



# DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK



## The Deployment Cycle



For service members and their families, deployments encompass more than the time spent at sea or in a foreign country. There is a cycle that begins long before the ship or unit departs, and it continues beyond homecoming. For the different warfare communities — aviation, submarine, surface, expeditionary and special forces — the cycle may be different, but the overall process is the same. The deployment cycle consists of four phases: pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment and reintegration. You never return to the same pre-deployment phase; you move forward. You learn, grow and change through your deployment experiences, making you more resilient and ready for the next deployment.

### Pre-Deployment Phase

Before deployment, commands and units go through additional training to prepare for their upcoming missions. There is an increased operations tempo (OPTEMPO) as equipment is tested and training intensifies. Service members may be gone for days or weeks at a time, returning home for brief periods before leaving again to continue training. This period, sometimes referred to as “work-ups,” can be stressful due to the uncertainty of the schedule. For families, this is the time to begin preparing for the longer separation of deployment.

### Deployment Phase

The deployment phase begins with the departure of the ship or unit. Facing the extended separation can result in stress for both service members and their families. For service members, once the ship or unit has deployed, it becomes a time to focus on the mission at hand. For families, it is a time to adjust to the absence of their loved ones and develop a new “normal” for the duration of the deployment.

### Post-Deployment Phase

Once the ship or unit has returned, there is a brief respite before a return to normal duties. Service members may be able to take leave during this time, but it is important to remember that leave is determined by the needs of the command. There may also be opportunities for service members to attend training, as needed.

### Reintegration Phase

The final phase of the deployment cycle. During this time, service members adjust to being home with loved ones and return to their customary routines and activities. This time can be stressful for service members and family members as everyone adjusts to being together again. If you are feeling stressed or anxious, help for dealing with the stress of reintegration is available through your local Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC).



## Individual Augmentee (IA) Deployments



In an *IA deployment*, a service member receives orders to deploy individually or with a small group to augment a different unit or branch of service. This is different from deploying with a ship, a squadron or an entire unit. An IA can be active duty or Reserve, volunteer or be selected for deployment. Special training is required for IAs before their deployment, so they may be away from home for an extended period of time.

**IA deployments** may have shorter notification periods, and service members may only receive minimal information about the deployment. More information on the IA program can be found on each military branch's website:

- [Navy IA Sailor](#)
- [Navy Expeditionary Combat Command \(NECC\)](#)
- [Individual Mobilization Augmentee \(IMA\) Program, Army Human Resources Command](#)
- [IMA Program, Marine Corps](#)
- [Air Force Reserve Command \(AFRC\)](#)

Returning Warrior Workshop (RWW): RWW is available to returning IAs to help with issues they may face during reintegration.

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program: This program connects National Guard and Reserve members and their families with resources through all stages of the deployment cycle.

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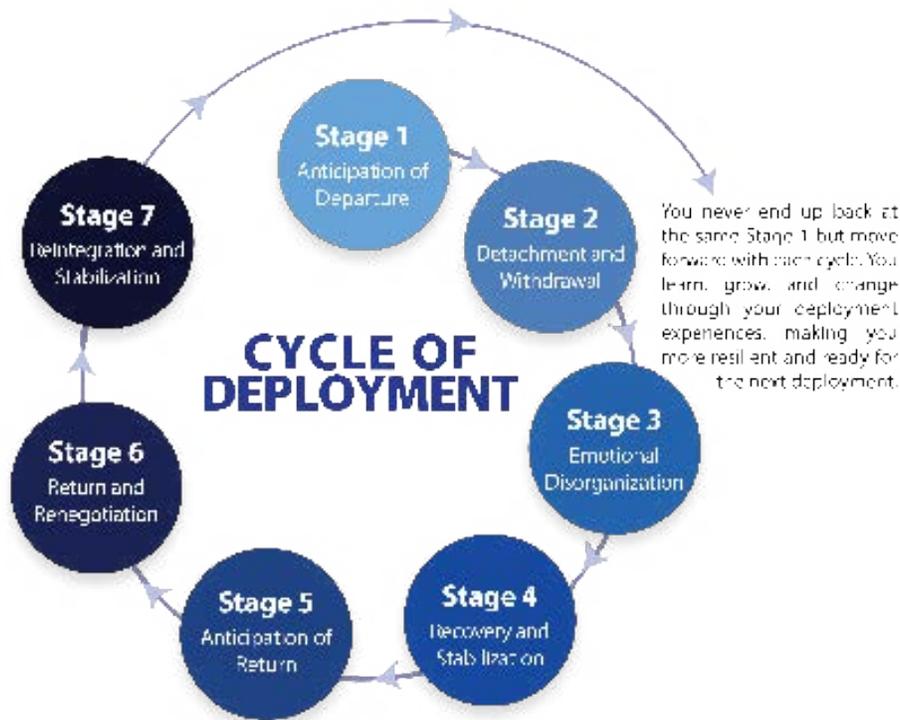
**NOTE:** *Forward-deployed ships include those homeported at overseas installations including Japan, Guam and Spain. These ships may experience higher (OPTEMPO); they may be deployed more frequently than stateside ships.*

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## Emotional Cycle of Deployment

The emotional cycle of deployment describes the emotional and behavioral changes that may occur during a deployment. Understanding this cycle and the common emotions for each stage can help service members and their families adjust to the changes they will experience during deployment. These stages will be discussed in greater detail throughout this handbook.

# Emotional Cycle of Deployment



## **Stage 1:** Anticipation of Departure

Before deploying, service members may be working extra hours to prepare for departure. The time apart, added to the stress of longer working hours, can result in tension at home.

## **Stage 2:** Detachment and Withdrawal

This second stage usually takes place during the last week before deployment. This is a period of heightened anxiety and conflicting emotions.

## **Stage 3:** Emotional Disorganization

During this stage, family members must adjust to the changes at home. They create new routines as they assume new responsibilities.

## **Stage 4:** Recovery and Stabilization

The recovery and stabilization stage occurs when spouses settle into their new routines and realize that they can manage the family affairs. For spouses, a strong support network can reduce their stress level and increase their resiliency.

## **Stage 5:** Anticipation of Return

The anticipation of homecoming may be tinged with anxiety as spouses consider their changing roles when their service members return home. Open communication about expectations for homecoming can help alleviate these concerns.

## **Stage 6:** Return and Renegotiation

After the initial excitement of homecoming has passed, there is a period of adjustment to new roles and routines. Tension and arguments may increase as everyone redefines their roles and responsibilities. Communication is essential to successful reintegration.

## **Stage 7:** Reintegration and Stabilization

During this final stage, life will normalize. It may take a few months, but everyone will adjust to the changes. Communication is the key to successfully dealing with these challenges.

**TIP:** Remember that these emotions are normal. Be sure to take the time to talk with your loved ones about the emotions you are experiencing so that you can work through them together. If, at any stage, emotions escalate or become unmanageable, you can take advantage of the free, confidential counseling services available through the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), Military OneSource, or any military installation's Family Support Center.



Preparation is key to a successful deployment. This checklist includes important tasks to complete before deployment.

