Maintaining a Healthy Marriage During Deployment

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors
Learning Objectives

» Challenges your marriage may face while you and your spouse are separated during a remote assignment
» How to protect your marriage
» How to strengthen your marriage
» Identify things deployed spouses can do to promote their personal growth during deployment
Challenges Faced During Deployment

» Sense of isolation
» Sense of loneliness
» Lack of physical contact and intimacy with your spouse
» Challenges of dealing with issues remotely
» “Culture Shock”- adjusting to new environments
Ways to Keep a Marriage Healthy

» Regularly reaffirm commitment to each other
» Use your support system
» Become active in activities
» Take advantage of resources and groups on the installations
» Post photos of the spouse and children where you see them daily
» Don’t forget birthdays, anniversaries and family traditions
Communication is key
Importance of Effective Communication

- Effective communication promotes a healthy relationship and can be important for the safety of the Service Member.
- When contact with each other is positive, both partners can feel more connected.
- Effective communication during deployment provides an opportunity to build an even stronger relationship.
Challenges to Communication

» Service Member
  – Separated from the family
  – In a war zone
  – May be worried about the family back home

» Spouse
  – May be functioning as a single parent
  – Trying to keep household together
  – May have financial concerns
Effective Communication Skills

Verbal Communication

» Be attentive to what is said

» Clarify understanding

» Listen for the feelings being communicated

» Avoid mental rehearsal of your response while the other person is talking

» Use “I” messages when you do respond
Written Communication Skills

When writing a letter or email, remember that the written word is sometimes more powerful than the spoken word.

» Keep the message positive and encouraging

» Let the other person know how much you love them

» Send pictures from home
» Accept that some conflict is normal
» Practice effective communication skills
» Remember to attack the problem not each other
Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage During Deployment

» Talk regularly about daily experiences and impressions

» Exchange photographs

» Plan future activities with spouse to have a joint goal to work toward

» Talk with spouse about special times you had together

» Regularly remind yourself why you married your spouse and the love you first felt toward that person
Ways to Promote Personal Growth

» Pursue educational activities
» Join a sports team, book club or look at other interests you have
» Surround yourself with positive people
» Keep a journal
» Remember important keys during stressful times
  – Get plenty of sleep
  – Exercise
  – Try and eat healthy
Summary

» Maintaining a healthy marriage during deployment can be challenging

» It is important to understand those challenges and look at ways to meet those challenges

» Communication is a key element

» There are many ways you can grow on a personal level
Questions
Resources

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