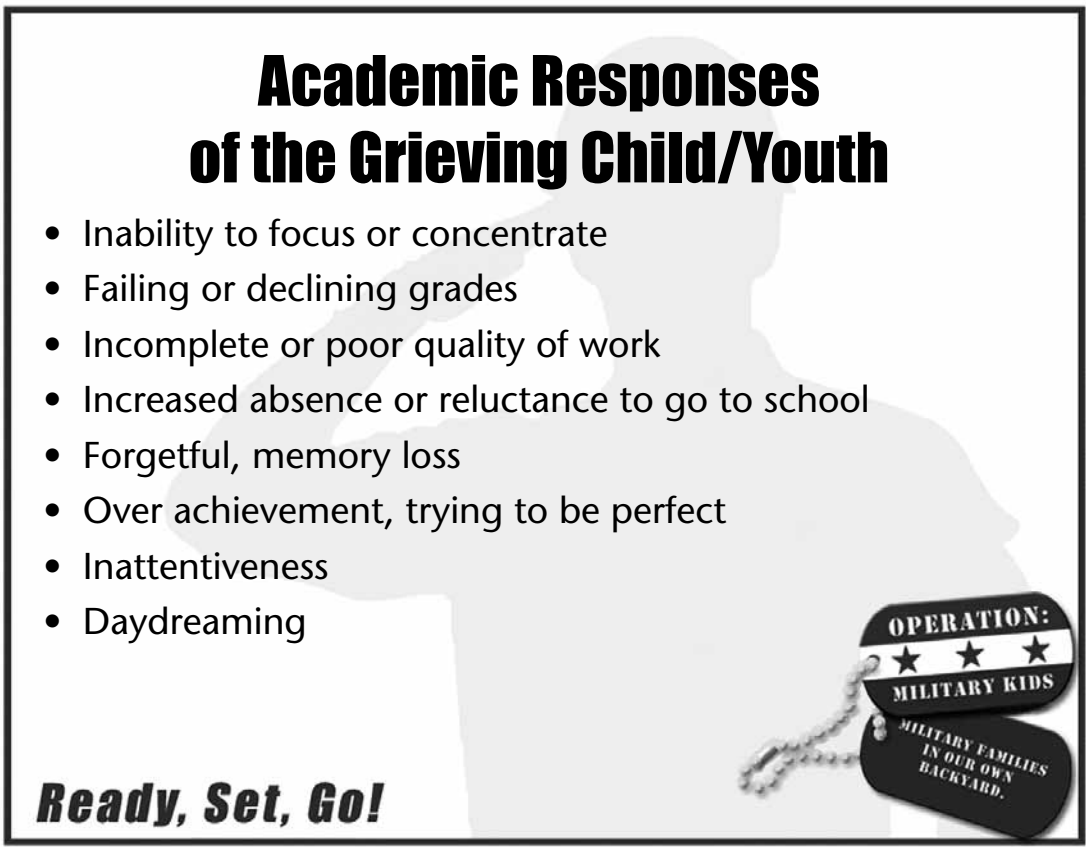
***Say:*** *Children and youth grieve differently than adults.*

***Say:*** *Children and youth need to grieve loss, change, and death at all developmental ages and stages.*

*It is important to keep the doors of communication open with children and youth even if they appear to be unaffected or uninterested in talking about the grief and loss, change, and/or death.*

*In time, all grieving children and youth will eventually display some changes in behavior that are indicated on the following slides.*

*It is important for adults to be aware of and respond to these changes in healthy and supportive ways.*




## Slide 7-9: Academic Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

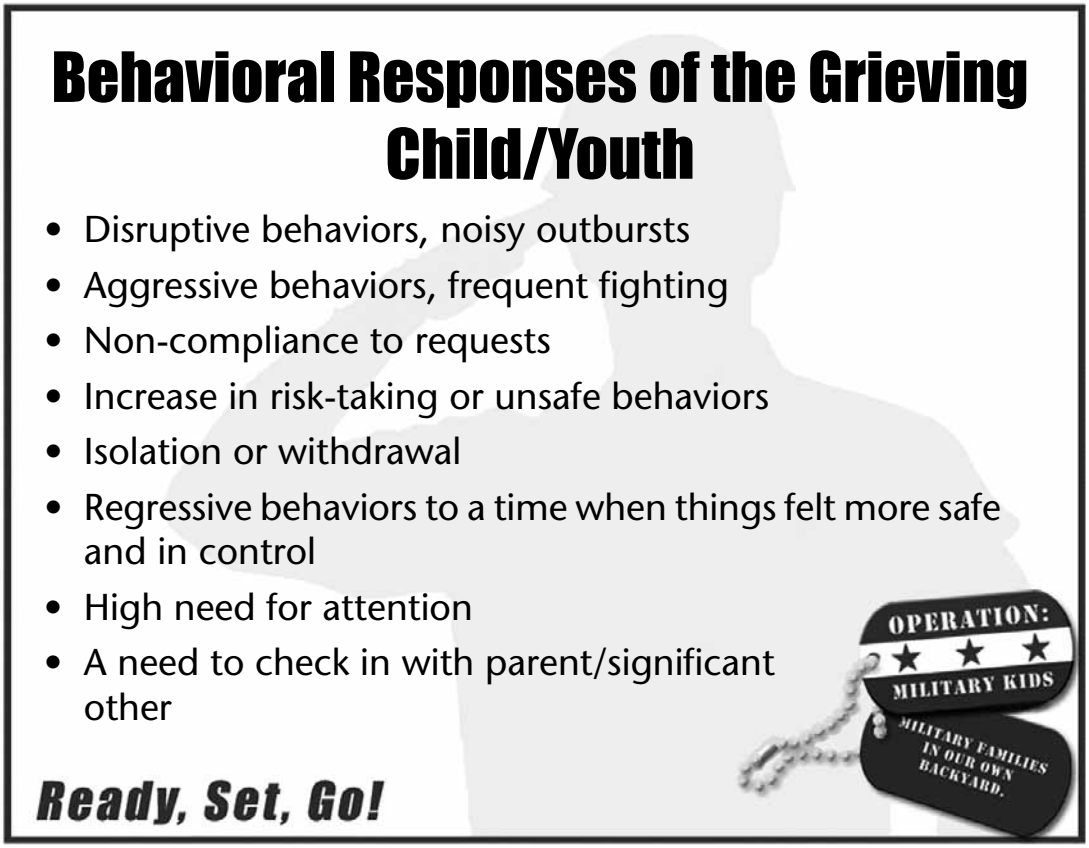
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

*Do:*
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

*Say:* *Have any of you seen any other child or youth academic responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

*Do:*
- Facilitate discussion as needed.