Date	Tasks	Resource
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ID cards:</b> Ensure that everyone in your family has a current ID card so they can gain access to military facilities and receive military benefits.	DEERS database <a href="https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/">MilConnect https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Power of attorney:</b> Allows you to act on a service member's behalf during their absence.	Region Legal Service Office <a href="https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/legal_services_locator_dso.htm">Legal services locator https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/legal_services_locator_dso.htm</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service member's full deployment address:</b> Communication varies based on the deployment location, but regular mail is usually accessible to everyone. Be sure you know how to contact the service member in case of emergency.	Service member
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS):</b> Maintains your family information, ensures all family members are accounted for and assesses your needs, especially in an emergency. Remind your service member to ensure the information is up-to-date.	NFAAS website <a href="https://navyfamily.navy.mil">https://navyfamily.navy.mil</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beneficiary information (Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance):</b> Make sure your service member's beneficiary information is accurate, especially if there has been a change in your family.	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp">www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Command ombudsman:</b> The ombudsman is a military spouse appointed by the CO to serve as a liaison between the command and family members. Ombudsmen are a great first stop for information. If you move or leave the area for an extended period of time, provide your ombudsman with your current contact information.	Ombudsman locator <a href="https://www.ombudsmanregistry.org/?m=contactombudsmanorg/?m=contactombudsman">https://www.ombudsmanregistry.org/?m=contactombudsmanorg/?m=contactombudsman</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Page 2 (Record of Emergency Data):</b> Service members must ensure that the contact information for their primary and secondary next of kin is up to date. The person listed will be contacted in an emergency.	Service member
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Spending plan:</b> There are many pay changes that occur before, during and after one deploys. Creating or updating your spending plan will help you manage these changes so that you stay on track with your financial goals.	FFSC financial counselor <a href="https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/FFSC.html">FFSC locator https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/FFSC.html</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Will:</b> A legal document that outlines the wishes of a person upon their death, including what they want to happen to their property and other assets. If you have children, it is important to include who you and your partner want to care for your child(ren) should something happen to you both.	Region Legal Service Office <a href="https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/legal_services_locator_dso.htm">Legal services locator https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/legal_services_locator_dso.htm</a>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Support system:</b> The person(s) you will turn to when you need help during the deployment. The go-to person for family members may be a relative, best friend, the ombudsman or a support group like the Family Readiness Group (FRG).	Relatives, friends, ombudsman, FRG



In addition to the practical steps listed above, the following suggestions can help you successfully navigate the challenges of deployment:

1. **Communicate.** Regular, honest, open communication with a variety of people is the norm for successful deployers and their families.
2. **Ask for help.** Successful deployers and their families are aware of the vast resources available to military families and do not hesitate to ask for help when they need it.
3. **Manage stress.** Stress is unavoidable. Successful service members and their families manage stress. They generally eat a balanced diet, exercise, avoid excessive alcohol and drugs and have some type of spirituality or belief system. For practical stress-reduction tips, see the Stress Reduction, Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention section of this handbook. If stress becomes too much during deployment, leverage resources such as your deployed resiliency counselor (DRC), FFSC counselors, Military OneSource or medical professionals.
4. **Prepare.** Successful Navy families prepare for deployments. They ensure ID cards do not expire, update their Record of Emergency Data (Page 2), life insurance, wills and powers of attorney.
5. **Have a positive attitude.** You may not have control of many things in your life, but you do have control of your attitude. Successful service members and their families are optimistic that they can cope with deployment. While they allow themselves to worry or occasionally experience self-doubt, they usually give themselves positive internal self-talk and maintain a “can do” attitude.
6. **Set goals.** Successful service members and their families have long-term goals and set goals to accomplish during deployment: increase job proficiency, go back to school, save money, lose weight, read more, get in shape.
7. **Have fun.** Successful military families do not put life on hold during a deployment. They make time for fun and do things they enjoy. They also celebrate personal successes as well as successes of friends and family.
8. **Get involved.** Successful service members and their families participate in family readiness groups, community groups, sports, volunteer at events, attend classes and stay busy. They often focus on helping others as a way to deal with deployment loneliness.
9. **Form friendships.** Successful people initiate friendships and do not wait for someone to approach them. They reach out to others in need and, therefore, others reach out to them when needed.
10. **Trust.** Successful service members and their families rely on others to do the right thing. They are not naïve but believe in others.
11. **Stay in touch.** Service members should make every effort to maintain communications with loved ones. Frequent contact with family members helps service members feel connected to home, whether that contact comes via letters, email or phone, when available.



## Pre-Deployment Phase



This section is intended to help you prepare for deployment and to serve as a resource during a deployment. The material is presented in seven sections: Document Preparation, Financial Preparation, Health Care Preparation, Housing Preparation, Family Preparation, Top 10 Resources for Military Families and Pre-Deployment Checklists for single service members, couples and single parents.

### Document Preparation

Document preparation includes paperwork you need to complete before deployment, including administrative, legal, financial and health care. As you prepare and review these files, check for expiration dates or events that may occur during deployment.

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**TIP:** Be sure to put all important documents in a safe place, such as a fireproof safe at home or a safety deposit box at your bank.

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#### Administrative Documents

**Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS):** DEERS is the database that lists all service members and family members who are eligible for military benefits, including TRICARE. Before deploying, check your DEERS information to be sure that all eligible family members are properly enrolled. You can verify and update personal information through the DEERS website at [MilConnect](#).

**Record of Emergency Data (Page Two):** Make sure your Page Two has the current contact information for your primary and secondary next of kin. The person you list will be contacted in case of an emergency. Family members who move or leave the area for an extended period of time should always provide their ombudsman with their current contact information.

**Uniformed Services Identification Card:** You must be enrolled in DEERS before you can receive a military ID card. Family members must go to an ID card facility to get their ID cards, because photos are required. Children do not need an ID card until they are 10 years old, but they must be registered in DEERS. You can find the nearest ID card facility through the [RAPIDS Site Locator](#).

**Passports:** Family members who do not have passports may want to apply for one before the service member deploys. Information about passports can be found on the [Department of Defense Military and Civilian Passport Matters](#) and [Department of State](#) websites.



## Legal Documents

As part of your preparation for deployment, you should review your legal documents and update them before departure. The military's Legal Service Offices can help you prepare or update documents at no cost. You can find the nearest Legal Service Office through the Armed Forces Legal Assistance (AFLA) [Legal Services Locator](#). Additionally, the American Bar Association (ABA) offers assistance for military families through [ABA Home Front](#).

**Power of Attorney (POA).** A power of attorney is a document that gives one person the authority to act on another's behalf for legal or financial issues for a specific time period. For service members, this is typically the length of the deployment.

**General Power of Attorney.** A general power of attorney gives broad authorizations to a specified person. The agent is allowed to act on your behalf in medical, legal or financial matters.

**Specific/Limited Power of Attorney.** A specific/limited power of attorney allows you to give only specific powers to the designated person for a specified period of time.

**Living Will.** A living will is a written document that allows you to determine what medical treatment you do or do not want in the event of a serious injury or terminal illness. A living will only goes into effect if you cannot express your wishes.

**Last Will and Testament.** A will states how you want your property to be disposed of after your death. Service members are strongly encouraged to make a will. Without a will, a court may decide how to distribute your property or designate who should be responsible for the care of your children.

