



# ISSUES FAMILIES FACE WHEN THE MILITARY DEPLOYS

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

# OBJECTIVES

## Participants will learn to:

- Recognize the symptoms of deployment stress
- Develop personal strategies to cope with stress



# AGENDA

## Stressors for:

- service members
  - spouses
  - children
  - parents
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- Symptoms of deployment stress
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- Strategies for coping with deployment stress



# DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

- Separated from family
- Concerns about family finances and safety issues
- Separated from career (if Guard or Reserve)
- Exposure to combat zone and culture



# DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS FOR SPOUSES



- Finances
- Employment
- Child care
- Media attention
- Separated from spouse



# DEPLOYMENT FOR CHILDREN



- Disruption of routine
- Changes in supervision/child care
- May assume more responsibility
- Separation from deployed parent



# DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS FOR PARENTS & SIBLINGS

- Support system affected by service member's absence
- May feel left out when focus is on member's spouse and children
- Media attention



# SYMPTOMS OF DEPLOYMENT STRESS



- Anger
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Resentment
- Distancing





# COPING STRATEGIES: PREPARE & PLAN AHEAD

## Prepare family members

- Tell all of your family members details of the separation
- Use pictures, calendars, maps or globes to locate military member's destination

## Complete your personal readiness plan

- Make sure all bank accounts are joint accounts
- Have current ID cards – check expiration dates
- Make sure that wills and powers of attorney are current.



# COPING STRATEGIES: COMMUNICATION

- Have numerous family and one-on-one discussions
- Discuss issues and roles before deploying
- Decide how you will communicate: letters, email, Skype, tape recordings, etc.
- Encourage children to send pictures they've made, copies of report cards, etc.



# HOW TO COPE WITH DEPLOYMENT STRESS

## Take good care of yourself

- Eat balanced meals
- Get plenty of rest
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Avoid news reports or articles that are disturbing
- Avoid spending sprees



# MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

- Avoid excessive use of alcohol or drugs (prescription and illegal)
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Develop a support group
- Set boundaries and say “no” when you need to
- Get plenty of rest
- Keep a sense of humor – laughter is a great stress reducer
- Have a Life – Socialize, Sports, Church, Chaplain
- Health & Fitness – Proper Diet and Exercise



# WHEN TO SEEK HELP

- In a few weeks, most families should be established in a new routine.
- As symptoms begin to subside, you may have a burst of energy.
- If symptoms do not subside and if they interfere with your daily functioning, seek help from Military Community Services, a Chaplain or Behavioral Health Services.



# SUMMARY

- Using coping strategies can help reduce stress related to deployment
- Prepare and plan ahead
- Keep communication channels open
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Seek help if stress symptoms persist and interfere with functioning



# 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

