STAGES OF DEPLOYMENT

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors
OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

• The phases of deployment
• Tips for managing reunion/re-entry
AGENDA: EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

Pre-Deployment Phase
- Stage 1: Anticipation of loss
- Stage 2: Detachment and withdrawal

Deployment Phase
- Stage 3: Emotional disorganization

Moving into Reunion Phase
- Stage 4: Recovery and stabilization

Reunion Phase
- Stage 5: Anticipation of homecoming
- Stage 6: Renegotiation of marriage contract
- Stage 7: Reintegration and stabilization

Reunion/Re-Entry
THREE PHASES OF DEPLOYMENT

• Pre-deployment
• Deployment
• Reunion
Anticipation of Loss

- Occurs four to six weeks before deployment
- Characteristics
  - Restlessness
  - Sadness
  - Irritability
  - Anger and resentment (spouse)
  - Guilt (military member)
Detachment and Withdrawal

- Occurs during final days before departure
- Characteristics
  - Despair / hopelessness
  - Decision making may become increasingly difficult
  - Ambivalence about sexual relations
  - Emotional distancing
DEPLOYMENT PHASE STAGE 3

Emotional Disorganization

• Occurs during first 6 weeks of deployment
• Characteristics
  • Initial relief followed by guilt
  • Feel numb, aimless, without purpose
  • Depression and withdrawal from friends
  • Overwhelmed with responsibility
  • Difficulty sleeping
  • Restless, angry, confused, disorganized, indecisive, irritable
DEPLOYMENT PHASE STAGE 4

Recovery and Stabilization

• Variable duration between stages 3 and 5
• Characteristics
  • Established new family patterns and settled into a routine
  • More comfortable with reorganization of roles and responsibilities
  • Cultivated new sources of support
  • Increased freedom and independence
  • Pride in ability to cope alone
REUNION PHASE STAGE 5

Anticipation of Homecoming

• Occurs during last six weeks of deployment
• Characteristics
  • Feelings of joy, excitement, apprehension
  • Reevaluation of marriage and effects of spouse’s return on the life of self and kids
  • Restlessness, frantic activity to finish projects
Anticipation of Homecoming: characteristics continued

- Confusion
- Changes in appetite
- Decisions may become harder to make
- Irritability
Renegotiation of the Marriage Contract

- Occurs during six weeks after homecoming
- Characteristics
  - Physical togetherness, emotional distance
  - Loss of freedom and independence
  - Establish new routines
  - Renegotiation of assumptions and expectations of marriage
  - Adjustments in roles and responsibilities
Communication is of utmost importance

Here are a few communication tips:

• Be tentative rather than absolute (be open to what the other person has to say)
• Inform instead of order
• Don’t assume that people can read your mind or know how you feel
• Listen with your full attention or set up another time to talk
• Practice communication of your thoughts and feelings. It will come easier with practice.
REUNION PHASE STAGE 7

Reintegration and Stabilization

• Occurs six to twelve weeks after end of deployment

• Characteristics
  • New routines have been established
  • Relaxed, comfortable feelings
  • Sense of being a couple and a family again
  • Back on track emotionally and able to enjoy warmth and closeness of being married
REUNION/RE-ENTRY

- Communicate
- Approach each other as equals
- Find out what new skills everyone has learned
- Be patient
- Arrange quiet time
- Stay positive
- Don’t expect old problems to have gone away
- Get help if you need it
SUMMARY

• Pre-deployment phase is characterized by anticipation of loss

• Deployment phase: relief that the waiting is over. Emotions can become intensified

• During reunion, after initial readjustments to roles are made, the couple can begin to feel a sense of closeness again

• Communication during reunion is essential
RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource  (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE   www.Tricare.mil
- Behavioral Health Services
THANK YOU