## Financial Preparation



Before deploying, you should make it a priority to organize your financial matters. Couples should discuss their finances to ensure that everyone is working toward the same financial goals.

**Spending Plan.** What are your financial goals? A spending plan can help you achieve your financial goals by managing the money that comes into and goes out of your pocket. Ask yourself how much money your household needs for the length of your deployment. In-

clude basic expenses, such as rent/mortgage, utilities, groceries, insurance and child care. Prioritize expenses to see whether there are any items that can be reduced or eliminated during deployment.

Make the time to organize your accounts. Decide whether to maintain a joint account or separate accounts to manage your finances during deployment.

Check with your partner before making major purchases. Deployment can make communicating with each other on financial matters a challenge. If you anticipate a major purchase during the deployment (e.g., appliance, car), plan the purchase ahead of time and set a price limit.



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**TIP:** For assistance creating a spending plan, speak with your Command Financial Specialist(CFS) or the personal financial management staff at the FFSC.

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**Bill Paying.** How will bills be paid during deployment? Will a spouse, partner or other family member be handling the family finances? Be sure to review payment due dates and provide all necessary account information.

**Allotments.** Allotments can help you manage your money. Allotments allow service members to pay bills or deposit a set amount of money into a different bank account each month. For information about setting up allotments, go to [DFAS Allotments](#).

**Savings Deposit Program.** Deployed service members may be eligible to participate in the Savings Deposit Program (SDP). The program is available to service members during deployments to specific locations. Additional information on the SDP can be found on the DFAS website at [DoD Savings Deposit Program](#).

**Taxes.** If income taxes are due during the deployment, how do you want to have your tax return completed? Tax assistance may be available, particularly on larger ships. If the spouse at home plans to file a joint return during the deployment, the service member needs to complete and sign IRS Form 2848, *Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative*, and leave it with the spouse preparing the return.

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**TIP:** Active-duty members may be eligible to file their federal income taxes for free electronically. [Military OneSource](#) offers free tax preparation assistance. You should also check with your state's tax department to determine whether they also offer free electronic filing of income tax returns for the military.

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**Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).** The SCRA provides financial protections for active-duty service members and members of the Reserve and National Guard on active-duty status. Protections under SCRA generally begin on the first day of active duty and may extend for 30 to 180 days after release from active duty. Under SCRA, you can limit to 6% the interest rate for all financial obligations (including mortgages) that you incurred before beginning active duty. This protection does not apply to debts you entered into while on active duty, to federally guaranteed student loans and to some other types of financial obligations.

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**TIP:** For more information about preparing financially for deployment, talk with your CFS or the Personal Financial Manager at your installation FFSC. Download the MyNavy Financial Literacy App for education via financial readiness touchpoint courses (including pre- and post-deployment touchpoints), and a collection of in-app and online resources. Visit <https://www.app-locker.navy.mil/#/apps> to learn more and download the app.

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**Emergency Financial Assistance:** In the event of a financial emergency, family members may need to seek assistance from a military relief organization, such as the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. Before deploying, service members should preauthorize their families to receive financial assistance if the need arises. If family members are not preauthorized to receive assistance, the service member's permission will be required for the relief organization to be able to help family members.

*More information on preauthorization can be found through these relief organizations:*

- [Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society \(NMCRS\)](#)
- [Army Emergency Relief \(AER\)](#)
- [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance \(CGMA\)](#)
- [Air Force Aid Society \(AFAS\)](#)



**VFW Unmet Needs.** [Unmet Needs](#) helps service members who run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity. The program provides financial aid of up to \$1,500 for basic life needs in the form of a grant. This is not a loan, so no repayment is required.

## Health Care Preparation



Family members of active-duty personnel are entitled to health care insurance through TRICARE. Family members of Reservists who are mobilized or deployed for periods longer than 30 days also become eligible for TRICARE services.

You should check the enrollment of your family members to ensure that they will be covered during the deployment on [TRICARE's Beneficiary Web Enrollment](#).

TRICARE offers health and dental insurance options to meet the needs of military families. To learn about the different plans, go to:

- [TRICARE Health Plans](#)
- [TRICARE Dental Plans](#)

## Housing Preparation



One of the decisions you must make before deployment is where your family will live while the service member is away. When a service member receives orders to deploy, a common reaction is to move back home to be near family and friends. There are advantages to moving to familiar surroundings, but there are also benefits to staying in your military community. Before you make a decision, you should carefully evaluate what is best for your family.

Some things to consider:

- Ties to your current community.
- Your children. If your children are in school or involved in sports or other activities, moving can be disruptive.
- Finances.
- Housing situation.

## Family Preparation



Preparing your family for deployment can help them successfully navigate the challenges they will face. Understanding what to expect and making a plan for the time apart will reduce stress and increase the resiliency of all family members.

As part of your pre-deployment preparation, you should become familiar with the many programs and services available to help spouses and other family members manage the challenges of deployment. These include:

- [FFSCs](#)
- [Family Readiness Groups \(FRGs\)](#)
- [Military OneSource](#)
- [Command Ombudsman](#)



**NOTE:** A list of military and community programs and services is included in the appendix.

During this preparation period, service members and families will experience the first two stages of the emotional cycle of deployment. Common feelings during these two stages include:

**Anticipation of Departure**

Spouses may alternately feel denial and anticipation of loss. Arguments and bickering are common. This can be a useful way for a couple to distance themselves emotionally in preparation for the separation.

Family	Service Member
<p><b>Physically drained</b>  <b>Emotionally numb or tired</b>  <b>Mentally separating</b>  <b>Anger, resentment</b>  <b>Denial</b></p>	<p><b>Physically drained</b>  <b>Emotionally numb or tired</b>  <b>Mentally separating</b>  <b>Guilt</b></p>

**Detachment and Withdrawal**

Sadness and anger occur as couples attempt to protect themselves from the hurt of separation. Although physically together, they may have separated emotionally. Often the non-deploying spouses think, “If you have to go, go.” And service members think, “Let’s get on with it!”

Family	Service Member
<p><b>Overwhelmed or tired</b>  <b>Hurt, rejection</b>  <b>Sad or lonely</b>  <b>Nervous about responsibilities</b>  <b>Worried</b></p>	<p><b>Ready to get started</b>  <b>Guilt for leaving</b>  <b>Sad or lonely</b>  <b>Excited to perform</b>  <b>Worried</b></p>

**Developing Personal Coping Strategies.** Before deployment begins, make time to identify personal strategies and outline your plans for managing self-care, care for others, communication and support. If you are not sure where to begin, consider the questions below and identify resources to reinforce your plans.

- **Self-care:** How will you take care of yourself when you begin to experience negative feelings associated with deployment?
- **Care for others:** How will you show care and concern for others, such as children, a partner or a shipmate, when they are hurting?
- **Communication:** How will you communicate with your partner, children, family members or friends about emotions you or they are feeling?
- **Support:** How will you know when it is time to get extra help from your support system?



Contact your FFSC for help with identifying strategies and developing plans to thrive during deployment.

