



# Preparing for Your Parent's Deployment

Month, Day YYYY | Location





# Objectives

Participants will learn:

- » What to expect during deployment
- » Positive aspects of deployment
- » Possible stress associated with deployment
- » Effects of stress
- » How to cope with the stress of having a deployed parent

# Agenda

- » Introduction
- » Discussion questions
- » What to expect
- » What is the stress response?
- » How does the stress response affect you?
- » Coping with a parent's deployment
- » Staying connected
- » Practicing self-care
- » Stabilization
- » Positive aspects of deployment
- » When to seek help



# Introduction

- » When a parent deploys, it can be difficult for the whole family
- » While there can be positive things about deployment, there can also be challenges
- » It's helpful to understand what some of the challenges can be and look at ways to handle them





## Discussion Question 1

» “When I found out about my parent’s deployment I felt.....”



## Discussion Question 2

- » When I found out about my parent's deployment I felt.....”
- » “What I worry about the most is .....



## Discussion Question 3

- » When I found out about my parent's deployment I felt.....”
- » “What I worry about the most is .....
- » “What I worry about the least is .....



## Discussion Question 4

- » When I found out about my parent's deployment I felt.....”
- » “What I worry about the most is .....
- » “What I worry about the least is .....
- » “What I will miss most about my parent is.....”



## Discussion Question 5

- » When I found out about my parent's deployment I felt.....”
- » “What I worry about the most is .....
- » “What I worry about the least is .....
- » “What I will miss most about my parent is.....”
- » **“What helps me the most is.....”**



## Discussion Question 6

- » When I found out about my parent's deployment I felt.....”
- » “What I worry about the most is .....
- » “What I worry about the least is .....
- » “What I will miss most about my parent is.....”
- » “What helps me the most is.....”
- » “What I feel best about is...”



# What to Expect

Possible changes may include:

- » Discipline methods may change with the parent who is at home
- » Change in routines and responsibilities
- » Changes with family relationships (may become closer or more distant)
- » Roles at home may change
- » May move to a different home in a different neighborhood, city or state
- » May have to stay with relatives
- » May change schools

# Stress and Deployment

# What is the Stress Response?

The stress response is:

- A normal response to the demands and changes in our lives

This response is also:

- An individual response
- A physical response
- Necessary for survival



# How Does Stress Affect You?

## Physical

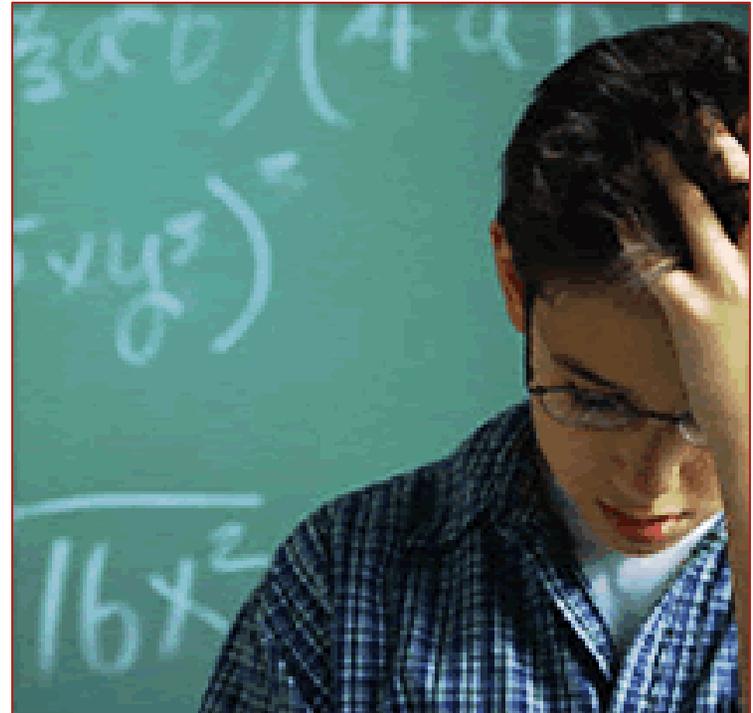
- » Headaches
- » Muscle tension
- » Tiredness
- » Changes in appetite (eating more or less)
- » Changes in sleep pattern (difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much)



## How Does Stress Affect You? continued

### Mental

- » Trouble thinking clearly
- » Poor concentration
- » Confusion
- » Forgetfulness
- » Difficulty making decisions



