

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Helping Children Cope with Post Deployment Issues

Page 1 – none.

Page 2 – none.

Page 3 –

- Children like structure and routine. It helps them feel safe and secure. Although most children adjust well, when big changes occur, some children may take more time to adjust.
- Even though most children are very excited to have their parent home again, they may also have feelings of fear or anger at the changes that are coming.
- NOTE: We will be looking at the different issues and reactions children may have with reunion/reintegration. We will also learn about how to communicate with children in age-appropriate ways.
- You will receive a workbook of activities for children and teens which we will discuss. This will give you ideas of how to help your child increase their coping skills.

Page 4 – What other reactions do you think your child/children will have? What have you done in the past that has helped?

Page 5 – none.

Page 6 – none.

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- This is not always the case, but many toddlers and preschoolers have a lot of separation anxiety and stranger anxiety. This is perfectly normal and will subside as the child begins to see you on a daily basis as a caregiver.
- At the other extreme, your child may be very excited to have you there and may want to be with you every minute. Either way, things will normalize over time.

Page 8 – Most school age children will be excited and happy to see you. Some may have some uncertainty about what to expect and how you will react to them. They may also not be quite sure how to interact with you. They may be demanding of your attention and not understand why you want time alone with the other parent or siblings.

Page 9 – NOTE: In the following slides, we will learn how to help enhance resiliency in children and effective ways of communicating with children.

Page 10 – none.

Page 11 –

- **Ability to keep self calm:** It's important to work with children in developing coping skills. Teaching relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, tensing and releasing muscle tension, etc. can be very effective.
- **Teaching good communication skills** such as listening, using "I" statements and non-threatening language can give them the tools they need to communicate what they feel, think and need.
- NOTE: Relaxation skills and exercises for helping children and teens express feelings will be provided in your workbook. Communication skills will be discussed in following slides.

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- "I" statements - "You" statements make the other person feel attacked and defensive. "I" statements indicate you are taking ownership.
- Open ended questions help open up discussion. Asking yes or no questions usually evokes only a yes or no answer.

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- Getting down to your child's eye level establishes a connection with them.
- Using simple sentences with few words is more effective than long explanations which will not be meaningful to them.

Page 14 –

- **Asking for their ideas and input** helps them feel valued and they are more likely to be open about how they feel and what they need from you.
- **Provide reassurance** – remember, they are worriers
- **Avoid being judgmental or critical:** being overly critical and judgmental lowers your child's self esteem and closes off communication.
- **Validate feelings:** Take a child's feelings seriously. We may not see the significance of their hurt or anger but it is important to validate what they are feeling, anyway. They are important to your child. Let the child know you understand how he/she feels and that it is okay to feel that way. Help them to express feelings appropriately: It's ok to feel angry and say that you're angry.

Page 15 – Communicating in writing – if talking is difficult or leads to further conflict, putting your thoughts and concerns in a note to your teen can facilitate further discussion. Make sure to state all the positive things you love about your teen before expressing concerns. A note will allow your teen to sit quietly and absorb what it is you have to say.

Page 16 – NOTE: Next we will look at the workbook of activities for children and teens and examine ways to increase your child's/children's coping skills.

Page 17 – none.

Page 18 – none.

Page 19 – none.

Page 20 – none.

Page 21 – none.