**Preparing Spouse, Partners and Caregivers for Deployment.** Service members and their families should discuss their expectations and concerns before departure in order to alleviate fears and reduce uncertainty. Experienced military family members say that communication during this time is critical to their ability to successfully cope with deployment. During deployments, spouses and family members assume many of the responsibilities normally handled by the service member.

## **Seven Keys to Positive Communication**

### **1. Make time to talk.**

Life can get hectic, especially as a deployment approaches. Prioritize making opportunities to talk at stress-free times. If there are challenging topics to address, take breaks and tackle one difficult subject at a time.

### **2. Be an active listener.**

It is so important not just to hear but to actually listen. Rather than formulating a response and waiting for your chance to share it, give your full attention to your partner. Be courteous and minimize interruptions by turning off the television and putting the phone or computer away. Paraphrase your understanding of your partner's comments and ask questions to clarify and ensure you're on the same page.

### **3. Be mindful of body language.**

Keep an open posture and make eye contact. Keep in mind that nonverbal communication speaks volumes and should support what's being said. If body language contradicts the information that's being communicated, the receiver of the message may feel as though their partner is being dishonest.

### **4. Keep your sense of humor.**

You are partners for a reason. Although tough topics will inevitably arise, humor can melt away some of the tension and help you connect through stressful times.

### **5. Use "I" statements.**

Use neutral statements to express your thoughts and feelings, such as "I feel ..." or "I'm concerned that ...". Be specific when communicating and focus on building solutions together rather than placing blame.

### **6. Maintain an open heart and mind.**

Be honest and share your feelings openly. Intentional communication can be tough, especially if something prompts a defensive reaction. This may be easier said than done, but don't make assumptions and resolve to set aside judgment.

### **7. Give praise.**

Open and honest communication requires thoughtful effort, and it helps if you both focus on what you can give rather than take. Everyone likes to feel appreciated and valued. Be emotionally generous by openly appreciating your partner's perspectives and offering support and encouragement.



# Additional Resources

There are many free resources accessible to military families that may be beneficial to you as a couple when preparing for, living through and completing a deployment cycle. A snapshot of these resources is below. Contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) for more information and individualized assistance.

## Fleet and Family Support Center

Your FFSC offers programs and services to support your personal and professional well-being. Contact the FFSC to learn more about consultations and classes that are available at your local site.

## Navy Chaplains

Navy chaplains are a confidential resource. They are available to work with individual couples and, depending on the installation, they host marriage retreats. Contact your local chapel for more information on which resources they have available to support you in strengthening your relationship!

## Military OneSource

Military OneSource provides free resources such as the “Love Every Day” app, which helps to foster effective relationship communication and kindle your romance. They also have the “Re the We” page, which includes free articles, tools and resources to rekindle, repair or reset your relationship. Additionally, there is a coaching package available called “Building Healthy Relationships with Your Significant Other” that focuses on providing guidance on common issues faced by military couples and tools to support strong relationships. It is available to you via phone or video.

- ▶ Love Every Day: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/resilience-tools/relationship-tool-helps-you-love-every-day/>
- ▶ Re the We: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support/>
- ▶ Building Healthy Relationships: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/specialty-consultations/building-healthy-relationships/building-healthy-relationships/>

## Miscellaneous Resources

Write any additional resources you find out about here:

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**Preparing Parents for Deployment.** Before deploying, discuss a plan for communicating with your parents and make sure they know the following:

- The correct address for sending letters and care packages.
- The service member's email address, if email is available during the deployment.
- How to communicate with the command in the event of an emergency.

Consider giving parents the contact information for the ship or unit and make sure they know how to request and receive information. Parents may want to join the command's FRG in order to receive updates about events and the schedule for homecoming. If your command has a newsletter or website that provides information during deployment, you may want to add parents to the access list for these resources.

**Preparing your children for deployment.** Children may need help coping with the stress of an upcoming deployment. Reassure them that they will be cared for while Mom or Dad is away. Encourage them to ask any questions they might have. They may not be able to talk about how they are feeling because they may not be sure of their own emotions. Typical responses include:

- Shock, denial, anger or fear.
- Sadness that you are leaving.
- Feelings of isolation.
- Moodiness, whining and irritability.
- Testing limits.
- Angry outbursts, possibly followed by clinginess.
- Acting out at home or school.
- Reverting to previously outgrown behaviors.

When these feelings or behaviors arise, remind yourself that they are normal responses to a deployment. Listen to and talk with your child. Describe your deployment. Take your child on a tour of your ship or to meet your unit. Allow them to see where you will be living and working while you are away. Let them know that you also wish you did not have to leave. If your children say they are afraid you will not come back, talk about all of the training and practice you have had and how that will keep you safe.

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**NOTE:** If your child is struggling, do not hesitate to contact your child's school counselor, the school liaison officer, the FFSC, a chaplain or Military OneSource for assistance.

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### Deploying as a single parent.

While your deployment experience will be unique, you are not alone. With some advance planning and preparation, you can have a smooth deployment while maintaining care for and connection with your child. There are four main areas to attend to as you prepare for the practical aspects of your departure:

- Identify a caregiver for your child(ren).
- Complete a [Family Care Plan](#)
- Plan logistics by using the *Single Parent Deployment Readiness Checklist* on Page 23.
- Inform your designated caregiver about the support resources available while you are away and encourage them to access [the Navy Family eHandbook](#) for more information about deployment support and caring for Navy dependents.

Beyond the practical aspects, you may be curious about how your upcoming separation will influence your feeling and those of your child's. Here are four emotional aspects for single deploying parents to consider:

- **Concerns:** You may be worried your child will forget you or be upset with you, or you may feel sad about missing key milestones in their lives. In addition to worry or sadness, separation can bring about a whole host of emotions, including guilt. These emotions are normal as you prepare for and adjust to being apart.
- **Challenges:** It may be inopportune timing when deployment occurs during a more difficult time in your child's life. For example, there may be times your child is struggling through their growth and development. For younger children, this may be a stage such as potty training. Alternatively, a teenager may be in a rebellious stage as their caregiver attempts to provide appropriate discipline and structure. Trials such as these may leave you feeling conflicted and unable to help. To cope, prioritize caring for yourself and establishing a support network while on deployment to have a sounding board for sharing challenges.
- **Reality:** With emotions running high, it is easy to imagine the worst-case scenario. Regardless of your situation, it is essential to trust that your chosen caregiver will be providing the best care and support possible. You have a mission to carry out, and your child's caregiver has a mission to ensure their well-being in your absence. Your child can thrive while you are away, and they may commemorate growth and milestones with the support of their caregiver. Rest assured that you can celebrate together when you return. In the meantime, ask the caregiver to pass along updates, including photos or videos when possible. Before you deploy, tell your child(ren) that their caregiver will share details about their important milestones. Use the updates by commenting on key details to enrich caring connection with your child(ren) while apart.
- **Positive outlook:** Mindset matters. At the end of the day, your child wants what is best for you. You may miss out on some milestones and events, but in the long run, your child(ren) will cherish making new memories with you when you return. Try to think of the deployment as a positive time of growth for you and your child. Stay connected through whichever means are available to you (i.e., mail, email, video conferencing, etc.) and communicate love and support as often and regularly as possible. Your child will remember the love and support you shared long after your separation has ended.