## Slide 7-10: Behavioral Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

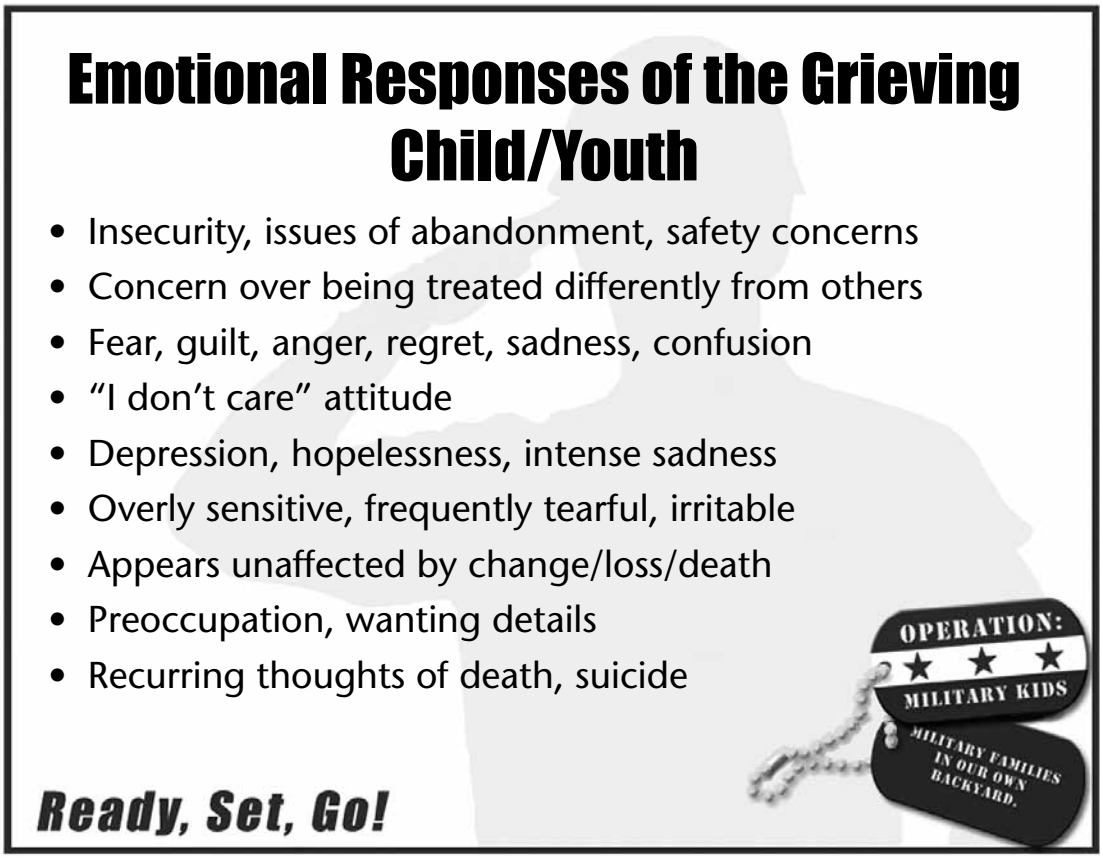
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

***Say:*** *Have any of you seen any other child or youth behavioral responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

***Do:***
- Facilitate discussion as needed.




## Slide 7-11: Emotional Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

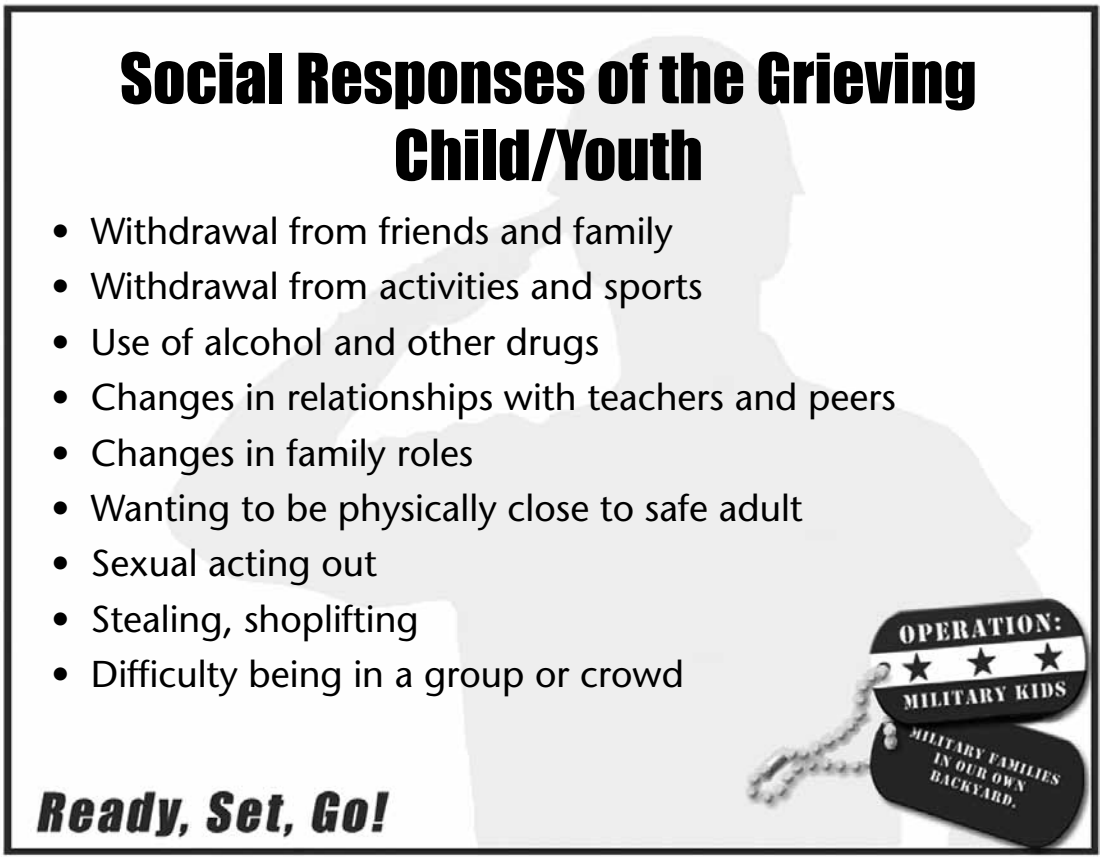
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

***Say:*** *Have any of you seen any other child or youth emotional responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

***Do:***
- Facilitate discussion as needed.




## Slide 7-12: Social Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

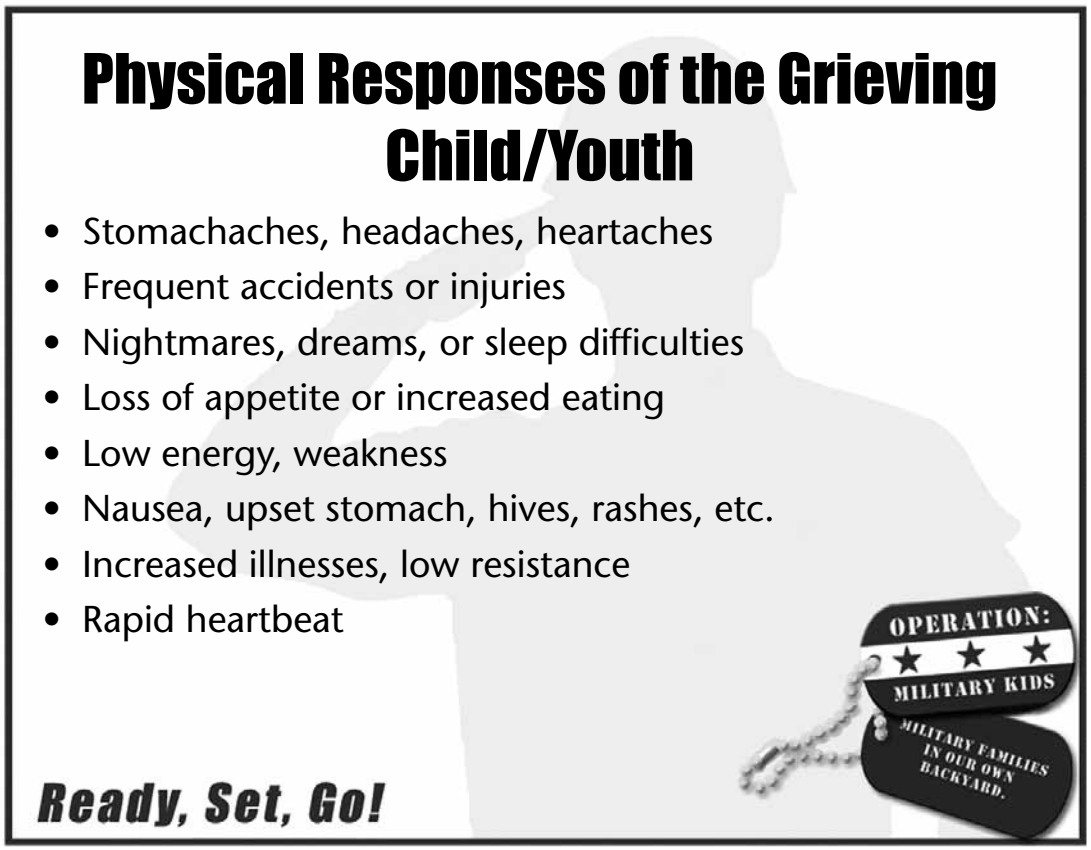
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

