THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors
AGENDA

Pre-Deployment

• Stage 1: Anticipation of loss
• Stage 2: Detachment and withdrawal
• Tips for managing pre-deployment

Deployment

• Stage 3: Emotional disorganization
• Stage 4: Recovery and stabilization
• Tips for managing pre-deployment

Reunion

• Stage 5: Anticipation of homecoming
• Stage 6: Renegotiation of marriage contract
• Stage 7: Reintegration and stabilization
• Tips for managing pre-deployment
OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

• The emotional phases of deployment
• Possible effects of the deployment phases
• Tips for managing the reunion
THREE PHASES OF DEPLOYMENT

• Pre-Deployment
• Deployment
• Reunion
Pre-Deployment
Anticipation of Loss

- Occurs four to six weeks before deployment
- Possible reactions
  - Restlessness
  - Sadness
  - Irritability
  - Anger and resentment (spouse)
  - Guilt (military member)
DETACHMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

- Occurs during final days before departure
- Possible reactions
  - Despair / hopelessness
  - Decision making may become increasingly difficult
  - Ambivalence about sexual relations
  - Emotional distancing
Tips for Managing Pre-Deployment
PRE-DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

• Prepare for deployment now
• Prepare family members
• Communicate with your family
HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

Financial Matters

• Budget
• Allotments
• Bills
• Goals

Legal Matters

• ID Card
• Power of Attorney
• Wills
• Family Care Plan
HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

Practical Matters

• Security
• Healthcare issues
• Household & vehicle
• Passport

Personal Matters

• Spouses
• Children
• Other relatives and friends
• Loved ones
STAYING IN TOUCH DURING DEPLOYMENT

• “Snail” Mail
• Tape Recordings
• Telephone Calls
• E-Mail
• Video
Deployment
DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 3

Emotional Disorganization

• Occurs during first 6 weeks of deployment
• Possible reactions
  • Initial relief followed by guilt
  • Feeling numb or without purpose
  • Sadness and withdrawal from friends
  • Overwhelmed with responsibility
  • Difficulty sleeping
  • Restless, angry, confused, disorganized, indecisive, irritable
Recovery and Stabilization

• Variable duration between stages 3 and 5
• Possible reactions
  • Established new family patterns and settled into a routine
  • More comfortable with reorganization of roles and responsibilities
  • Cultivated new sources of support
  • Pride in ability to cope alone
Tips for Managing Deployment
MANAGING DEPLOYMENT

• Develop a daily routine

• Send notes, emails, letters to your service member as often as possible

• Create care packages for your Service Member

• Volunteer

• Display your flag

• Seek support from family and friends

• Practice self-care
TIPS FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

• Seek support from your battle buddies
• Avoid consuming too much alcohol
• Talk, send an email or write to your partner as often as possible
• Stay focused on the mission and reuniting with your partner and family after deployment
SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SPOUSE

Use Good Judgment

• Other than family, friends and colleagues, don’t tell people your spouse is gone
• When someone calls asking for your spouse – never tell them your spouse isn’t home
• Don’t discuss their absence in public, even with friends
• Don’t give social security numbers to persons over the phone unless you are requesting a service or information that requires it
PRACTICE SELF-CARE

• Get plenty of rest
• Maintain a healthy diet
• Exercise
• Practice relaxation
• Laugh
• Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine
• Minimize the amount of news you watch or read
• Listen to soothing music
MOVING INTO REUNION PHASE, STAGE 5

Anticipation of Homecoming

• Occurs during the last six weeks of deployment
• Possible reactions
  • Feelings of joy, excitement, apprehension
  • Reevaluation of marriage and the effects on the family
  • Restlessness, frantic activity to finish projects
Anticipation of Homecoming

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

- Occurs during six weeks after the end of deployment
- Possible reactions
  - Physical togetherness, emotional distance
  - Loss of freedom and independence
  - Establish new routines
  - Renegotiation of assumptions and expectations of marriage
  - Adjustments in roles and responsibilities
REUNION PHASE, STAGE 7

Reintegration and Stabilization

• Occurs six to twelve weeks after the 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
Tips for Managing Reunion
MANAGING REUNION

- Communicate openly
- Go slow and be patient
- Make time for yourself and allow others free time as well
- Stay positive
- Reconnect with your social network
- Don’t expect old problems to have gone away
MANAGING REUNION

• Curb your desire to take control
• Accept that things may be different
• Take time to become reacquainted
• Remember that intimate relationships may be awkward at first
Communication is of utmost importance

Here are a few communication tips:

• 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 become easier with practice
WHEN TO SEEK HELP

• If the stress of the deployment cycle is interfering with your ability to function in daily life, and coping methods are not working, don’t be afraid to seek help from a Chaplain, Military Community Services or Behavioral Health Service
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
QUESTIONS?
RESOURCES

• Military Community Services
  • i.e. Family Services, legal assistance (for power of attorney assistance) installation home web site, PFC/PFM for budgeting assistance, child/youth services

• Chaplain and Local Clergy

• Military OneSource (800) 342-9647

• TRICARE www.Tricare.mil

• Behavioral Health Services
REFERENCES

• *Coping with Deployment*,
  [http://marriage.about.com/cs/militarymarriages/a/deployment_2.htm](http://marriage.about.com/cs/militarymarriages/a/deployment_2.htm)

• *Guide to Coping with Deployment and Combat Stress*,

• *Preparing Your Marriage for a Military Deployment*,
  [www.TwoOfUs.org](http://www.TwoOfUs.org)
THANK YOU