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**NOTE:** Before deployment, connect with a counselor at the FFSC or via Military OneSource. During deployment, connect with your chaplain or a DRC, if available. Speaking with an experienced counselor may help you work through the emotional aspects of separation and strengthen your resilience to focus on the mission at hand. Write any additional resources you find out about here:

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# Ages & Stages

Age	Emotions	How Parents/Caregivers Can Help
<b>Infant to 2 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restlessness</li> <li>● Irritation</li> <li>● Fear and/or confusion</li> <li>● Anxiousness</li> <li>● Frustration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be patient.</li> <li>● Hold your baby more often.</li> <li>● Maintain a routine.</li> <li>● Record the deploying parent singing, talking and/or reading, because it will keep the parent's voice familiar.</li> </ul>
<b>3 to 5 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Confusion</li> <li>● Irritation</li> <li>● Surprised</li> <li>● Neglected — less attention from deployed parent</li> <li>● Guilt — blaming self for causing their parent to leave</li> <li>● Fear — the deployed parent will never return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide plenty of positive interactions with your child when they seek attention through requests to play together, wanting to show you something they learned or seeking physical contact.</li> <li>● Learn to ignore attention-getting behaviors, such as whining, back talk, defiance or tantrums, and be sure to give plenty of attention as soon as the attention-getting behavior stops.</li> <li>● Be careful not to excuse unacceptable behaviors that are not normally tolerated.</li> <li>● Keep the rules and routine consistent.</li> <li>● Make more time for hugs and cuddles.</li> <li>● Talk about why the deployed parent has to go away.</li> <li>● Talk about things that keep everyone safe. Be careful not to say, "Nothing bad will happen," because you cannot guarantee that. Be sure not to promise something you cannot predict or have no control over.</li> </ul>
<b>6 to 12 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sadness</li> <li>● Anger</li> <li>● Separation anxiety</li> <li>● Guilt</li> <li>● Loneliness</li> <li>● Worry or fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be a good role model by demonstrating good coping techniques and expressing your own feelings.</li> <li>● Talk with your child's teachers about the deployment. Let them know when it will begin and end, and discuss behavioral and academic concerns.</li> <li>● Help your child express their feelings creatively through art or writing.</li> <li>● Discover their interests; know their friends and invite them over to your house.</li> <li>● Provide additional adult relationships (aunts/uncles, coaches, friends or teachers).</li> </ul>
<b>13 to 18 years old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sadness</li> <li>● Fear of parent's rejection</li> <li>● Anger or resentment</li> <li>● Worry</li> <li>● Denial about their own feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch for signs of depression (rapid weight loss or gain, changes in sleep patterns, interests, energy level and ability to concentrate).</li> <li>● Work on building mutual respect.</li> <li>● Be involved in their life, but do not encourage dependence.</li> <li>● Allow your teens to make more of their own decisions.</li> <li>● Choose battles carefully. Try not to criticize music, friends, hairstyle and clothing.</li> <li>● Establish clear limits on things like dating and curfews.</li> <li>● Remember that they are still children and need guidance and support from you.</li> <li>● Have your own adult support system and do not rely on your children for support.</li> <li>● Provide additional adult relationships with aunts/uncles, coaches, friends or teachers.</li> <li>● Keep communication open. Teenagers will frequently open up while driving or doing chores.</li> <li>● Listen more often than you talk.</li> </ul>



*"Children will listen to you after they feel listened to."  
– Jane Nelsen*

Here are some tips for having productive, two-way communication with your children.

## How to Listen

- ▶ Give full attention.
- ▶ Make eye contact.
- ▶ Get on child's level.
- ▶ Label emotions.
- ▶ Ask questions.
- ▶ Paraphrase and summarize.

## How to Speak

- ▶ Use your child's name.
- ▶ Use positive language.
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions.
- ▶ Be gentle but firm.
- ▶ Pick the right time to have meaningful conversations.

## Speaker/Listener Technique

- ▶ The speaker has the floor.
- ▶ The speaker keeps the floor while the listener paraphrases.
- ▶ Speak in small chunks.
- ▶ Focus on understanding perspectives (no problem solving).
- ▶ Share the floor.
- ▶ If you can't peacefully talk, both parties need to take a timeout or a break, then come back together and try again.





# Single Sailor Deployment Readiness Checklist

Preparing for deployment requires a lot of advance planning. The following checklists can help single Sailors, couples and single parents prepare:

✓	<b>Do you know where each of the following documents is located?</b>
	Birth certificate
	Divorce decree(s)
	Death certificate(s)
	Medical records
	Dental records
	Veterinarian records for each pet
	Up-to-date passports/visas/REAL ID
	Insurance policies (i.e., life, health, home, vehicle, flood, others)
	Real estate documents (i.e., lease, deed, first and second mortgages)
	Vehicle title, registration and inspection
	Most recent Leave and Earnings Statement (LES)
	Current address and phone number of immediate family members
✓	<b>Legal Documents</b>
	Do you have/need a will?
	Is your Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) current?
	Is the amount and beneficiary information current for the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)?
	Will a general or specific power of attorney be needed to manage your affairs in your absence?
	Will your ID card expire during deployment?
✓	<b>Financial Planning</b>
	Do you have a written monthly spending plan?
	Does your budget include money for port visits, phone calls, gifts/souvenirs?
	Does your budget include additional funds for sea pay and other special pay (i.e., flight, submarine, combat duty, etc.)?
	Will there be a promotion during deployment?
	Will a reenlistment bonus be received during deployment?



	Do you have access to myPay?
	Are you enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)?
	Have you established a financial goal(s) for this deployment, such as paying off a vehicle, increasing savings, saving money to purchase a new vehicle, etc.?
✓	<b>Banking</b>
	Is pay distribution set up the way you want? Direct deposit to correct account(s)? Split pay? Any allotments or automatic check drafts?
	Do you have overdraft protection for your checking accounts?
	Will your debit/credit cards expire during the deployment?
✓	<b>Bills</b>
	How will you be making payments to creditors? Do they have your correct address?
	How will you be paying rent/mortgage/utilities?
	Are there any annual/quarterly expenses, such as car or home insurance payments, due while you are deployed? If so, how will they be paid?
✓	<b>Taxes</b>
	If you plan to file federal or state taxes while deployed, do you have all the necessary documents?
	Do you have a specific power of attorney if someone else will be filing your taxes, or are you going to request a filing extension?
✓	<b>Vehicles</b>
	Are vehicle insurance, tags, registration, title and inspection stickers current?
	Is all routine maintenance current?
	Have you made arrangements for storing your vehicle(s)?
	Have you talked with your insurance agent about reducing coverage while your vehicle is in storage?
	If a friend or family member is storing your vehicle for you, does your insurance cover them?
✓	<b>House</b>
	Are you able to terminate your lease due to military deployment? Will there be a financial penalty?
	If you plan to maintain your house or apartment, is your renters/homeowners insurance current?
	Is your house/apartment prepared if it will be vacant for an extended period during deployment? Did you stop the mail and newspaper, turn off or reduce the temperature of the water heater, air conditioning or heat, arrange lawn maintenance, etc.?