# How Does Stress Affect You? continued

## Emotional

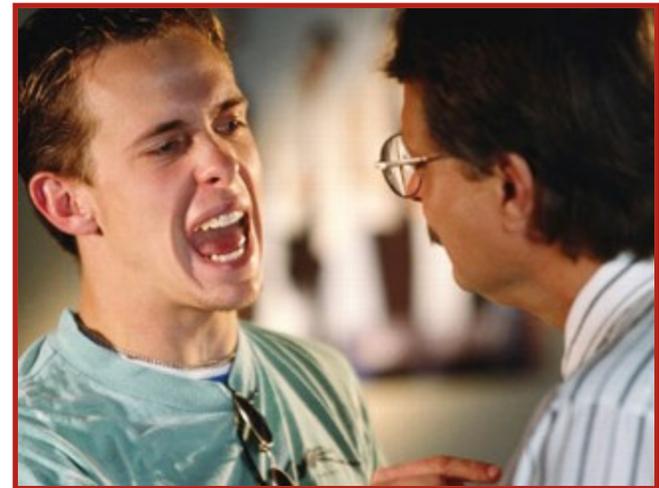
- » Feeling overwhelmed
- » Nervousness, anxiety
- » Increased irritability
- » Sadness, tearfulness
- » Increased anger



## How Does Stress Affect You? continued

### Behavioral

- » Aggression (verbal or physical)
- » Rebelling against authority (breaking house or school rules)
- » Inability to start or complete projects



# Coping with the Stress of a Parent's Deployment



# Coping with a Parent's Deployment

- » Write it down - keep a journal
- » Figure out how you can help at home
- » Talk about it with supportive people
- » Socialize and participate in activities with friends
- » Try to maintain routines
- » Realize that feelings of sadness, loss and anger are normal
- » Be proud of your parent's service and sacrifice
- » Acknowledge your own service and sacrifice



## Coping with a Parent's Deployment continued

- » Stay positive
- » Limit time watching news programs or reading the paper
- » Send care packages
- » Express yourself creatively through art, music, creative writing or dance

## Coping with a Parent's Deployment continued

- » Connect with other military kids through:
  - Military Community Services
  - National Military Family Association ([www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org))
  - Military Child Education Coalition ([www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org))
- » Seek help when needed



# Resources

- » Parents
- » Teachers
- » School Counselors
- » Clergy
- » Other trusted adults





# Staying Connected

Staying connected with your parent is one of the most important things you can do to for yourself and your deployed parent

- » Send emails, letters, greeting cards, pictures, and get their friends and relatives to do the same
- » Invest in a WEBCAM if possible or mini-cassette tape recorder for you and your parent
- » Send care packages often

# Practicing Self-Care

- » Don't over-schedule yourself - take some down time
- » Get plenty of rest
- » Exercise
- » Do something fun and enjoyable
- » Laugh – share a joke with a friend
- » Create a support network of friends, family, teachers, school counselors, etc.





# Stabilization

Usually within a few weeks after deployment, things begin to stabilize. You will have made your adjustment and:

- » Settled into a routine
- » Become comfortable with changes in roles and responsibilities
- » Developed your support group
- » Have pride in your ability to cope



# Positive Aspects of Deployment

- » May increase your sense of independence & self-confidence
- » Relationship with deployed parent may strengthen through exchange of letters, packages, emails, phone calls
- » May strengthen the relationship with the parent at home
- » May develop closer family ties as all family members work together for a common goal



## When to Seek Help

- » If you begin to feel overwhelmed and your stress level is interfering with your schoolwork and your relationships with family and friends, don't be afraid to ask for help.
- » If you have any thoughts of hurting yourself or others, get help immediately.
- » Remember - sources of help include: your parents, teachers, school counselors, clergy or other trusted adults



# Summary

- » While there can be positive aspects to deployment, there can also be challenges
- » There may be changes in roles at home, duties and responsibilities
- » The challenges of having a parent deploy can create stress which can cause physical, mental and emotional reactions
- » Coping with a parent's deployment includes: reaching out to supportive people and acknowledging all feelings are ok
- » Seek help if you are feeling overwhelmed and stress is affecting your ability to function at school and at home.



# Questions





## References

- » *Parents' Deployment Draws Mixed Emotions from Teens, Research Magazine*, Office of the Vice President for Research, Virginia Tech,  
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- » *Deployment, Military Youth on the Move*,  
<http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/>
- » *Young Heroes: Preparing Military Children for a Parent's Deployment*,  
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