



# REDEPLOYMENT: ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

# EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

- Behavior and emotions before, during and after deployments can be overwhelming for both the Service Member and their loved ones.
- Understanding, recognizing, acknowledging and coping with these emotions is part of the emotional cycle.
- We all respond differently based on past experiences.



# TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Introduction
- Stages of Deployment
- Normal Responses
- Stress Responses
  - Problem behaviors
- Planning Strategies
  - How to help
  - When to seek assistance



# INTRODUCTION

- Deployment is a major event for everyone affected
- Maintaining at home is challenging
- Difficulties usually come from changes during the absence of spouse, parent/caregiver
- Stress is normal
- Poor coping can lead to problem behaviors



# STAGES OF DEPLOYMENT

- Pre-deployment (length varies)
- Deployment (1<sup>st</sup> month)
- Sustainment (2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> month)
- Re-deployment (last month)
- Post-deployment (3-6 months after return)



# WHAT TO EXPECT

- Things have changed and with change comes stress
- You can expect a transition period of 4-6 weeks
- Most children and families transition without any long term consequences



# WAYS CHILDREN RESPOND

- Physical Response
- Regressive Behaviors
- Emotional Responses
  - Fear, Anxiety
- Social Responses
  - Withdrawing, Fear of Strangers, Clinging



# CHILDREN'S RESPONSE

- Very individualized
- Different responses at different developmental levels
- Behavioral changes can be predicted in response to changes in their lives
- Children respond, in part, based on how their parents respond
- Most children/families will adapt and survive (many excel)





# DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

- Infants (<1 year old)
- Toddlers (1–2 year olds)
- Preschoolers (3-5 year olds)
- School aged children (6-12 year olds)
- Adolescents (13-18 year olds)



# PLANNING STRATEGIES

- Anticipate a transition period (4-6 weeks)
- Share concerns / expectations
  - Rapid communication can ease transitions
  - Communicate openly and honestly with children
- Expect that each child has changed
  - May need additional acknowledgement
  - May use school/activities as a “getaway”



# PLANNING STRATEGIES

CONTINUED

- Acknowledge change has occurred
- Acknowledge the transition
- Go slowly, be patient, allow adequate time to re-establish family bonds
- Let your children set their own pace
- Lines of communication should be open and two-way



# WHEN TO SEEK HELP

- Everyone should be adjusting within several months
- Remember, most of what you see is a normal response to change - be patient
- If the family or an individual family member is unable to return to normal functioning, a visit to their primary care provider or mental health professional may be needed



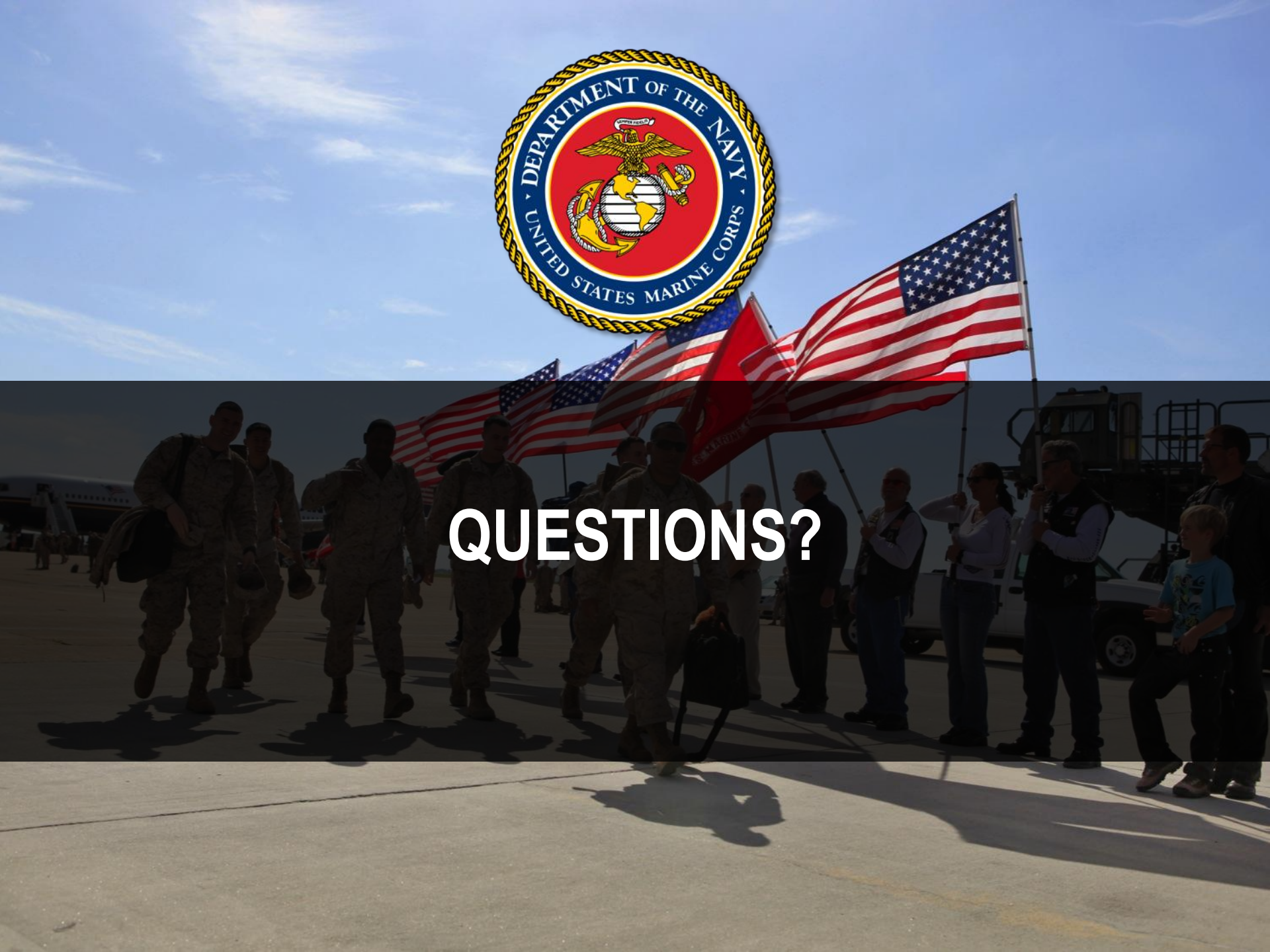
# SUMMARY

- A child's response to stress is individual and varies with their developmental level and temperament
- Transition periods can be stressful
- Expect normal responses, and allow for a 4 to 6 week transition period





**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**