***Say:*** *Have any of you seen any other child or youth social responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

***Do:***
- Facilitate discussion as needed.




## Slide 7-13: Physical Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

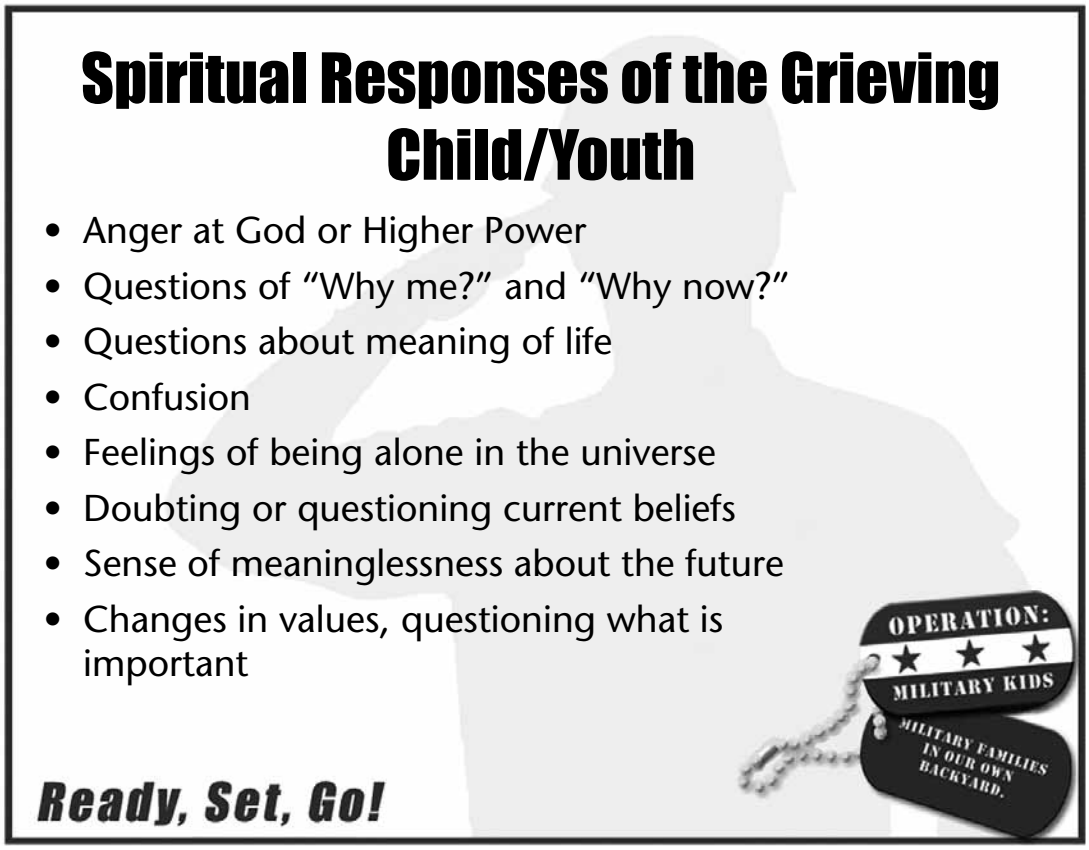
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

*Do:*
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

*Say:* *Have any of you seen any other child or youth physical responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

*Do:*
- Facilitate discussion as needed.




## Slide 7-14: Spiritual Responses of the Grieving Child/Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

*Do:*
- Review slide content with participants.
- Encourage participants to respond to the following question.

*Say:* *Have seen any other child or youth spiritual responses to grief and loss not listed on this slide?*

*Do:*
- Facilitate discussion as needed.

## Slide 7-15: Developmental Responses: Infants and Toddlers

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

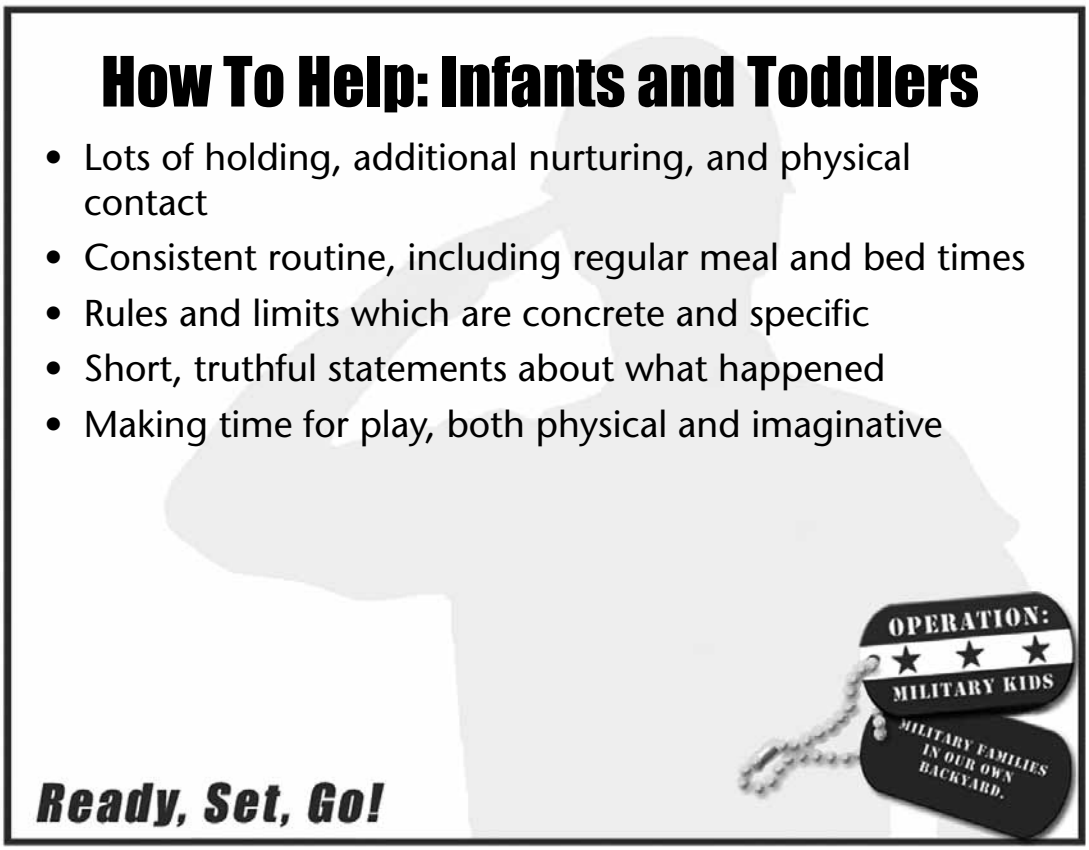
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Infants and toddlers know intuitively that something has happened but don't have the verbal skills to articulate their feelings.*

*It is important to be aware of changes in behavior and to respond with support as outlined on the following slide.*




