

## Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: From Combat to Home

**Page 1** – none.

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- While there are many benefits of military life, there are also challenges which provide an opportunity to build resilience in the family and bring family members closer together.
- Ask participants if they can think of other challenges/benefits.
- In the next slides we will first look at general challenges of returning home and then look at specific challenges for military members, spouses and children. Then we will look at solutions.

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- **Unrealistic expectations:** When our expectations don't meet up with reality, our stress level can increase and exacerbate the marital issues.
- **Role changes:** This may require some negotiation. The spouse and family have taken on different roles while the service member has been deployed. Sometimes the spouse and children have found the new roles fulfilling and are resistant to letting go of them. Other time, the spouse and children are happy to have the service member back to resume some of those responsibilities.
- **Financial changes, struggles, mismanagement:** Sometimes the deployment means financial hardship on the family. The service member may think the spouse hasn't managed the budget well. This can lead to stress and tension in the marital relationship.
- **Lack of intimacy:** It's best to take this slowly and give each other time to readjust.
- **Changes in differences and values:** Sometimes perception of the world and values can change during deployment for both the service member and the spouse. Each may be seeing the world differently now due to the new experiences they each had during the deployment.
- **Who had it worse:** Both spouses have had challenges during the deployment and can sometime feel resentment toward the other when they think they are not being acknowledged for their sacrifices. Getting into this game only makes the resentment worse and increases the likelihood of distancing from each other.
- **Possible issues of mistrust and jealousy:** Spouses may question each other's commitment during the separation. Spouse at home may have expanded their social network and have new friends the military member doesn't know. If the military member has buddies at home, they may want to spend more time with them than their spouse.

**Page 5** – Aggressive behaviors necessary in combat can become destructive at home.

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**Page 8** – While new responsibilities can create added pressure, they can also build confidence and be a positive challenge. When the military members returns home, the spouse may have difficulty relinquishing responsibilities and resentments can build..

**Page 9** – Some children adjust very well to the deployment cycle. For some children, separation from a parent or parents can create anxiety and threaten their sense of safety. Separation can also bring about positive changes such as building new confidence and creating closer bonds with parents.

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- Good communication means sending clear and consistent messages not just with words but with gestures, tone of voice and body language. Good communication also involves being a listener which will also be covered more in depth later.
- **“I” statements:** With “I” statements you are taking responsibility for your feelings and not blaming or attacking the other person. Example: “When you say you had it worse than I did, I feel angry, because I think you don’t understand my sacrifice.”

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