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

• Symptoms of deployment stress

• 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
RESOURCES

• Military Community Services

• Chaplain and Local Clergy

• Military OneSource  (800) 342-9647

• TRICARE  www.Tricare.mil

• Behavioral Health Services