## Slide 7-16: How to Help: Infants and Toddlers

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

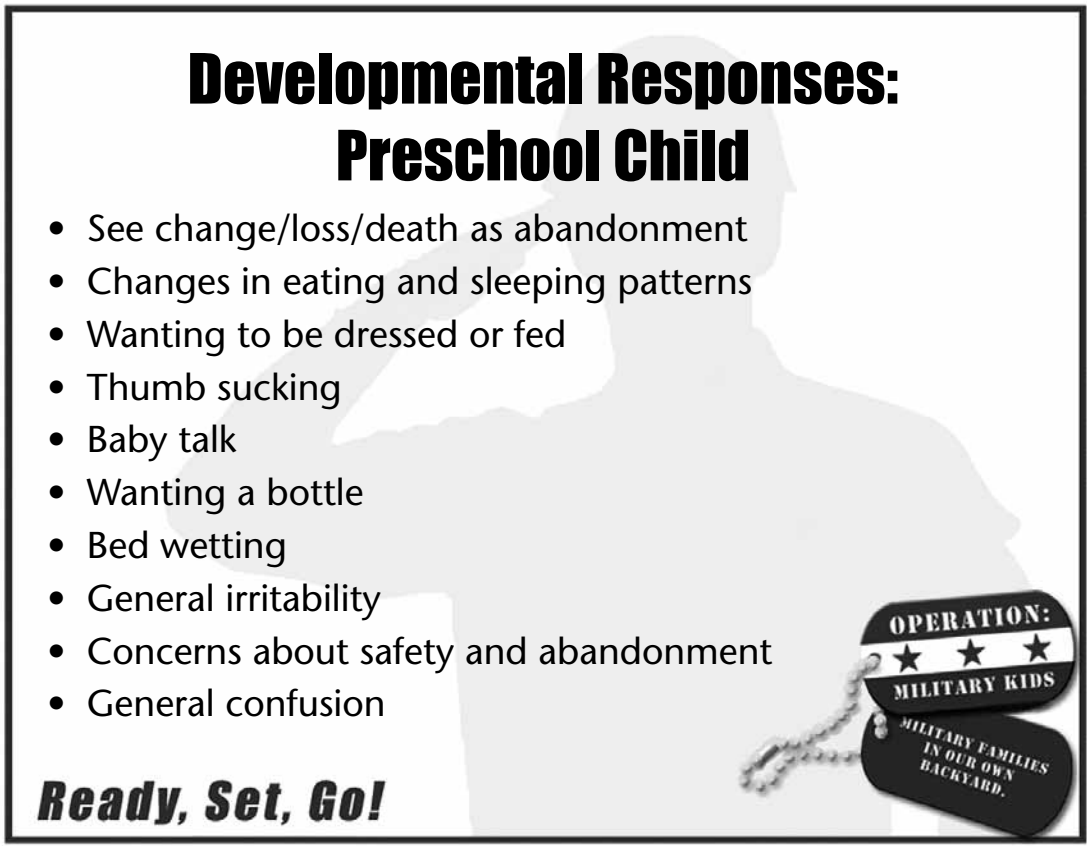
**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Physical touch, nurturing, and consistent structure are key components to helping infants and toddlers feel safe and supported during times of grief and loss, change, and/or death.*




## Slide 7-17: Developmental Responses: Preschool Child

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

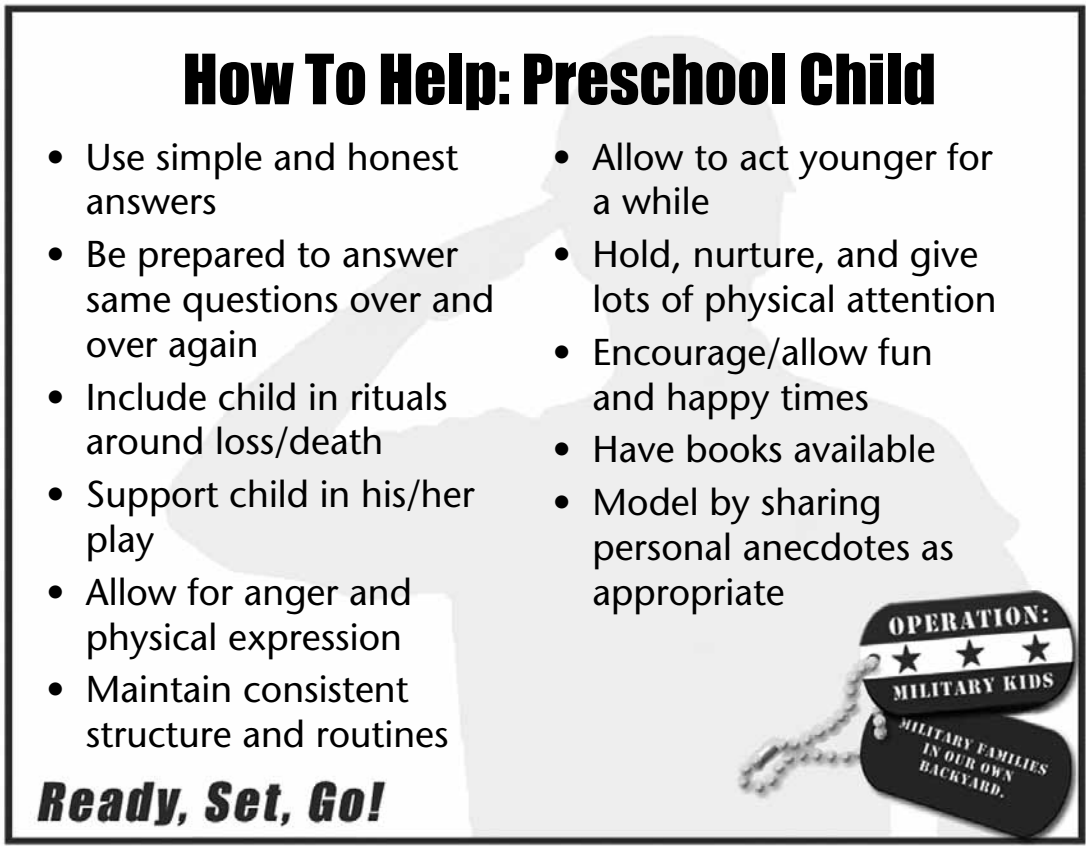
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Preschool children see grief, loss, change, and especially death as abandonment, so it is important to reassure them that it is not about them—it is not their fault.*

*Regression in behavior will most likely occur. It is important to put this in context with the child's grief and loss response.*

*Be sure to provide consistent nurturing and structure during this time to assure children they are safe and will not be abandoned by remaining caregivers.*




