

## Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Family Reunion

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- This is a time of high emotions and often times mixed emotions. Family members can experience a range of emotions from high excitement and joy to anxiety over how things may change. There are often high expectations about how wonderful the homecoming will be.
- There is also a realization that there is about to be a significant change in lifestyle.
- Some changes are welcome such as being with your loved one again and feeling additional support.
- Some changes may not be as well received such as having to give up some responsibilities that may have been fulfilling.

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- Adjusting to being together again can be challenging. It requires on-going communication. When the high expectations of homecoming don't match up with the reality, couples can feel a disappointed and let down by the other person.
- Characteristics of Reunion:
  - Physical togetherness, emotional distance
  - Loss of freedom and independence
  - Establishing new routines
  - Renegotiation of assumptions and expectations of marriage
  - Adjustments in roles and responsibilities

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**Page 7** – Communication is very important during the reunion phase as this can be a challenging time. This is a period where a renegotiation of roles usually needs to be made.

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- Change can be scary and difficult. Feelings of resentment can surface often times due to fear of the unknown (Will my spouse be receptive to my opinions? Does my spouse realize that things have been difficult for me too? )
- Keeping the channels of communication open is key. Talk with your spouse about your fears and attitudes about this change. You will probably find that your spouse has similar fears and attitudes. (Tips on communication are on following slide.)

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