



Emotional Cycle of Deployment

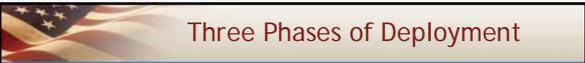
Presented by Military & Family Life Consultants




Emotional Cycle of Deployment

- » Stage 1: Anticipation of loss
- » Stage 2: Detachment and withdrawal
- » Stage 3: Emotional disorganization
- » Stage 4: Recovery and stabilization
- » Stage 5: Anticipation of homecoming
- » Stage 6: Renegotiation of marriage contract
- » Stage 7: Reintegration and stabilization

★ 2 ★



Three Phases of Deployment

- » Pre-deployment
- » Deployment
- » Reunion

★ 3 ★



Pre-Deployment Phase, Stage 1

Anticipation of loss

- » Occurs four to six weeks before deployment
- » Characteristics
 - Restlessness
 - Sadness
 - Irritability
 - Anger and resentment (spouse)
 - Guilt (military member)

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Pre-Deployment Phase, Stage 2

Detachment and withdrawal

- » Occurs during final days before departure
- » Characteristics
 - Despair / hopelessness
 - Decision making may become increasingly difficult
 - Ambivalence about sexual relations
 - Emotional distancing

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Deployment Phase, Stage 3

Emotional Disorganization

- » Occurs during first 6 weeks of deployment
- » Characteristics
 - Initial relief followed by guilt
 - Feel numb, aimless, without purpose
 - Depression and withdrawal from friends
 - Overwhelmed with responsibility
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Restless, angry, confused, disorganized, indecisive, irritable

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Deployment Phase, Stage 4

Recovery and stabilization

- » Variable duration between stages 3 and 5
- » Characteristics
 - Established new family patterns and settled into a routine
 - More comfortable with reorganization of roles and responsibilities
 - Cultivated new sources of support
 - Increased freedom and independence
 - Pride in ability to cope alone

★ 7 ★

Moving into Reunion Phase, Stage 5

Anticipation of homecoming

- » Occurs during last six weeks of deployment
- » Characteristics
 - Feelings of joy, excitement, apprehension
 - Reevaluation of marriage and effects of spouse's return on the life of self and kids
 - Restlessness, frantic activity to finish projects

★ 8 ★

Reunion Phase, Stage 5

Anticipation of homecoming

- » Characteristics continued
 - Confusion
 - Changes in appetite
 - Decisions may become harder to make
 - Irritability

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Reunion Phase, Stage 6

Renegotiation of the marriage contract

- » Occurs during six weeks after deployment
- » Characteristics
 - Physical togetherness, emotional distance
 - Loss of freedom and independence
 - Establish new routines
 - Renegotiation of assumptions and expectations of marriage
 - Adjustments in roles and responsibilities

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Reunion Phase, Stage 6

Communication is of utmost importance

Here are a few communication tips:

- » Be tentative rather than absolute (be open to what the other person has to say)
- » Inform instead of order
- » Don't assume that people can read your mind or know how you feel
- » Listen with your full attention or set up another time to talk
- » Practice communication of your thoughts and feelings. It will come easier with practice

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Reunion Phase, Stage 7

Reintegration and stabilization

- » Occurs six to twelve weeks after end of deployment
- » Characteristics
 - New routines have been established
 - Relaxed, comfortable feelings
 - Sense of being a couple and a family again
 - Back on track emotionally and able to enjoy warmth and closeness of being married

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Reunion/Re-Entry

- » Communicate
- » Approach each other as equals
- » Find out what new skills everyone has learned
- » Be patient
- » Arrange quiet time
- » Stay positive
- » Don't expect old problems to have gone away
- » Get help if you need it

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Summary

- » Pre-deployment phase is characterized by anticipation of loss
- » Deployment phase: relief that the waiting is over. Emotions can become intensified
- » During reunion, after initial readjustments to roles are made, the couple can begin to feel a sense of closeness again
- » Communication during reunion is essential

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Questions



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Resources

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

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