✓	<b>Pets</b>
	Have you made arrangements for your pets to be cared for by family, friends or an animal foster care group ( <a href="https://blog.ahrn.com/foster-military-dogs/">https://blog.ahrn.com/foster-military-dogs/</a> )?
	Does your pet's caregiver have a copy of veterinary and immunization records, current license, if required, and your vet's contact information?
	Have you made arrangements to pay for food, treats and vet care while deployed?
✓	<b>Emergencies</b>
	Is your NFAAS information and family NFAAS information up to date and correct?
	Do you have a least one month's pay saved in case of financial emergency?
	Does your family know to use the American Red Cross in case of an emergency?
	Does your family have the command ombudsman's name and phone number? Have you given the ombudsman permission to provide information to your family members?
✓	<b>Relationships</b>
	If you are in a relationship, have you discussed the effect of an extended separation?
	Have you told friends and family you are deploying, provided them with your contact information and asked them to keep in touch?
	If you share a house or apartment, have you instructed your housemates on the use of your household goods, or are you planning to store them?
✓	<b>Communication</b>
	Have you discussed how often you will communicate and by which methods?
	Have you discussed how sensitive news will be shared?
	Does your family have the number to the command care line, if available?
	Is your family on the command phone/email tree?

**Additional Items**

List items not covered in the checklist here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Couples Deployment Readiness Checklist

✓	Personal Documents
	Birth certificates
	Marriage licenses
	Divorce decrees
	Update/verify information in NFAAS ( <a href="http://navyfamily.navy.mil">navyfamily.navy.mil</a> )
	Medical records of each family member
	Dental records of each family member
	Veterinarian records for each pet
	Adoption papers
	Citizenship/naturalization papers
	Wills
	Up-to-date passports/visas/REAL ID
	Insurance policies (i.e., life, health, home, vehicle, flood, others)
	Real estate documents (i.e., lease, deed, first and second mortgages)
	Car title, registration and inspection
	Social Security numbers of each family member
	Current address and phone number of immediate family members of both spouses
	Is the service member's Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) current?
	Is the amount and beneficiary information current for the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance?
	Are powers of attorney needed for buying a house, moving into government quarters, completing taxes, etc.?
	Is a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) form required to grant access your medical records?
	Will military ID cards expire during deployment?
	Are all family members enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment and Reporting System (DEERS)?
✓	Financial Planning
	Do you have a written monthly spending plan?
	Does your budget include money for port visits, phone calls and gifts/souvenirs?
	Does your budget include additional funds for sea pay, family separation allowance and other special pays (i.e., flight, submarine, combat duty, etc.)?
	Will there be a promotion during deployment?



	Will a reenlistment bonus be received during deployment?
	Do you/your spouse have access to myPay?
	Are you enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)?
	Do you and your spouse understand and agree to how finances will be handled during the deployment?
	Have you decided who will be using which credit cards during the deployment?
✓	<b>Banking</b>
	Is pay distribution set up the way you want? Direct deposit to correct account(s)? Split pay? Any allotments or automatic check drafts?
	Are you using joint or separate checking accounts? If joint, have you discussed how you will manage?
	Do you need overdraft protection for your checking accounts?
	Will your debit/credit cards expire during your absence?
✓	<b>Bills</b>
	How will you be making payments to creditors? Do they have your correct address?
	How will you be paying rent/mortgage/utilities?
	Are there any annual/quarterly expenses, such as car or home insurance or tuition payments, due while you are deployed? If so, how will they be paid?
✓	<b>Taxes</b>
	If you plan to file federal or state taxes while deployed, do you have all of the required documents?
	Do you have a specific power of attorney if someone else will be filing your taxes, or are you going to request a filing extension?
✓	<b>Vehicles</b>
	Are vehicle insurance, tags, registration, title and inspection stickers current?
	Is all routine maintenance current?
	Have you left the name of a trusted mechanic/repair garage with your family?
	Have you provided information about types of routine maintenance, such as oil, filters and tires?
✓	<b>House</b>
	Is all routine household maintenance complete?
	Is your renters/homeowners insurance current?
	If you are expecting to move into government quarters during the deployment, is a special power of attorney available to arrange the move?
	If your family is planning to stay with extended family during the deployment, note that this is not covered in the military clause of most leases. Does your lease allow you to sublet or will there be a penalty?



✓	<b>Emergencies</b>
	Is your NFAAS information and family NFAAS information up to date and correct?
	Do you have a least one month's pay saved in case of a financial emergency?
	Have you considered signing a preauthorization form with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society for your spouse?
	Does your family know to use the American Red Cross in case of an emergency?
	Does your family have the name and number of the command ombudsman?
✓	<b>Communication</b>
	Have you discussed how often you will communicate and by which methods?
	Have you discussed how sensitive news will be shared?
	Does your family have the number to the command care line, if available?
	Is your family on the command phone/email tree and newsletter distribution list?
✓	<b>Homecoming</b>
	Have you discussed homecoming plans and expectations?
	Do you want to stay at home or take a vacation upon reuniting?
	If you have children, what are the homecoming plans for them?

**Additional Items**

List items not covered in the checklist here: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# Single Parent Deployment Readiness Checklist

In addition to completing all of the items on the Single Sailor Deployment Readiness Checklist, active-duty custodial single parents should also be able to answer “yes” to the following:

✓	<i>Personal Documents</i>
	Does your will include who will become your child/children’s guardians should something happen to you?
	Have you updated your family care plan? This document ensures that arrangements are in place for your dependent children.
	Is your Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) current?
	Is the amount and beneficiary information current for your Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance?
	Do your children have ID cards and are they enrolled in DEERS?
	Do you have a written financial agreement with your caregiver?
	Do you have an “agent letter” to allow your child’s caregiver access to the base and to services such as the commissary, exchange and medical clinic for your child?
	Does your child’s caregiver have a medical power of attorney to access emergency and routine care for your child/children? Do they know how to access the military medical clinic or how to file TRICARE claims if using civilian facilities?
	Is a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act form required in order for your child’s care giver to access your child’s medical records?
✓	<i>Caregiver</i>
	Does your caregiver know how to contact you with your command name and mailing address and your email address?
	Does your caregiver know to use the American Red Cross in case of an emergency?
	Is your caregiver aware of the services provided by the command ombudsman? Do they have the name and number of the command ombudsman?
	Is your child’s caregiver aware of any medical conditions your child has and any medications being taken?
	Does your child’s caregiver know how to get medication refills?



	Have you discussed rules and discipline with your child’s caregiver?
	Do you have a plan for celebrating your child’s birthday during your absence?
	Have you developed a communication plan with your child’s caregiver? How often will you email, phone or send regular mail? What types of information would you like to know? Have you asked your child’s caregiver to send pictures?
	Does your child’s caregiver have the number to the command Careline, if available?
	Have you asked the command ombudsman to keep your child’s caregiver informed on the status of the command via the command phone/email tree and newsletter distribution list?
	Does your child’s caregiver have an age-appropriate car seat for transporting your child?