## Slide 7-18: How To Help: Preschool Child

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

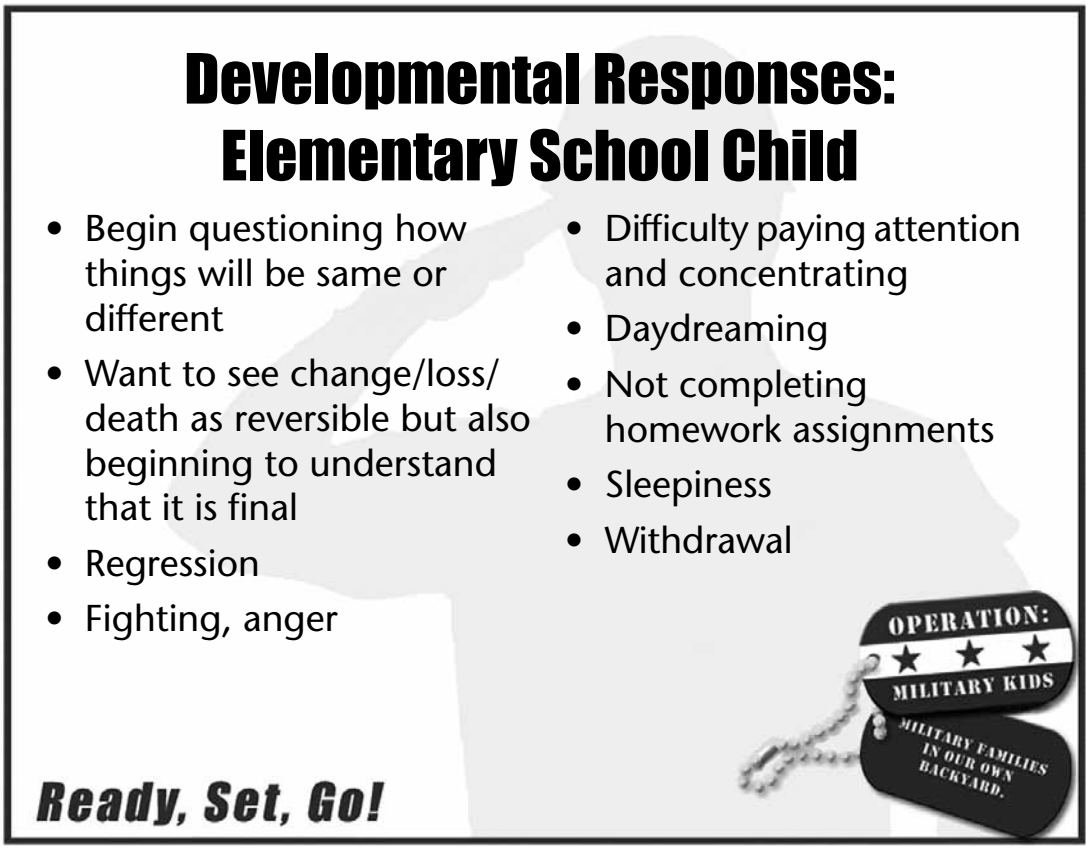
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *It is important to be honest and patient with children when dealing with their questions of why, how, etc., related to the grieving process.*

*Emotional responses from children such as anger and resistance are common reactions to grief and loss at this age and stage.*

*Developmentally appropriate nurturing and consistent structure are key components to helping preschool children feel safe and supported during times of grief and loss, change, and/or death.*




## Slide 7-19: Developmental Responses: Elementary School Child

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

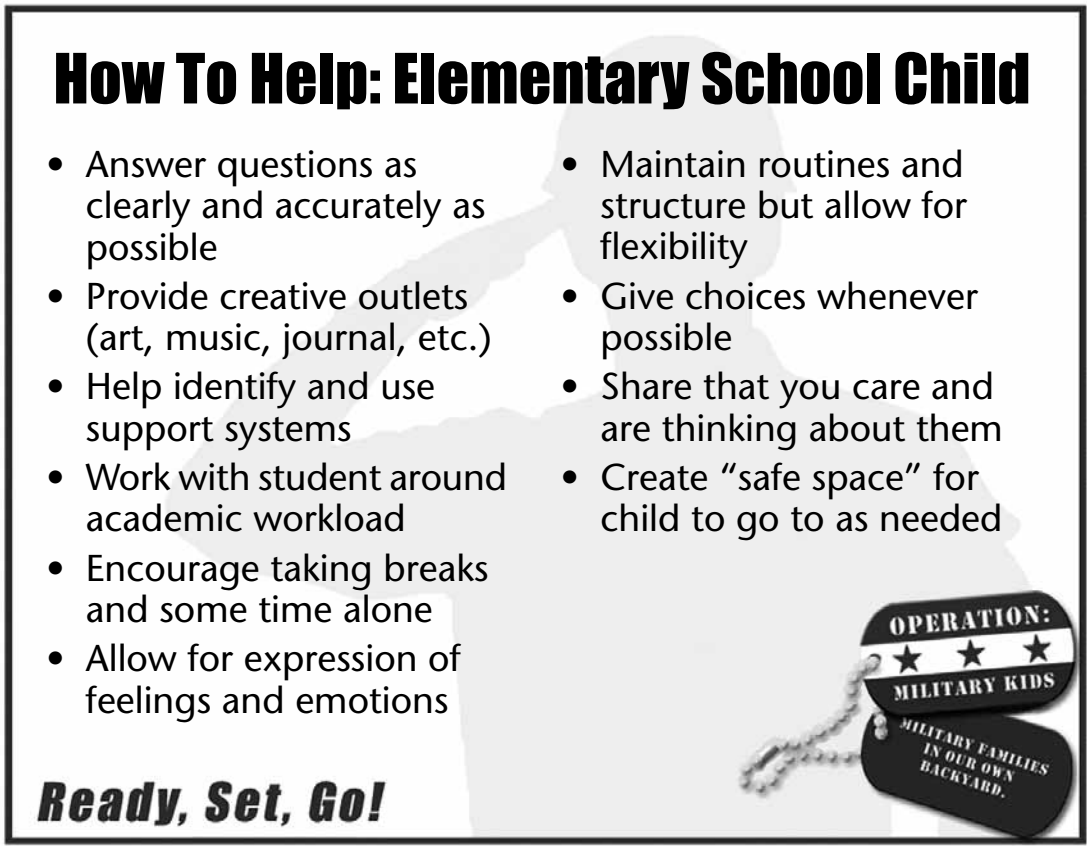
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Children may struggle tremendously at this age and stage with realizing and accepting that grief, loss, change, and/or death is completely final.*

*They may mistakenly blame themselves for grief and loss, change, and death. It is important to let them know it is not their fault.*

*Defiant and angry behaviors are common responses of grieving children at this age. A balanced response of caring, support, and accountability by concerned others is key to healthy resolution of these emotions.*




## Slide 7-20: How to Help: Elementary School Child

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

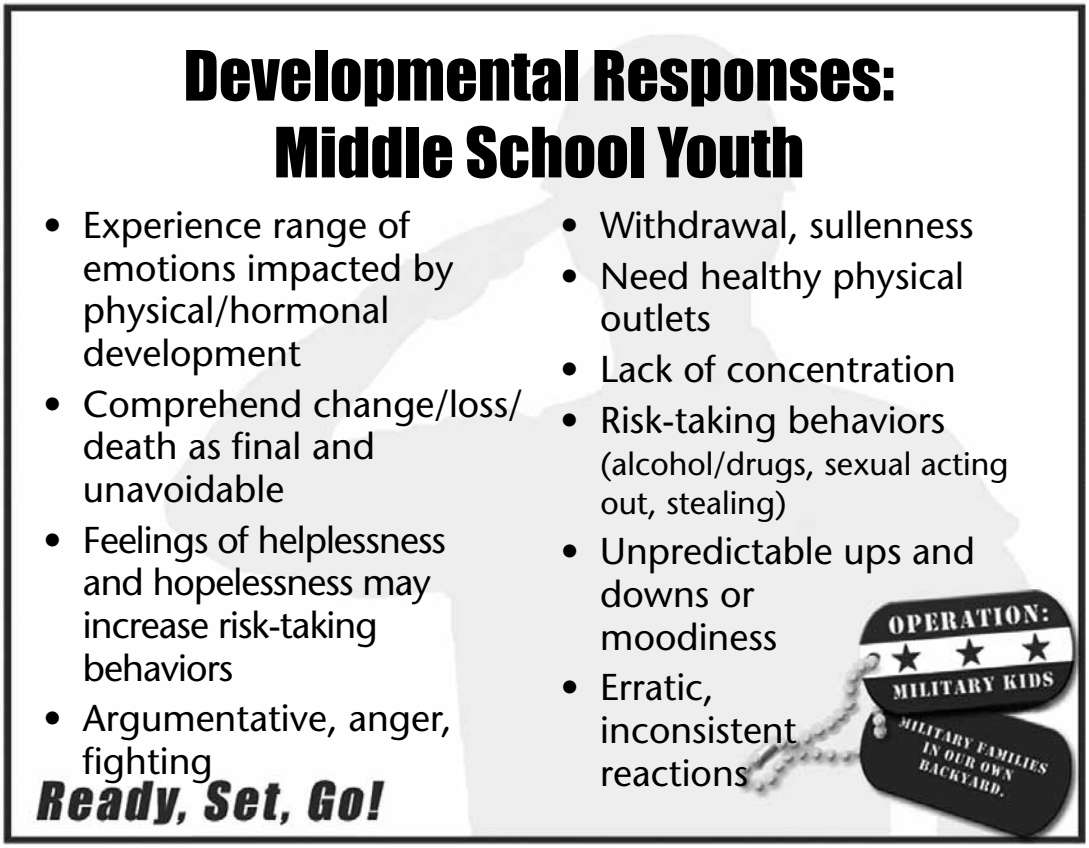
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *It is important to provide detailed information as needed to help children understand grief and loss, change, and death from their perspective.*

