



FROM COMBAT TO HOME

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

AGENDA

- Challenges and benefits of military life
- Challenges of returning home
- Challenges for military member, spouse and children
- Solutions for individuals, couples and children
- When to seek help for children
- When adults should seek help



CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE

Challenges

- Family separations
- Multiple relocations
- Separation from extended family
- Multiple deployments
- Fear of death or serious injury

Benefits

- Education and job training
- Access to health care
- Being part of a tradition
- A sense of pride and patriotism
- Financial stability/retirement benefits
- Builds resilience in families
- A sense of belonging and community



CHALLENGES OF RETURNING HOME

- Unrealistic expectations
- Role changes
- Financial changes, struggles, mismanagement
- Lack of intimacy
- Changes and differences in values and world view
- Playing the “who had it worse” game
- Possible issues of mistrust and jealousy



CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE

In Combat

- Split second decisions are necessary
- Anger keeps you pumped and alert, awake and alive
- It can be kill or be killed
- Made strong ties with their buddies

At Home

- May come across as angry and authoritarian towards others
- May display inappropriate anger and/or overreact to minor events
- May respond with inappropriate aggression
- May spend more time with buddies than spouse



CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE

CONTINUED

In Combat

- Emotions are controlled
Fear, sadness, and loneliness can get suppressed

At Home

- Emotions may still be controlled which can inhibit the ability to reconnect with family and friends



CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE

CONTINUED

In Combat

- Emotions are controlled
Fear, sadness, and loneliness can get suppressed
- Survival depends on discipline and obeying orders

At Home

- Emotions may still be controlled which can inhibit the ability to reconnect with family and friends
- The lack of order and predictability can lead to anger and conflict



CHALLENGES FOR SPOUSE

- Expanded responsibilities
- Single parenting
- Handling finances
- Anxiety, anger, stress
- Loneliness
- Growth, change, self confidence



CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN

- Separation from parent
- May experience anxiety, anger, stress
- Sense of safety may be threatened
- Taking on new responsibilities
- Building new bonds with both parents
- Experiencing growth and change



SOLUTIONS - INDIVIDUAL

- Adjust your expectations
- Give your partner time and space to ease back into a post-combat reality
- Solve your own issues that contribute to marital stress
- Expand your own personal skills and resources
- Discuss how to balance time spent between family and friends/buddies



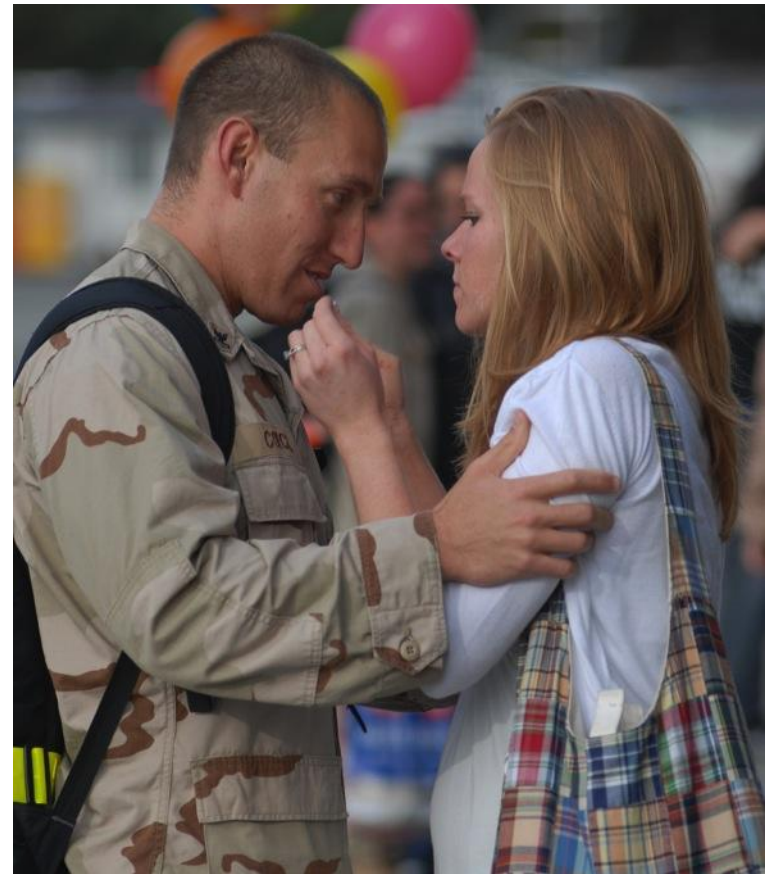
SOLUTIONS - COUPLE

- Build and enrich the marital friendship
- Identify and honor values, ideals and goals for each spouse, for the relationship and for the family.
- Take time to increase intimacy –both emotional and sexual –don't try to rush it
- Take time to get to know each other again
- Create rituals that celebrate the marriage, the family, and connect you to the community



SOLUTIONS – COUPLE (CONTINUED)

- Use good communications skills:
- Be attentive to what is said
- Clarify understanding
- Listen for the feelings being communicated
- Notice body language
- Avoid mental rehearsal of your response while the other person is talking



SOLUTIONS – COUPLE (CONTINUED)

- Use “I” messages when you do respond
- Renegotiate priorities and responsibilities and be flexible -let go of the little things
- Acknowledge the sacrifices each of you made
- Express your love and appreciation of each other and practice saying “thanks”



SOLUTIONS – CHILDREN

- Spend some special time with each child
- Let them know you love them –give lots of hugs and kisses
- Encourage them to talk about their feelings
- Listen without being judgmental
- Acknowledge the responsibilities they have taken on and express appreciation
- Praise your children often
- Comfort them as often as needed



WHEN TO SEEK HELP FOR CHILDREN

- Extreme irritability and acting out behaviors that do not respond to usual discipline methods
- Getting into fights, hitting, biting or kicking
- Decline in grades at school
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Sad most of the time



WHEN ADULTS SHOULD SEEK HELP

Seek help if the following persist and/or interfere with your ability to function:

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, irritability
- Crying episodes
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Use of alcohol or drugs

If you have thoughts of hurting yourself or others, seek help immediately



SUMMARY

- While there are many challenges of being in a military family, there are also many benefits.
- Challenges can arise when the military member returns home from combat.
- Adjusting your expectations, renegotiating your priorities and spending special time with spouse and children can be helpful solutions to the challenges of readjustment.
- It is important to know when to seek help for both children and adults.





QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

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





THANK YOU