✓	<i><b>Your Child</b></i>
	Have you told your child that you will be leaving and that you will return?
	Have you made a communication plan with your child and provided them with the tools they need to stay in touch with you, such as stationery, pens, markers, stamped, self-addressed envelopes, etc.?
	Did you include money in your budget for phone calls and gifts/souvenirs for your children?
	If you have pets, is your child’s caregiver caring for them too? If the pets will be cared for elsewhere, have you explained this to your child?
	Do you and your child have a support system – people you can reach in person, by phone or email – you can turn to for assistance during the deployment?
	Will your child be able to see you off when you leave for deployment?
	In conjunction with your child’s caregiver, do you have plans to keep your child/children busy during deployment with fun activities including sports, scouts, music, church, etc.?



✓	<b><i>Relationships</i></b>
	Have you talked with your child's school or day care provider about your deployment? Have you asked them to send copies of school work and report cards? Be sure to include self-addressed, stamped envelopes.
	Have you asked if your child's school sponsors a discussion group or other program for children of deployed military parents?
	Have you discussed with your child's other parent what role, if any, they will have during your deployment?
	Have you informed extended family members about your upcoming deployment, provided your child's contact information and asked them to keep in contact with your child?

✓	<b><i>Comfort Items</i></b>
	Have you created a photo album for you and each of your children doing things together?
	Have you read and recorded your child's favorite books on audio or videotape?
	Did you leave a personal item of yours for each of your children to keep until your return?

✓	<b><i>Homecoming</i></b>
	Will your children be able to meet you at homecoming? If so, have you made arrangements?

**Additional Items**

List items not covered in the checklist here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



## Deployment Phase



This section provides guidance for managing the challenges of deployment, including: Communication During Deployment, Emergencies During Deployment, Disaster Preparedness and Coping with Separation.

### Communication During Deployment

Communicating with loved ones during deployment benefits both the service member and families. This section discusses some best practices for communication during deployment.

#### Operations Security (OPSEC)



Operations security (OPSEC) is based on the idea that the accumulation of sensitive or unclassified pieces of information, when gathered and analyzed by adversaries, could compromise command and personal security. Do not talk, text or post about sensitive/classified information or try to communicate in code. Doing so could inadvertently give adversaries a critical piece of the puzzle that could compromise security and/or the command's mission.

Best practices for protecting OPSEC include avoiding discussion of:

- Command or unit mission (including number of personnel).
- Ship or troop movement (e.g., location and times of deployment).
- Command morale or personnel issues.
- Security procedures.
- Capabilities.
- Scheduled or potential port calls.
- Homecoming dates.

#### Practice OPSEC. Do not:

- Talk about sensitive information in public settings such as the club, commissary, Navy Exchange or in the community.
- Talk about sensitive information over the telephone.
- Post pictures or information on social media.
- Include sensitive information in emails or attachments.
- Write about sensitive information in newsletters or blogs.
- Try to talk around classified information — it is extremely difficult to outsmart experienced intelligence analysts.



## Communicating with the Command

There may be times during deployments when family members need to contact the service member's command. The command ombudsman serves as the liaison between command families and the command.

Ombudsmen are volunteers appointed by the commanding officer to serve as an information link between the command leadership and command families. Ombudsmen are trained to disseminate official Department of the Navy and command information. They also provide resource referrals when needed and are instrumental in resolving family issues before they require extensive command attention.

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**TIP:** You can find contact information for your command ombudsman on the [Ombudsman Registry](#).

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Each branch of the service offers similar services to its families. For more information about each of these programs, follow the links below:

- [Navy Ombudsman](#)
- [Marine Corps Unit Personal and Family Readiness](#)
- [Coast Guard Ombudsman](#)
- [Army FRG](#)
- [Air Force Key Spouse](#)

**Family Readiness Groups:** Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are part of a network that bundles key support services such as ombudsmen, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), chaplains, school liaison officers and child development centers at the command level.

Purpose:

- Enhance command mission readiness.
- Prepare members for deployments and homecoming.
- Provide family support during deployments.
- Help families adjust to challenges and to support one another in times of personal, unit or area crises.
- Welcome/mentor members who are new to the Navy lifestyle.
- Coordinate social events, such as holiday celebrations.

FRGs are open to command members (active duty and Reservists or civilians) in their personal capacity, command members' spouses and children, other family members, and other interested civilians associated with the command and its personnel.



## Communication Methods



There are many means of communication and it is important to know that there are limitations to each; the needs of the military may interrupt communication paths. Talk with your family about which communication methods are realistic and share expectations for keeping in touch so disappointments do not occur.

- **Frequency.** Share how often you would like to receive some form of communication. For example, how often would you like to exchange letters or emails? How often would you like to send or receive a care package?
- **Availability.** What are the best days and times to call? Be mindful that there will be times when commands will turn off communication (e.g., going “black” or “river city”) for an undisclosed period. Family members, do not be alarmed if you do not hear from your service member for weeks or more at a time. Sometimes communication will be received but not sent or vice versa. Plan how you will manage these silent periods.
- **Preferences.** Discuss preferences for difficult and enjoyable situations. For example, would you like to know about a problem while it is occurring or only after there is a solution? Also, discuss items that you might like to receive in a care package and what to write (or not write) in letters and emails.
- **Discretion.** Use discretion in the type of communication you send your service member. Emails, letters and packages can be screened, lost and/or opened. News of a death or serious illness of a family member or close friends should be sent through official channels, such as American Red Cross and/or the command ombudsman. Also, discuss how to send “private” communication. For example, you may need to agree on how to signal the other person not to open emails, letters and packages in front of others.
- **Flexibility.** Communication plans can change once the deployment begins and schedules shift. So, do not feel stuck to whatever plan you establish today. The rule of thumb is to work out a new plan when and if your situation changes.

**Email.** As with all forms of communication with deployed personnel, when sending emails to loved ones you should:

- Remember OPSEC; do not discuss dates or plans in your email.
- Not expect immediate replies. Service members may not have access to a computer or the email network may not be available.
- Remember, email is not secure; others may be able to read it.
- Wait before sending an email when you are angry. Save it as a draft and then review it before sending.

**Internet Communications.** Service members on shore-based deployments may have ready access to programs such as Skype and FaceTime, which allow them to communicate directly with loved ones. Access to these programs may be limited during seagoing deployments due to the limited bandwidth on shipboard computer systems. Check with your command ombudsman or FRG to learn more about the availability of internet communications at your command.



**Telephone Calls.** To make the most of your phone conversations with your service member practice the following:

- Keep a written list of things to talk about.
- Stay positive and upbeat.
- Discuss daily activities. Avoid spending the entire phone call talking about problems.
- Remember, service members may not have privacy.

**Calling Cards.** Calling cards can help you save money on long-distance calls. Rates can be cheaper than using a smartphone or charging a call.

**Video Chat.** Some commands may offer service members access to video teleconferencing. If your command provides this service, check with your ombudsman for scheduling and location information.

**Pictures and Video Recordings.** One of the most popular ways to stay connected with your service member is through pictures and video recordings. Videos of daily activities allow your service member to share your experiences. Pictures of family, pets, your home, even a much-loved car are always welcome and appreciated. Check with your service member, command ombudsman or other experienced spouse to learn the most reliable method of sharing pictures and videos.

