



# THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

# AGENDA

## Pre-Deployment

- Stage 1: Anticipation of loss
- Stage 2: Detachment and withdrawal
- Tips for managing pre-deployment

## Deployment

- Stage 3: Emotional disorganization
- Stage 4: Recovery and stabilization
- Tips for managing pre-deployment

## Reunion

- Stage 5: Anticipation of homecoming
- Stage 6: Renegotiation of marriage contract
- Stage 7: Reintegration and stabilization
- Tips for managing pre-deployment



# OBJECTIVES

## Participants will learn:

- The emotional phases of deployment
- Possible effects of the deployment phases
- Tips for managing the reunion



# THREE PHASES OF DEPLOYMENT

- Pre-Deployment
- Deployment
- Reunion



# Pre-Deployment

# PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 1

## Anticipation of Loss

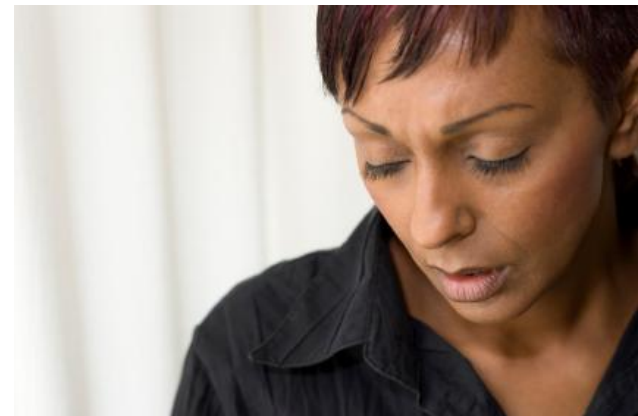
- Occurs four to six weeks before deployment
- Possible reactions
  - Restlessness
  - Sadness
  - Irritability
  - Anger and resentment (spouse)
  - Guilt (military member)



# PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 2

## Detachment and Withdrawal

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



# **Tips for Managing Pre-Deployment**

# PRE-DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Prepare for deployment now
- Prepare family members
- Communicate with your family



# HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

## Financial Matters

- Budget
- Allotments
- Bills
- Goals

## Legal Matters

- ID Card
- Power of Attorney
- Wills
- Family Care Plan



# HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

## Practical Matters

- Security
- Healthcare issues
- Household & vehicle
- Passport



## Personal Matters

- Spouses
- Children
- Other relatives and friends
- Loved ones



# STAYING IN TOUCH DURING DEPLOYMENT

- “Snail” Mail
- Tape Recordings
- Telephone Calls
- E-Mail
- Video



# Deployment

# DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 3

## Emotional Disorganization

- Occurs during first 6 weeks of deployment
- Possible reactions
  - Initial relief followed by guilt
  - Feeling numb or without purpose
  - Sadness and withdrawal from friends
  - Overwhelmed with responsibility
  - Difficulty sleeping
  - Restless, angry, confused, disorganized, indecisive, irritable



# DEPLOYMENT PHASE, STAGE 4

## Recovery and Stabilization

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



# **Tips for Managing Deployment**

# MANAGING DEPLOYMENT

- Develop a daily routine
- Send notes, emails, letters to your service member as often as possible
- Create care packages for your Service Member
- Volunteer
- Display your flag
- Seek support from family and friends
- Practice self-care



# TIPS FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

- Seek support from your battle buddies
- Avoid consuming too much alcohol
- Talk, send an email or write to your partner as often as possible
- Stay focused on the mission and reuniting with your partner and family after deployment



# SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SPOUSE

## Use Good Judgment

- Other than family, friends and colleagues, don't tell people your spouse is gone
- When someone calls asking for your spouse – never tell them your spouse isn't home
- Don't discuss their absence in public, even with friends
- Don't give social security numbers to persons over the phone unless you are requesting a service or information that requires it



# PRACTICE SELF-CARE

- Get plenty of rest
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Practice relaxation
- Laugh
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine
- Minimize the amount of news you watch or read
- Listen to soothing music



# Reunion

# MOVING INTO REUNION PHASE, STAGE 5

## Anticipation of Homecoming

- Occurs during the last six weeks of deployment
- Possible reactions
  - Feelings of joy, excitement, apprehension
  - Reevaluation of marriage and the effects on the family
  - Restlessness, frantic activity to finish projects



# REUNION PHASE, STAGE 5 CONTINUED

## Anticipation of Homecoming

- Possible reactions
  - Confusion
  - Changes in appetite
  - Decisions may become harder to make
  - Irritability



# REUNION PHASE, STAGE 6

## Renegotiation of the Marriage Contract

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



# REUNION PHASE, STAGE 7

## Reintegration and Stabilization

- Occurs six to twelve weeks after the 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



# **Tips for Managing Reunion**

# MANAGING REUNION

- Communicate openly
- Go slow and be patient
- Make time for yourself and allow others free time as well
- Stay positive
- Reconnect with your social network
- Don't expect old problems to have gone away



# MANAGING REUNION

CONTINUED

- Curb your desire to take control
- Accept that things may be different
- Take time to become reacquainted
- Remember that intimate relationships may be awkward at first



