



# **COPING SKILLS FOR THE RECRUITER LIFESTYLE**

**Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors**

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

## In this course, participants will learn:

- Challenges facing recruiters and their families
- Coping skills for dealing with the challenges of the recruiter lifestyle



# AGENDA

- Challenges for Recruiters
- Challenges for Spouses and Children
- Coping Strategies
- Summary



# CHALLENGES FOR RECRUITERS

- May have just returned from down range and still be adjusting to being back home
- Pressures regarding meeting their mission
- Working long hours 6-7 days a week may leave little time for family activities
- May not live near a military installation and therefore may feel isolated from the military support system



# CHALLENGES FOR RECRUITERS

CONTINUED

- The recruiting job may not be what you had expected initially
- May have to travel frequently and be away from family often – missing children's sports events and important milestones



# POSITIVES OF BEING A RECRUITER

- Being involved in a crucial part of maintaining a fighting force
- Able to spend time out of heavy op tempo of deployment
- Able to provide the recruit with not only a career opportunity, but also with an opportunity to serve
- Can assist the recruit by helping them navigate through the recruiting process



# POSITIVES OF BEING A RECRUITER

CONTINUED

- There can be satisfaction from serving as a mentor for recruits
- You can take pride in having served your country
- There may be an opportunity to live in a reintegrated family environment
- There may be the potential for flexibility of schedule if mission is met early



# CHALLENGES FOR THE SPOUSE

- The recruiter may be away from home a great deal of the time
- The spouse may not be prepared for the number of hours their recruiter will work
- The recruiter's hours may be extremely inconsistent





# CHALLENGES FOR THE SPOUSE

CONTINUED

- It may be difficult to make plans due to the recruiter's sometimes inconsistent schedule
- The recruiter's job stress can spill over into the home
- People in the community may not understand the role of a recruiter which may cause additional stress for family members



# POSITIVES OF BEING A RECRUITER'S SPOUSE

- It builds strength and courage
- You can learn to become more resourceful
- There is pride in realizing the sacrifice you've made for your country
- Being supportive to the recruiter and keeping the family together can build strong bonds with both your spouse and children



# POSITIVES OF BEING A RECRUITER'S SPOUSE

## CONTINUED

- There may be comfort in knowing the service member is not deployed to a location outside the US
- The recruiter and you may live in the same location which allows a reintegrated family environment to be established



# CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN

- Children may have to change schools and may be the only military kids in their school
- Children may not see their Mom/Dad very often
- The recruiter parent may miss some of their child's sports events, school performances, birthdays and other activities
- Children may not understand why Mom/Dad is in town but not able to attend their events as often as they'd like



# POSITIVES OF HAVING A RECRUITER PARENT

- Their parent is closer to home
- The child may live in the same location as their parent
- Their parent may be able participate in their lives more often and be there for special events when time allows
- They can take pride in knowing they have sacrificed and served their country too



# COPING STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITERS

- Remind yourself that this is temporary
- Seek support from others
- Try to stay focused on the mission
- Supporting your spouse and keeping communication channels open helps both of you
- Let your children know you miss seeing them and that you will spend time with them whenever possible



# COPING SKILLS FOR SPOUSES

- Keep a positive attitude
- Reach out to other spouses
- Focus on a new project or hobby, go back to school or take courses online
- When possible, take lunch or dinner to your spouse at their office
- Communicate daily with your spouse even if it is only to ask, “How was your day?”
- Be supportive of your spouse – this has benefits for everyone



# HELPING CHILDREN COPE

- When possible, help your children connect with other military kids
- If you can't be home often, leave your child notes or funny cards to let them know you're always thinking about them
- Provide your child with lots of structure and consistency at home
- Give your child lots of love and affection





# COPING SKILLS FOR EVERYONE

## Emotional Strategies

### Changing Destructive Thought Patterns:

- Our thoughts and perceptions of events directly affect our emotional and behavioral responses
- Learning to change our destructive thought patterns can reduce our stress levels



# COPING SKILLS FOR EVERYONE

CONTINUED

## Changing Our Perceptions

- Challenge the “shoulds”
- Avoid “all or nothing” thinking
- Be compassionate with yourself
- Focus on the present
- Embrace optimism



## Behavioral Strategies

- Get organized
- Exercise when possible
- Eat healthy
- Practice relaxation
  - Slow stretching
  - Deep breathing
  - Visualization



## Social Strategies

- Make social connections
- Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust
- Reach out to others when you feel overwhelmed



# SEEKING SUPPORT

- Don't be afraid to seek help if stress symptoms persist and if they begin to interfere with your ability to function at work or at home.
- Remember, asking for help is a sign of strength.
- Seek assistance through Military Community Services, Chaplain or Behavioral Health Services. If you are not near an installation, you can seek help through your local pastor or community behavioral health services.