*Creative outlets, such as art, music, sports, etc., can provide healthy alternatives for excess emotional and physical energy.*

*Developmentally appropriate nurturing and consistent structure—even if the child is resistant—are key components to helping the elementary school child feel safe and supported during times of grief and loss, change, and/or death.*




## Slide 7-21: Developmental Responses: Middle School Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

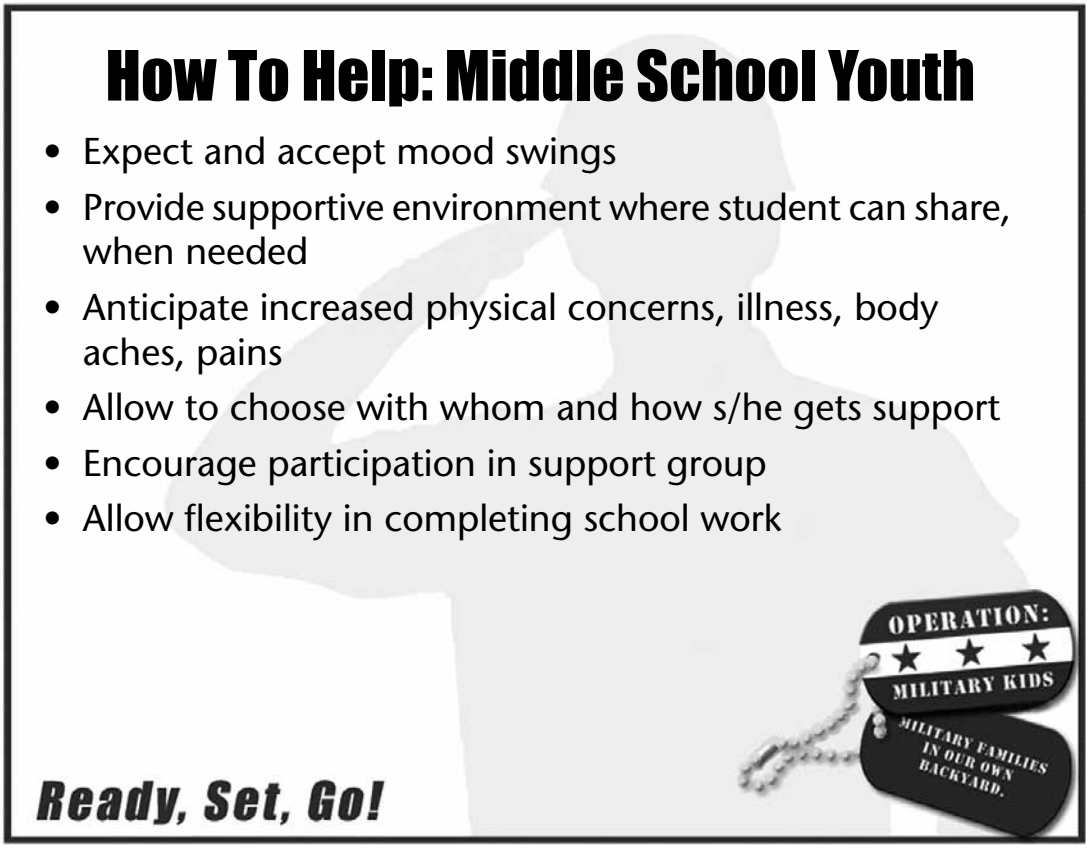
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Defiant, angry, and acting out behaviors are common responses of the grieving child at this age. A balanced response of caring, support, and accountability by concerned others is key to healthy resolution of these emotions.*

*There is high potential at this age and stage for youth to turn to risk-taking behaviors as a way to cope with the stress associated with grief and loss.*

*Students at this age and stage struggle with clear and direct expression of emotions related to grief and loss, change, and death. It is most important to see what they are saying—not with words but with their behaviors.*




## Slide 7-22: How to Help: Middle School Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

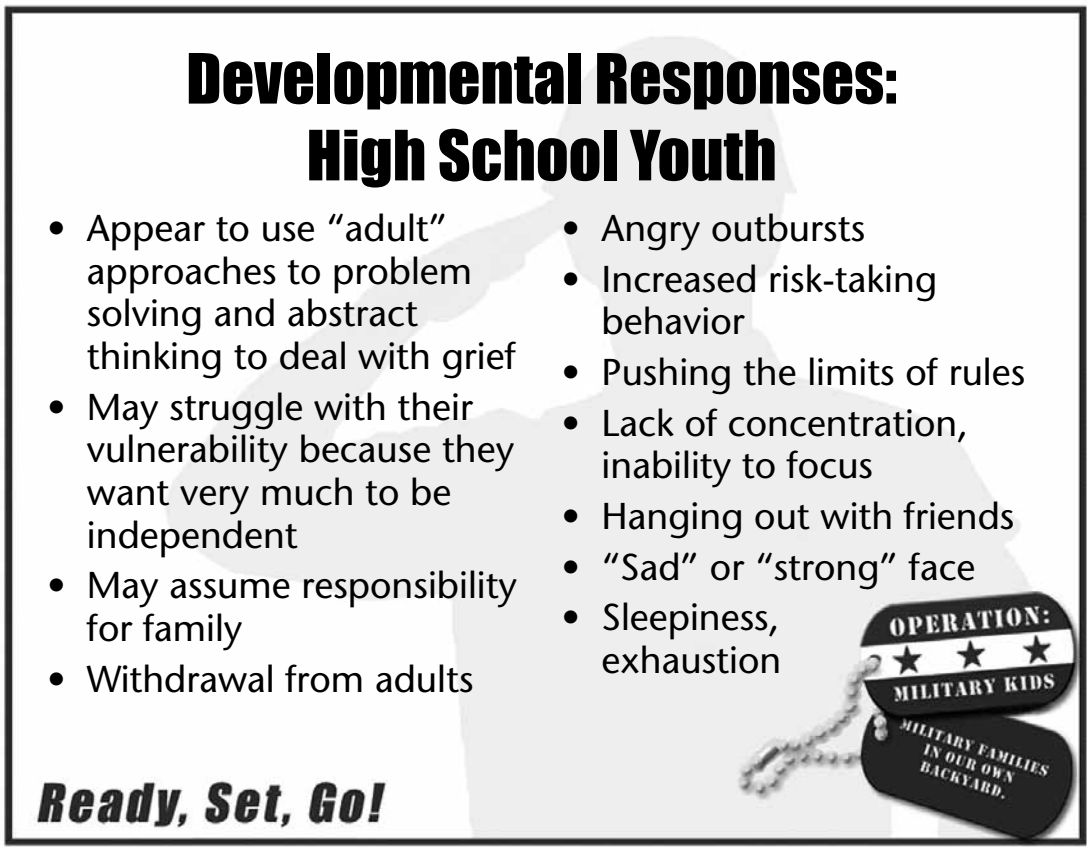
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Extreme emotional ups and downs are common responses for youth grieving at this age and stage.*

