

HOMECOMING AFTER LENGTHY MILITARY FAMILY SEPARATION

Reunion is a part of the deployment cycle and is filled with joy and stress. The following tips can help you have the best possible reunion.

TIPS FOR THOSE RETURNING:

- Support good things your family has done.
- Take time to talk to your spouse and family.
- Make time for individual children and your spouse.
- Go slow to re-establish your place in the family.
- Be prepared to make some adjustments.
- Romantic conversation can make re-entering love relations easier.
- Make savings last longer, manage your money.
- Take time to listen and talk to loved ones.
- Go easy on the parties.

TIPS FOR SPOUSES FOR REUNION:

- Avoid a busy schedule.
- Go slow to making adjustments
- You and your spouse may need time for yourself.
- Remind military spouse that they are still needed in the family.
- Discuss splitting up family chores.
- Stick to your budget until you have had time to talk it over.
- Along with time for the family, make individual time to talk.
- Patience is a key to re-building a relationship.

TIPS FOR REUNION WITH CHILDREN:

- Slowly adapt back to the old rules and routines.
- Be available to your child, with time and emotions.
- Let the child be first to re-new the bond.
- Expect some changes in your children while you've been away.
- Focus on the children's successes and limit all criticisms.
- Encourage your child to tell what all happened while you were away.

With separation comes change. Knowing what to expect and how to deal with changes can make reunion more enjoyable and less stressful. Below are some hints you might find helpful to you and your family for a happy homecoming.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THOSE RETURNING:

- You may want to spend time talking about your experiences, however some family members may not.
- Roles may have changed to manage basic chores and household taskings
- Face to face communication may be hard after a separation.
- Closeness may also be awkward at first.
- Children grow up during separations, they may seem different in some ways.
- Spouses sometimes become more independent, and need more space.
- You may have to change your outlook on priorities in the household.

EXPECTATIONS FOR SPOUSES:

- The returning spouse may have changed.
- He/she may feel closed-in on some days, needing space to re-new comfort.
- He/she may often feel overwhelmed by the everyday noise and confusion of home life.
- Allow the military member to get back to his/her own sleeping patterns.
- He/she often feels left out at first, needing time to adjust.
- He/she may feel hurt when small children are slow to hug and show emotions.

WHAT CHILDREN MAY FEEL:

- Babies less than 1 year may cry when being held.
- Toddlers may not know you at first and may hide.
- Preschoolers 3-5 years may be scared to see you because of the separation.
- School age 6-12 years may demand more of your time than other children
- Teen-agers may seem moody and may appear they don't care.
- Some children may be anxious to see you and fear your expectations of them.
- Children may be torn by loyalties to the spouse who remained.