Challenges Faced By Dual Military Couples

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors
Objectives

Participants will learn about:

» The challenges of dual military couples and coping methods for dealing with the challenges

» What to do when the dual military couple has children and both parents dep…
Agenda

» Positive Aspects of a Dual Military Couple
» Challenges
» Coping Methods
» When Both Military Parents Deploy
» When to Seek Help
Positive Aspects of a Dual Military Couple

» Understanding first hand what it’s like to be deployed
» Opportunities to be deployed together
» Being able to relate to each other’s career challenges and accomplishments in a way non-military spouses may not
» Having a special bond based on shared sacrifices
Challenges

» Frequent separations
» Finding childcare when both parents are deployed
» Differences in rank, career fields and branches of service
» Difficult career decisions sometimes necessary
Coping Methods

» Communication is key – communicate by phone, email, text messaging, etc. daily if possible
» Connect with other dual military couples
» Focus on the positive aspects of your lives together
» Recognize and support each other’s career goals
» Be flexible, and be prepared to switch roles
» Practice self-care and find balance in your life
» Develop a support network
» Take action in trying to find joint assignments
When Both Military Parents Deploy

» Have a primary plan for childcare as well as a back up plan

» Make sure all paperwork is up to date including:
  – Transfer of guardianship and powers of attorney
  – Wills
  – Lists of medications, dietary restrictions, allergies, etc.
  – Emergency contacts
  – Life insurance
  – Health insurance
  – Bank accounts
» Notify doctors, schools, daycare, dentists, teachers, etc.
» Spend extra time with your children
» If possible, allow the person who will be guardian to spend time at your house with your children and learn routines
» Decide ahead of time how you will communicate
» Once deployed, communicate with your children and their caregiver regularly
» Encourage the caregiver to talk with your children about you and their feelings about the deployment
Talking to Children About Both Parents Deploying

» Talk to your children as soon as possible once you are notified of your deployment
» Let them know who will be taking care of them while you are deployed
» Use age appropriate language and give as much information as you can
» Allow your children to express their feelings
» Let them know you are both trained to do your jobs
» Discuss changes in lifestyle that may occur
» Reinforce the emotional bond
When to Seek Help

- If the challenges of being a dual military couple become overwhelming and coping methods aren’t working, don’t hesitate to seek help from a chaplain, Military Community Services or behavioral health services.

- Remember – everyone needs assistance at one time or another, and it’s a sign of strength to ask for help when needed.
Questions
Resources

» Military Community Services
» Chaplain and Local Clergy
» Military OneSource  (800) 342-9647
» TRICARE  www.tricare.osd.mil
» Behavioral Health Services
References

» *When both Parents are Deployed*, http://www.military.com/fs/0,,fs_deploy_bothparents_00.html

» *Dual Military, Kids and Deployments*, http://www.homefrontonline.com/article.asp?articleid=1189


» Balancing Work and Life as a Dual Military Couple, www.MilitaryOneSource.com