

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Welcome Home: Reconnecting with Your Child

Page 1 – none.

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Page 5 – The military spouse plays an integral role in the success of their service member's mission. Keeping things secure on the home front allows the service member focus on the mission instead of on problems at home. Some spouses who may be in this situation for the first time may be overwhelmed at first and think they won't measure up to the task. Then they usually find their inner strength and rise to the occasion. There is a lot of personal growth that takes place as a result of being in this situation. A sense of independence also arises as the spouse finds they are able to do many things they weren't sure they could do.

Page 6 – Taking care of all of the responsibilities on the home front can be a daunting task. Ask participants what other responsibilities they can think of.

- **Single parent:** the spouse at home functions as a single parent during the deployment. They have the full responsibility of childcare and most of the decision making.
- **Financial manager:** Managing the household budget. Making decisions about major purchases.
- **Mechanic:** Either making repairs or contacting and coordinating repairmen/women.
- **Grounds keeper:** mowing the lawn, maintaining a garden or flower bed.
- **Decision maker:** Most all of the decisions regarding home and family must now be made by the spouse at home.

Page 7 – It's important to recognize all that you have accomplished. You have allowed your spouse to focus on the mission instead of having to be distracted by worries at home. Be proud of what you've done!

Page 8 – Ask participants what other challenges they have faced.

- **Moving to different parts of the country and the world:** Moving to a new location can add additional stressors on the home front. Sometimes it's necessary to create and establish new support systems.
- **Being left alone for months at a time:** Functioning as a single adult (and sometimes a single parent) not only has it's challenges of handling the many duties of keeping the home functioning, but there is also the lack of companionship and physical closeness from the spouse.
- **Having to be creative with career choices and education:** education may have to be sought from online sources. If you have relocated, you may need to find temporary job. With increased duties at home and with the family, you may also need to work part-time.
- **Sometimes having a child or facing home emergencies and other crises without the added support of having your spouse at home:** Sometimes children are born after the service member deploys and the spouse may not have much support at home.
- **Holding down a full time job and raising a family without at home support from your spouse:** - functioning as a single parent and may not have support nearby.

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- **Career and education sometimes put on hold due to moves and multiple deployments:** Sometimes being a military spouse requires putting your own goals temporarily on hold in order to provide the support needed for the family during deployment.

- **Financial sacrifices if your spouse had a higher paying job prior to deployment:** the financial sacrifices can sometimes be significant and require getting a job outside of the home or coming up with creative ways to earn income from home.
- **Facing their spouse's multiple deployments:** Like many service members who didn't think they were signing up for multiple deployments, the spouses also didn't think they were signing up for that. Multiple deployments are stressful for everyone and make it difficult to plan for the future.

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- **Don't be afraid to ask for support:** it's a sign of strength.
- **Reach out to family and friends:** that's what they are there for – you would want to be there for them if the circumstances were reversed.
- **If you are in a location away from family and friends, remember there are support services and resources available through military community services.**

Some installations have "parents' night out;" some have volunteers who can help with all sorts of needs – helping with lawn care, taking a car into the mechanic, etc.

**You can also contact the MFLC program at the installation.

- **Seek support from a military chaplain or local clergy:** they can provide support and direct you to other resources.
- **If in the Guard or Reserve seek services through the Family Assistance Centers (FAC):** these are available all over your state.
- **There are resources available through the internet specifically designed for military spouses and family members:** to find them, you can go through a search such as Google or Yahoo. You can also contact military one source for additional links to websites with support information.

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