# REUNION PHASE, STAGE 6

## Communication is of utmost importance

### Here are a few communication tips:

- 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 become easier with practice



# WHEN TO SEEK HELP

- If the stress of the deployment cycle is interfering with your ability to function in daily life, and coping methods are not working, don't be afraid to seek help from a Chaplain, Military Community Services or Behavioral Health Service



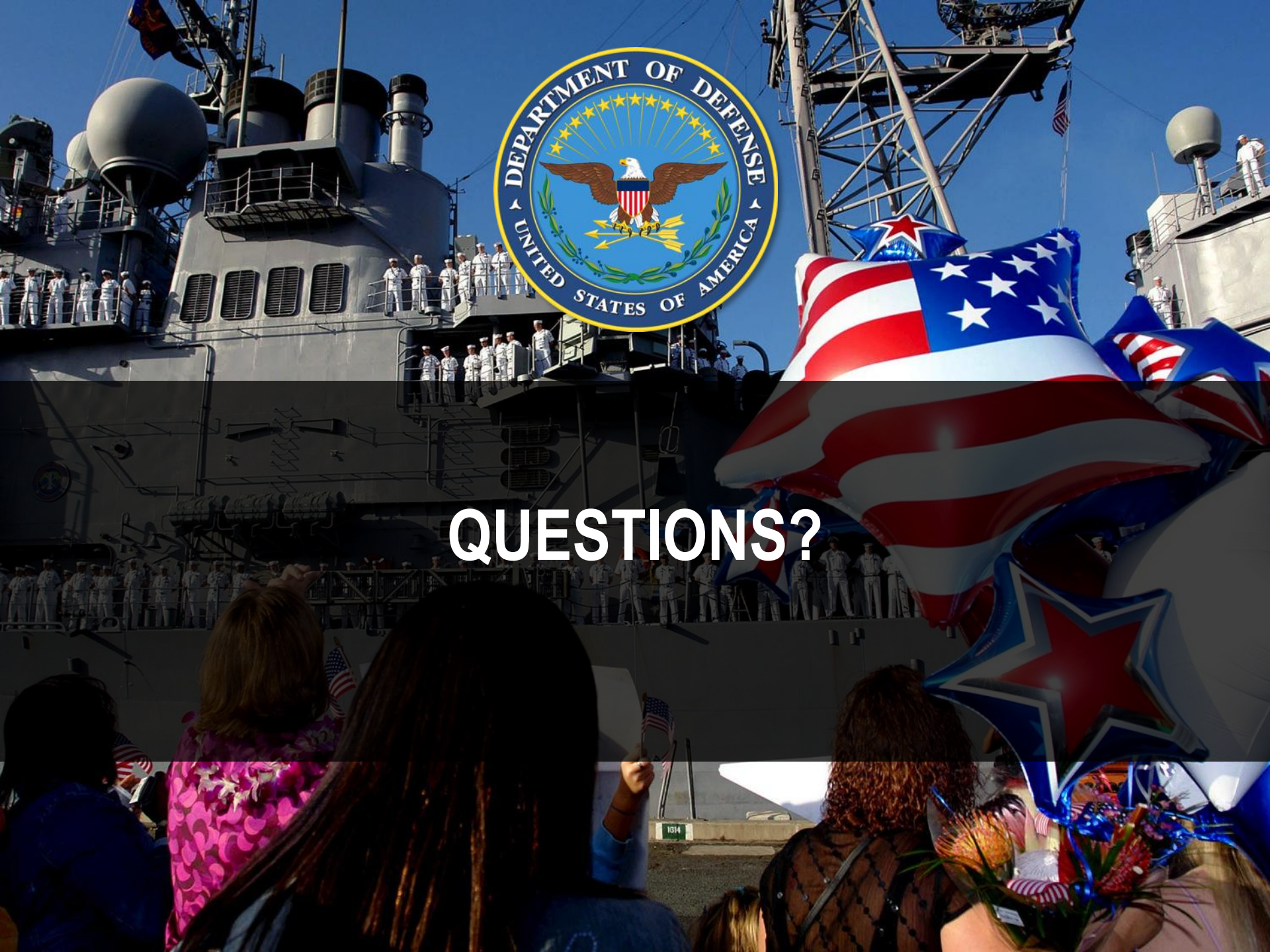
# SUMMARY

- 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





QUESTIONS?



# RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
  - i.e. Family Services, legal assistance (for power of attorney assistance) installation home web site, PFC/PFM for budgeting assistance, child/youth services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services



# REFERENCES

- *Coping with Deployment*,  
[http://marriage.about.com/cs/militarymarriages/a/deployment\\_2.htm](http://marriage.about.com/cs/militarymarriages/a/deployment_2.htm)
- *Guide to Coping with Deployment and Combat Stress*,  
[http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/Coping\\_withDeployment\\_CombatStress%20\\_03\\_08.pdf](http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/Coping_withDeployment_CombatStress%20_03_08.pdf)
- *Preparing Your Marriage for a Military Deployment*,  
[www.TwoOfUs.org](http://www.TwoOfUs.org)





**THANK YOU**