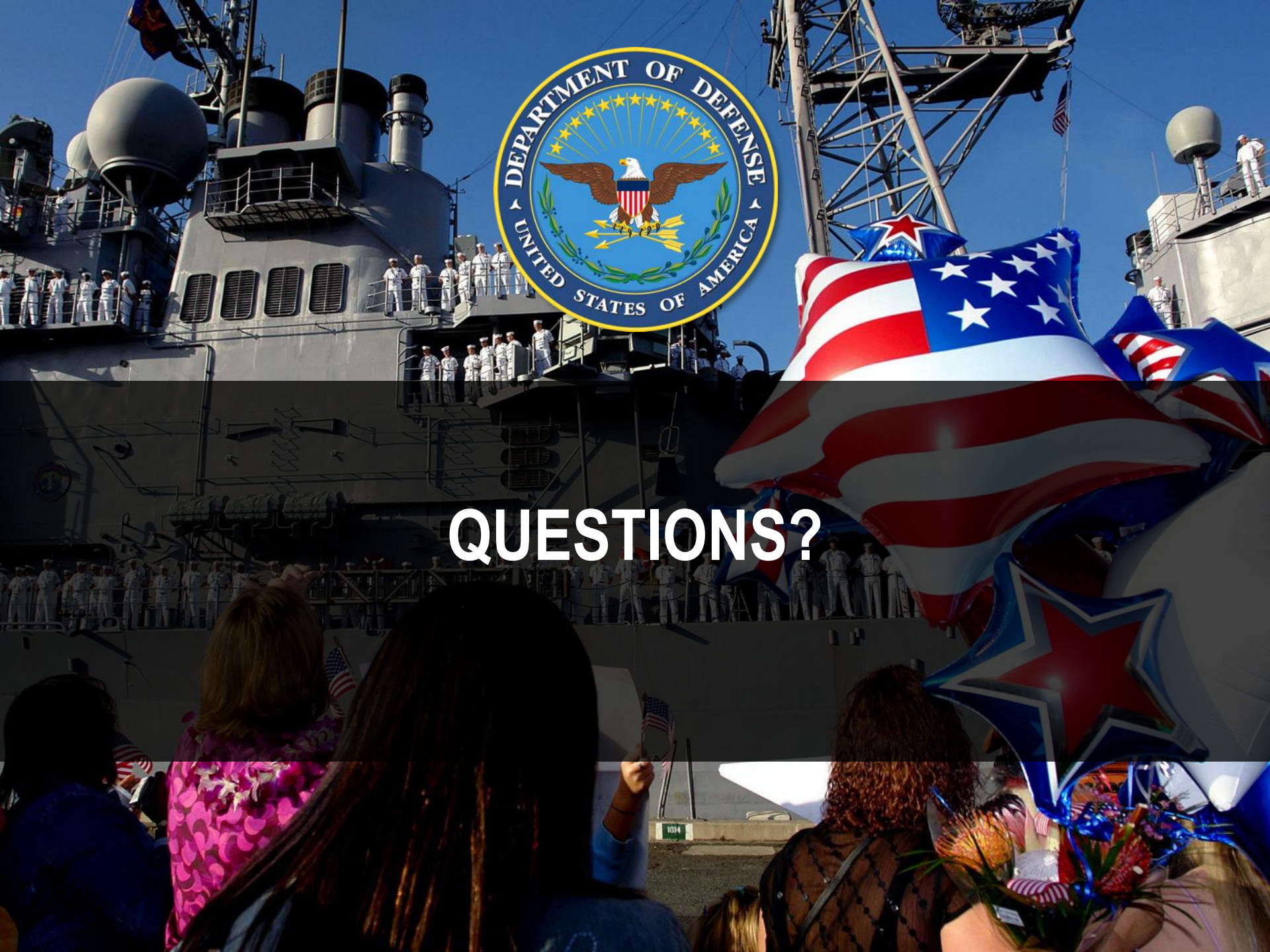
# SUMMARY

- One of the main stressors both recruiters and their families face is the time the recruiter must be away from home.
- Spouses often function as single parents.
- The recruiting job may not be exactly what they expected it to be.
- Coping requires focusing on the positive, keeping communication channels open and practicing stress management techniques.
- When the stress is overwhelming, don't hesitate to seek help.





QUESTIONS?



# RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services





# REFERENCES

- *For Army Recruiters, a Hard Toll From a Hard Sell*, by Damien Cave, March 27, 2005, *The New York Times*
- *Army Recruiter Stress Prompts Drug Abuse*, by Bryant Jordan, December 24, 2008, *Today in the Military*, *Military.com*
- *Iraq Vet Asks Army to Evaluate High-Stress Duty*, by Lindsay Wise, 2008, *Houston Chronicle*





**THANK YOU**