*Developmentally appropriate nurturing and consistent structure—even if the youth is resistant—are key components to helping them feel safe and supported during times of grief and loss, change, and/or death.*




## Slide 7-23: Developmental Responses: High School Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

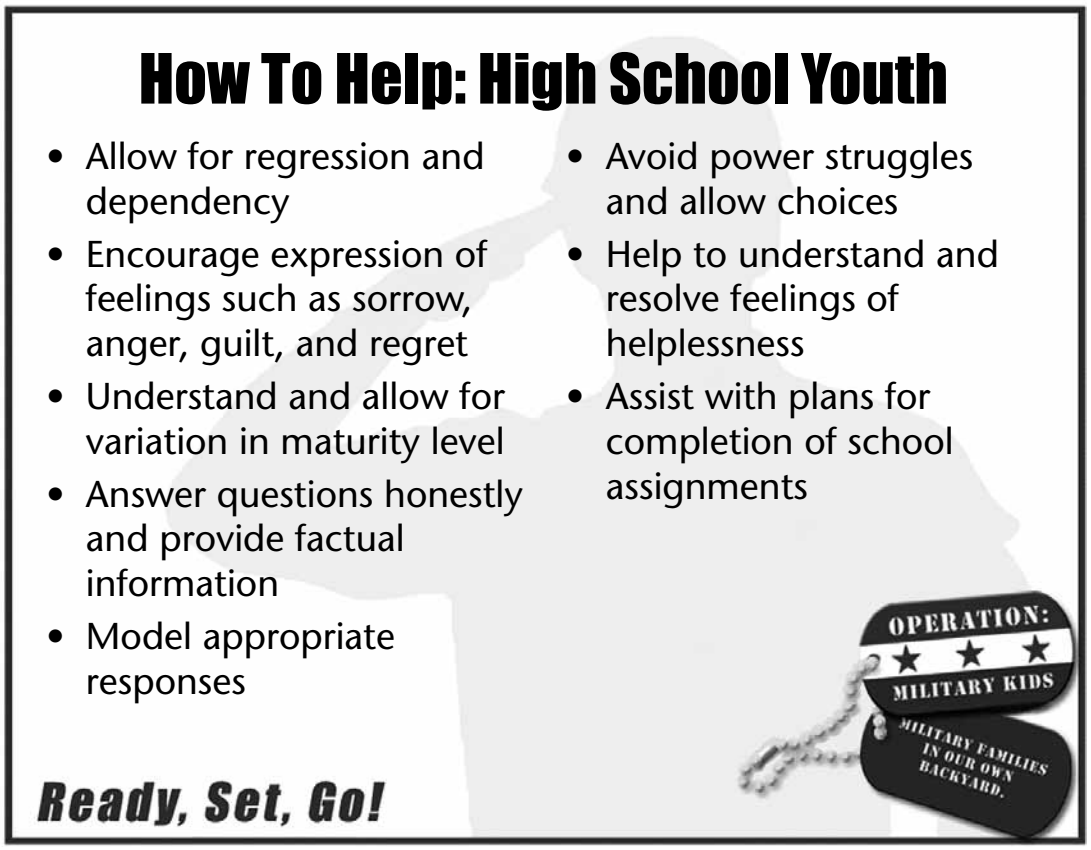
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *High school youth might appear to be coping like adults but they may also be struggling with their ability to ask for much-needed support, nurture, and structure to help them cope with grief and loss, change, and death.*

*Defiant behavior, anger, and acting out behavior are common responses of grieving youth at this age. A balanced response of caring, support, and accountability by concerned others is key to healthy resolution of these emotions.*

*Potential is high at this age and stage for youth to turn to risk-taking behaviors as a way to cope with the stress associated with grief and loss.*




## Slide 7-24: How to Help: High School Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

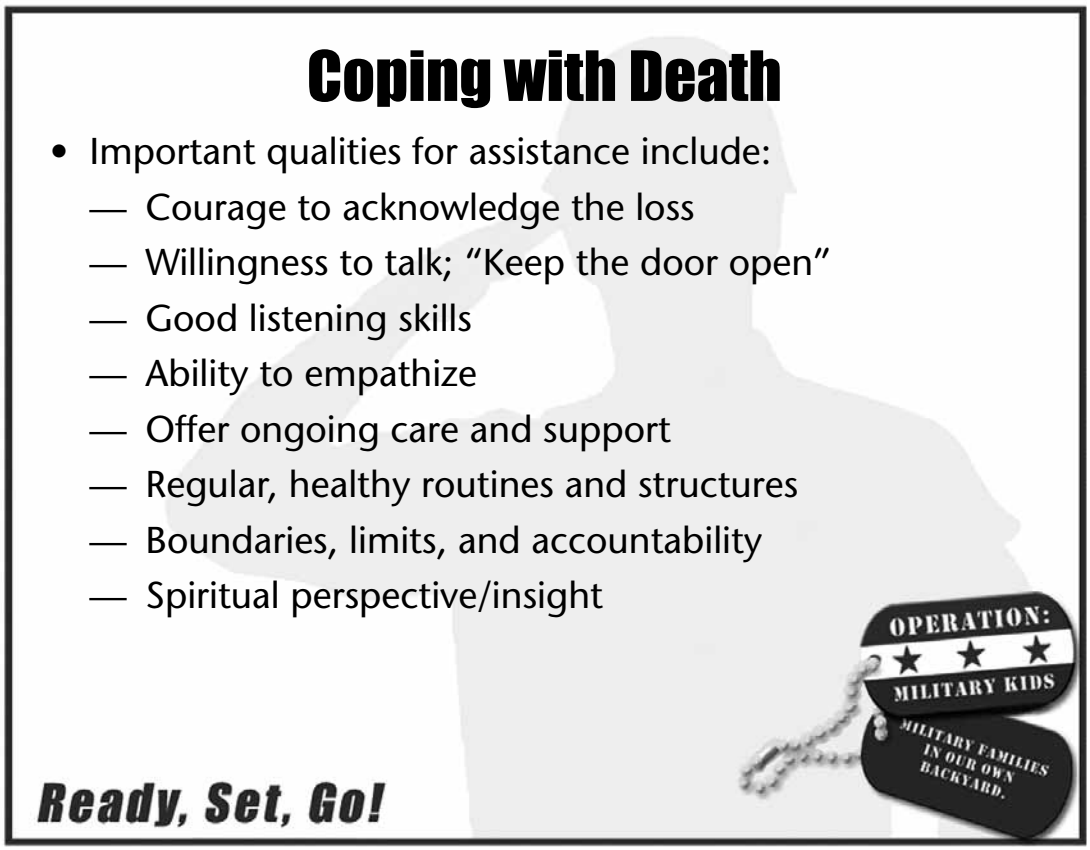
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Extreme emotional ups and downs are a common response for youth grieving at this age and stage.*

*Healthy adult role-modeling can be helpful to youth coping with grief and loss, change, and death at this age and stage.*

*Developmentally appropriate nurturing and consistent structure—even if the youth is resistant—are key components to helping the high school youth feel safe and supported during times of grief, loss, or death.*




