



THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

AGENDA

Pre-Deployment

- Stage 1: Anticipation of loss
- Stage 2: Detachment and withdrawal
- Tips for managing pre-deployment

Deployment

- Stage 3: Emotional disorganization
- Stage 4: Recovery and stabilization
- Tips for managing pre-deployment

Reunion

- Stage 5: Anticipation of homecoming
- Stage 6: Renegotiation of marriage contract
- Stage 7: Reintegration and stabilization
- Tips for managing pre-deployment



OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- The emotional phases of deployment
- Possible effects of the deployment phases
- Tips for managing the reunion



THREE PHASES OF DEPLOYMENT

- Pre-Deployment
- Deployment
- Reunion



Pre-Deployment

PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 1

Anticipation of Loss

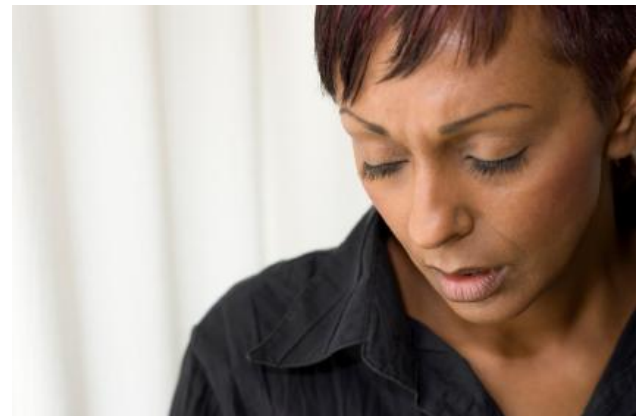
- Occurs four to six weeks before deployment
- Possible reactions
 - Restlessness
 - Sadness
 - Irritability
 - Anger and resentment (spouse)
 - Guilt (military member)



PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 2

Detachment and Withdrawal

- Occurs during final days before departure
- Possible reactions
 - Despair / hopelessness
 - Decision making may become increasingly difficult
 - Ambivalence about sexual relations
 - Emotional distancing



Tips for Managing Pre-Deployment

PRE-DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Prepare for deployment now
- Prepare family members
- Communicate with your family



HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

Financial Matters

- Budget
- Allotments
- Bills
- Goals

Legal Matters

- ID Card
- Power of Attorney
- Wills
- Family Care Plan



HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

Practical Matters

- Security
- Healthcare issues
- Household & vehicle
- Passport



Personal Matters

- Spouses
- Children
- Other relatives and friends
- Loved ones



STAYING IN TOUCH DURING DEPLOYMENT

- “Snail” Mail
- Tape Recordings
- Telephone Calls
- E-Mail
- Video



Deployment

DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 3

Emotional Disorganization

- Occurs during first 6 weeks of deployment
- Possible reactions
 - Initial relief followed by guilt
 - Feeling numb or without purpose
 - Sadness and withdrawal from friends
 - Overwhelmed with responsibility
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Restless, angry, confused, disorganized, indecisive, irritable



DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 4

Recovery and Stabilization

- Variable duration between stages 3 and 5
- Possible reactions
 - Established new family patterns and settled into a routine
 - More comfortable with reorganization of roles and responsibilities
 - Cultivated new sources of support
 - Pride in ability to cope alone



Tips for Managing Deployment

MANAGING DEPLOYMENT

- Develop a daily routine
- Send notes, emails, letters to your service member as often as possible
- Create care packages for your Service Member
- Volunteer
- Display your flag
- Seek support from family and friends
- Practice self-care



TIPS FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

- Seek support from your battle buddies
- Avoid consuming too much alcohol
- Talk, send an email or write to your partner as often as possible
- Stay focused on the mission and reuniting with your partner and family after deployment



SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SPOUSE

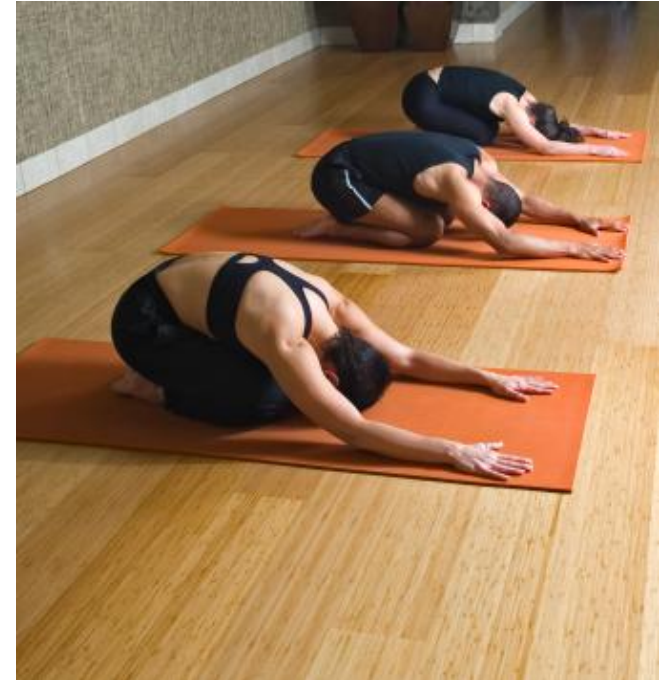
Use Good Judgment

- Other than family, friends and colleagues, don't tell people your spouse is gone
- When someone calls asking for your spouse – never tell them your spouse isn't home
- Don't discuss their absence in public, even with friends
- Don't give social security numbers to persons over the phone unless you are requesting a service or information that requires it



PRACTICE SELF-CARE

- Get plenty of rest
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Practice relaxation
- Laugh
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine
- Minimize the amount of news you watch or read
- Listen to soothing music



Reunion

MOVING INTO REUNION PHASE, STAGE 5

Anticipation of Homecoming

- Occurs during the last six weeks of deployment
- Possible reactions
 - Feelings of joy, excitement, apprehension
 - Reevaluation of marriage and the effects on the family
 - Restlessness, frantic activity to finish projects



REUNION PHASE, STAGE 5 CONTINUED

Anticipation of Homecoming

- Possible reactions
 - Confusion
 - Changes in appetite
 - Decisions may become harder to make
 - Irritability



REUNION PHASE, STAGE 6

Renegotiation of the Marriage Contract

- Occurs during six weeks after the end of deployment
- Possible reactions
 - Physical togetherness, emotional distance
 - Loss of freedom and independence
 - Establish new routines
 - Renegotiation of assumptions and expectations of marriage
 - Adjustments in roles and responsibilities



REUNION PHASE, STAGE 7

Reintegration and Stabilization

- Occurs six to twelve weeks after the end of deployment
- Characteristics
 - New routines have been established
 - Relaxed, comfortable feelings
 - Sense of being a couple and a family again
 - Back on track emotionally and able to enjoy warmth and closeness of being married



Tips for Managing Reunion

MANAGING REUNION

- Communicate openly
- Go slow and be patient
- Make time for yourself and allow others free time as well
- Stay positive
- Reconnect with your social network
- Don't expect old problems to have gone away



MANAGING REUNION

CONTINUED

- Curb your desire to take control
- Accept that things may be different
- Take time to become reacquainted
- Remember that intimate relationships may be awkward at first



REUNION PHASE, STAGE 6

Communication is of utmost importance

Here are a few communication tips:

- Be open to what the other person has to say
- Inform instead of order
- Don't assume that people can read your mind or know how you feel
- Listen with your full attention or set up another time to talk
- Practice communication of your thoughts and feelings. It will become easier with practice



WHEN TO SEEK HELP

- If the stress of the deployment cycle is interfering with your ability to function in daily life, and coping methods are not working, don't be afraid to seek help from a Chaplain, Military Community Services or Behavioral Health Service



SUMMARY

- Pre-deployment phase is characterized by anticipation of loss
- Deployment phase: relief that the waiting is over. Emotions can become intensified
- During reunion, after initial readjustments to roles are made, the couple can begin to feel a sense of closeness again
- Communication during reunion is essential





QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
 - i.e. Family Services, legal assistance (for power of attorney assistance) installation home web site, PFC/PFM for budgeting assistance, child/youth services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE www.Tricare.mil
- Behavioral Health Services



REFERENCES

- *Coping with Deployment*,
http://marriage.about.com/cs/militarymarriages/a/deployment_2.htm
- *Guide to Coping with Deployment and Combat Stress*,
http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/Coping_withDeployment_CombatStress%20_03_08.pdf
- *Preparing Your Marriage for a Military Deployment*,
www.TwoOfUs.org





THANK YOU

