



# REINTEGRATION

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

# AGENDA

- Purpose of this Briefing
- Importance of the Reintegration Process
- Checklists
- Changes
- Challenges
- Positive Coping Strategies
- Things to Keep in Mind
- Resources



# PURPOSE OF REINTEGRATION BRIEFINGS

Reintegration briefings help to provide an understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors common to most service members and their families as they adjust to life after deployment.



# THE IMPACT OF REINTEGRATION

- Reintegration can be both joyful and stressful.
- Emotions can be intense.
- Reintegration affects all family members.
- Reintegration causes changes in the family.



# REINTEGRATION CHECKLIST FOR EVERY SOLDIER

- How did the welcome home go for me?
- How did things go while I was gone?
- Is my family supporting me the way I need them to?
- How am I handling my finances?
- How is my return to work and/or school going?
- Have I stayed in contact with the soldiers I deployed with?



# REINTEGRATION CHECKLIST FOR THE SINGLE SOLDIER

- How I am doing with my relationships with family, old friends and lovers?
- Have I settled into my new living arrangements?
- Have I achieved a level of self-reliance that I am comfortable with?
- Am I moving forward with my life goals?



# REINTEGRATION CHECKLIST FOR THE MARRIED SOLDIER

- How have my partner and I changed?
- How are we coping with those changes?
- Do we still have things to talk about?
- How well are we connecting intimately?
- Does it feel like my partner still wants and needs me?
- How well are we sharing the responsibilities and tasks of marriage and family?



# REINTEGRATION CHECKLIST FOR SOLDIERS WITH CHILDREN

- What is my role in discipline with the children?
- How have the rules changed and how are those rules working?
- Have I reconnected with my child's activities, teacher/coach/scout leader?
- How much anxiety do my children have about potential future deployments and do I know how to deal with that?





# ADJUSTING TO ROLE CHANGES

## How am I adjusting to:

- A partner that may have learned more about managing a home or working outside of the home.
- A child that has matured and is doing more mature activities or handling more responsibilities than before.
- Finding my place again in a home that ran without me.
- Changes in my workplace and others' response to me and my combat experience?



# CHANGES TO LOOK FOR IN YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

- Appearance
- Attitudes
- Values
- Independence
- Trust
- Faith
- Interests
- Habits
- Preferences -food, clothing, recreation
- Goals -education, money, career
- Priorities - what's important in life



# OTHER COMMON REACTIONS TO BE AWARE OF...

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Depression
- Guilt
- Emotionally numb (“I just don’t feel much of anything anymore)
- Concentration problems
- Memory problems
- Crying spells
- Sexual performance issues
- Loss of trust
- Loss of interest/motivation
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
  - Oversleeping
  - Trouble falling asleep
  - Waking up in the middle of the night
- Feeling jumpy
- Flashbacks
- Intrusive thoughts



# FLASHBACKS AND INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

**Flashbacks are episodes of re-experiencing events that occurred during a deployment.**

- Soldiers feel as if they are “back in the Gulf,” and may not be aware of their immediate surroundings.

**Intrusive thoughts are recurrent and unwanted distressing images, ideas, or perceptions.**

- Although bothersome and distressing, flashbacks and intrusive thoughts are generally normal and not associated with more serious problems unless they persist for several months or cause significant interference in a soldier’s ability to function normally.



# FLASHBACKS & INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

CONTINUED

- *Flashbacks* and intrusive thoughts may occur in response to a “trigger” (e.g. a loud noise that sounds like a weapon’s discharge) or spontaneously without a trigger.

## **Soldiers can cope with flashbacks and intrusive thoughts by:**

- Reminding themselves that they are to be expected and that this is our mind’s way of trying to understand and make sense of the experience.
- Discussing them with family, friends, and supervisors.
- Seeking professional assistance if they are significantly distressed by these experiences.



# WHEN NORMAL REACTIONS BECOME PROBLEMATIC

- Functional impairment: Anything that significantly interferes with a soldier's ability to do the things that he or she needs to do in any important area of life (work, home family, couple/intimacy, social, spiritual).
- Sleep disturbances are common reactions to deployment that can become a functional impairment.



# NEGATIVE COPING STYLES A SOLDIER MAY EXPERIENCE

- Drinking alcohol excessively or using illegal drugs
- Driving recklessly or engaging in other risk-taking behaviors
- Picking fights
- Going on spending sprees
- Gambling
- Isolating yourself for long periods
- Dropping out of pleasurable or recreational activities
- Working all the time as a way of avoiding distressing memories
- Trying to constantly avoid exposure to people, places or thoughts that are associated with the traumatic event – it prevents progress in coping and healing



# POSITIVE COPING MECHANISMS

- Adjust gradually
- Stay positive and be patient
- Communicate and negotiate
- Respect each other's right to feel a little resentful
- Rethink your budget
- Resist spending sprees
- Talk about new rules and schedules
- Support and compliment positive changes





# POSITIVE COPING MECHANISMS

CONTINUED

- Plan a special celebration as a family
- Spend time together as a couple
- Re-establish sexual intimacy slowly
- Spend time with children (together and individually)
- Go easy on discipline
- Make time for yourself and allow others their free time also
- Reconnect or stay in touch with your church, social support system and recreational activities



# OLD PROBLEMS DON'T GO AWAY

- Separation does not solve problems that existed before deployment
- Old habits do not just disappear
- Don't expect to resolve the old (or new) problems right away





**QUESTIONS?**



# RESOURCES

- Army Community Services (Where available)
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- Tricare [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services
- Troop and Family Counseling Services  
(888) 755-9355







**THANK YOU**