## Slide 7-25: Coping with Death

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

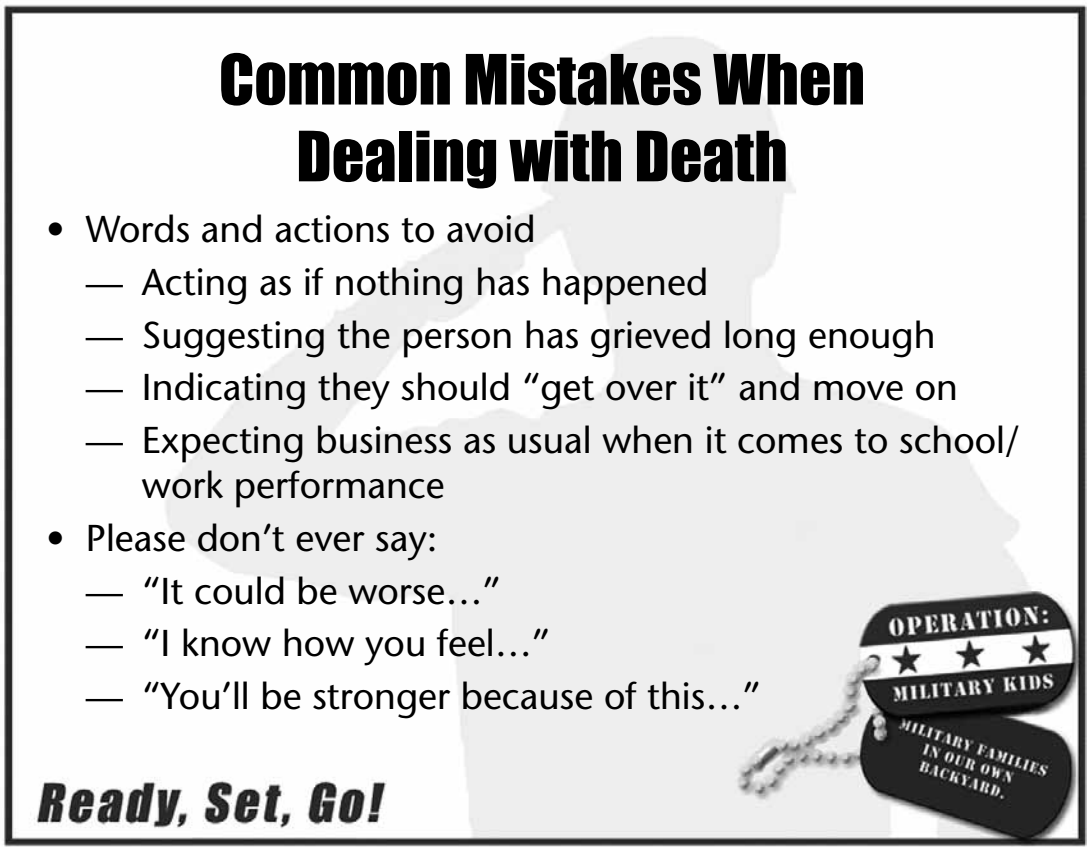
**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Children and youth coping with the death of a parent or loved one will experience the grief and loss process intensely throughout all of their stages of development.*

*Patience, understanding, and accountability are the keys to providing support to children and youth dealing with these issues.*

*Persistence and care in attempts to acknowledge and talk about death with children and youth are vital to letting them know they are not alone and that someone cares.*




## Slide 7-26: Common Mistakes When Dealing with Death

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers* by The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, Portland, OR, www.dougy.org.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

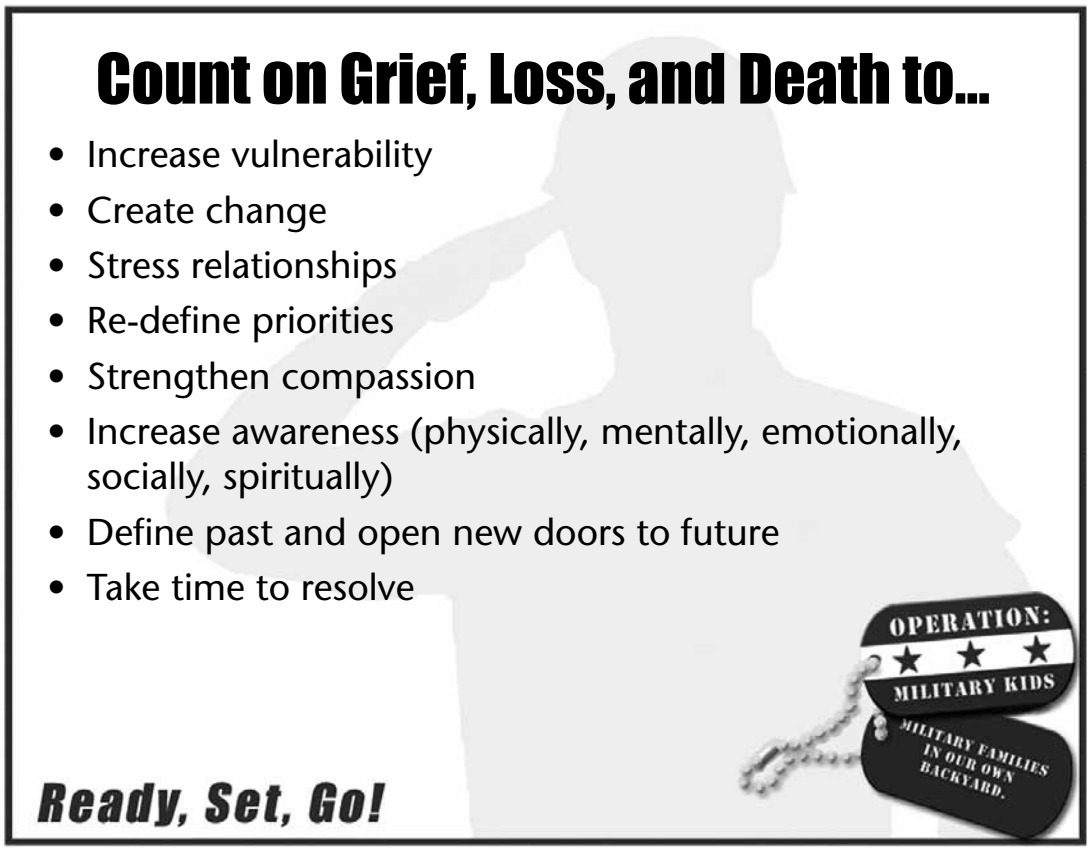
**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Emphasize key points of discussion as follows.

***Say:*** *Don't be afraid to ask children and youth, "How are you doing?" This is a safe way to open the doors of communication and let them know you care.*

*Remember that because grieving is a process, long-term adult support is very beneficial in helping children and youth deal with loss and death in healthy ways.*




## Slide 7-27: Count on Grief, Loss, and Death to...

**Content of this slide adapted from:** *Life After Loss: How to Help Others Through the Grieving Process* by Theresa McIntier, Carondelet Management Institute.

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**What to *Do*, What to *Say*:**

*Do:*
- Review slide content with participants.
- Check for group understanding.

*Say:* Are there any questions or comments about the materials on this slide?

## Slide 7-28: Brainstorming Strategies to Support Children and Youth

**Content of this slide adapted from:** N/A

**Materials Needed:** N/A

**Trainer Tips:** N/A

**<u>What to *Do*, What to *Say*:</u>**

***Do:***
- Review slide content with participants.
- Instructions: Divide into small groups and have each identify a facilitator to support those participating in conversation.
- Allow 15–20 minutes (minimum) to discuss questions on slide.
- Upon completion, process general responses to questions with large group.

***Say:*** *What responses did your group have to the questions presented on the slide?*

***Do:***
- Check for group understanding.

***Say:*** *Are there any final comments or questions on this chapter?*