



# 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



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- 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.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services





**THANK YOU**

