



Issues Families Face When the Military Deploys

Presented by Military & Family Life Consultants





Objectives

- » Help you recognize the symptoms of deployment stress
- » Teach you to develop personal strategies to cope with stress.



Agenda

- » Stressors for:
 - service members
 - spouses
 - children
 - parents

- » Symptoms of deployment stress

- » Strategies for coping with deployment stress



Deployment Stressors for Service Members

- » Separated from family
- » Concerns about family finances and safety issues
- » Separated from career (if Guard or Reserve)
- » Exposure to combat zone and culture



Deployment Stressors for Spouses

- » Finances
- » Employment
- » Child care
- » Media attention
- » Separated from spouse



Deployment for Children

- » Disruption of routine
- » Changes in supervision/child care
- » May assume more responsibility
- » Separation from deployed parent



Deployment Stressors for Parents & Siblings

- » Support system affected by service member's absence
- » May feel left out when focus is on member's spouse and children
- » Media attention



Symptoms of Deployment Stress

- » Anger
- » Denial
- » Anxiety
- » Sadness
- » Resentment
- » Distancing



Coping Strategies: Prepare & Plan Ahead

- » Prepare family members
 - Tell all of your family members details of the separation
 - Use pictures, calendars, maps or globes to locate military member's destination
- » Complete your personal readiness plan
 - Make sure all bank accounts are joint accounts
 - Have current ID cards – check expiration dates
 - Make sure that wills and powers of attorney are current.



Coping Strategies: Communication

- » Have numerous family and one-on-one discussions
- » Discuss issues & roles before deploying
- » Decide how you will communicate: letters, email, video conferencing, tape recordings, etc.
- » Encourage children to draw pictures. They can include copy of report cards, etc.



How Can You Cope with Deployment Stress

- » Take good care of yourself
- » Eat balanced meals
- » Get plenty of rest
- » Surround yourself with positive people
- » Avoid things that make you feel bad
- » Avoid spending sprees



Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

- » Avoid excessive use of alcohol or drugs (prescription and illegal)
- » Maintain a healthy diet
- » Exercise
- » Develop a support group
- » Set boundaries and say “no” when you need to
- » Get plenty of rest
- » Keep a sense of humor – laughter is a great stress reducer
- » Have a Life – Socialize, Sports, Church, Chaplain
- » Health & Fitness – Proper Diet and Exercise



When to Seek Help

- » In a few weeks, most families should be established in a new routine.
- » As symptoms begin to subside, you may have a burst of energy
- » If symptoms do not subside and if they interfere with your daily functioning, seek help from Military Community Services, a Chaplain or Behavioral Health Services



Summary

- » Using coping strategies can help reduce stress related to deployment
- » Prepare and plan ahead
- » Keep communication channels open
- » Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- » Seek help if stress symptoms persist and interfere with functioning



Questions





Resources

- » Military Community Services
- » Chaplain and Local Clergy
- » Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- » TRICARE www.tricare.osd.mil
- » Behavioral Health Services