**Social Media.** Social media provides another means of communicating with deployed service members. Access to these services may be restricted or denied for security reasons; check with your command ombudsman to find out whether instant messaging or chat services may be available during deployment.

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**TIP:** For more information about the correct use of social media, go to the [\*Military Community and Family Policy's Social Networking Guide\*](#).

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**Letters.** Letters are a great way to stay in touch during deployments. For service members, reading letters provides a much-needed break from their duties. For families, letters are the link that connects them to their loved ones.

When writing to your service member, consider the following:

- Number your letters.
- Have children send separate letters.
- Remember OPSEC.
- Use sarcasm and humor carefully.
- Write often.



**Make a Connection Calendar.** Although you will be physically distant from your service member, you can get creative in helping them to feel connected to your family's daily life. This will help you understand what is happening at home, from the average to exciting. It will also help your service member remember to ask about certain events. Depending on your service member's internet availability, you might accomplish this with a shared online calendar. However, because connectivity can vary, you may choose to take a blank calendar, fill in various dates and include it in their sea bag or next care package. To prepare the calendar, include momentous occasions and daily life events. Consider including the following:

- Anniversaries.
- Birthdays.
- Family holidays.
- Doctor's appointments.
- Extracurricular activity practice/events.

**Care Packages.** Care packages can be a great way to send a little piece of home to deployed service members. When packing a care package, consider the limits on your service member's storage space and privacy. Items that take up very little space or can be consumed or shared are generally the most appreciated. You may want to ask your service member for a list of items that are not available to them on deployment. Some items to include in care packages are:

- Pictures (home, family, friends, pets).
- Home-baked goodies.
- Non-perishable foods.
- Books/magazines.
- Children's artwork.

Packages sent to an APO or FPO will generally need completed customs forms. More information on customs' regulations and required customs forms can be found on the [United States Postal Service \(USPS\) Customs Forms](#) website. For a detailed list of restrictions by country, go to the [USPS Overseas/Diplomatic Mail](#).

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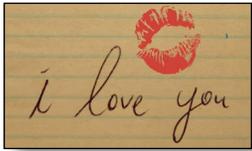
**TIP:** USPS offers a free "Military Care Kit" with the necessary supplies for sending packages overseas, including boxes, packing tape and Customs forms. Orders may be placed through the USPS website at [Military and Diplomatic Mail](#).

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# Care Packages



Running out of creative ideas to send in care packages? Try some of these “theme” pack ideas:



### **Call Home (or at least write) Pack**

- Note paper and colorful pens
- Phone cards
- Address labels
- Address book
- Pre-addressed special occasion cards
- Love letters from your courting days



### **Night at the Movies Pack**

- DVDs
- Popcorn
- Movie candy
- Nachos supplies
- Homemade poster
- Autograph from a favorite star



### **“Whine” & Cheese Pack**

- Recording of you/kids whining
- Assortment of cheeses
- Assortment of sausages
- Assortment of crackers



### **Our Morning Coffee Pack**

- Favorite coffee blend
- All the goodies to add ... creamer, sugar, flavors, etc.
- A great mug
- Individual coffee cakes
- Biscotti



### **Beach Party Pack**

- Flip-flops
- Sunglasses
- “Blow-Up” beach toys
- Sunscreen
- Bathing suit
- Beach towel
- Goldfish crackers
- Swedish fish



### **Go Fish (Put all in a tackle box)**

- Gummy worms
- “Go Fish” playing cards
- Fisherman’s hat
- Lip balm
- Sunscreen
- Plastic or model boat
- Can of chowder
- Fishing magazines



### **Good Sport Pack**

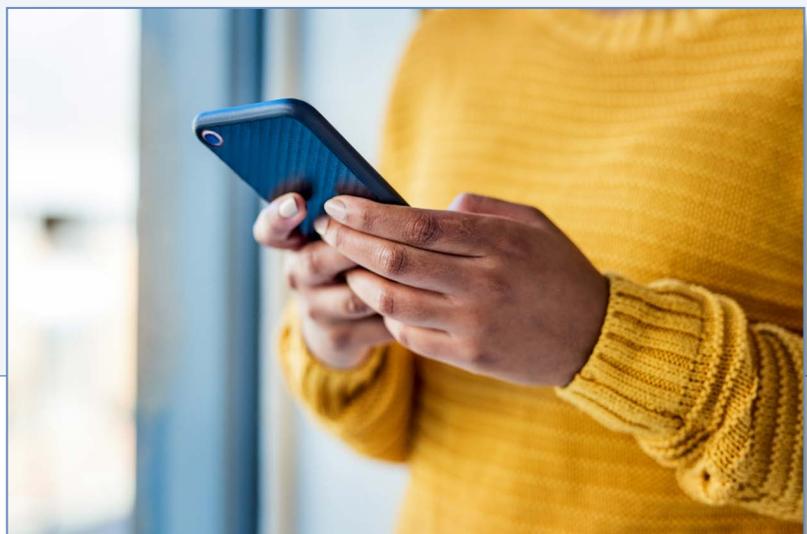
- Sports magazines
- Popcorn and peanuts
- Pennants
- Favorite team T-shirt or cap
- Video of a local game or your kid’s games



## Communication Tips

Open and frequent communication will keep your relationship strong. Of course, communication is not always easy, especially when one partner is away for extended periods. Suggestions for effective communication include:

- **Express feelings.** Before leaving, discuss your feelings about the deployment. Discuss the positive and challenging thoughts you have about the upcoming separation.
- **Discuss expectations.** Discuss your expectations during the deployment. These expectations can include a variety of issues: freedom to make independent decisions, contacts that may produce jealousy, going out with friends, budgeting, child rearing and even how often letters or care packages will be sent.
- **Address change.** Acknowledge that you may change when you are apart. The partner at home may become more self-reliant. The service member may discover inner resources they did not know they had. View changes as positive factors that will likely add to your relationship. Reassure each other that regardless of any changes, your marriage will stay as strong as ever. Celebrate each other's growth and changes and find the ways they benefit your relationship.
- **Determine methods.** Determine how you will stay connected with each other — by email, letters, etc., beforehand. It is also reassuring to know how often you will be in contact, and keep in mind that the method of communication may be determined by mission requirements.
- **Prepare for periodic breaks in communication.** There will be times when a command has to suspend communications to meet its mission. This period of reduced communications may be known as "River City," "going silent" or "going dark." You can prepare for these times by providing cards or letters that should be opened when other forms of communication are not available. Also worth noting, ombudsmen may be able to support emergency communication during "river city," so reach out if you need to.
- **Foster positive communication.** Be mindful of constructive communication techniques can help to prevent misunderstandings and hurt feelings. Some keys to positive communication include:
  - Make time to talk.
  - Be an active listener.
  - Be mindful of body language.
  - Keep your sense of humor.
  - Use "I" statements.
  - Maintain an open heart and mind.
  - Give praise.





## Emergencies During Deployment



Emergencies happen during deployments. Knowing how to respond to financial and family/medical emergencies can increase your resiliency and better prepare you to handle emergency situations as they arise.

### Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)

NFAAS standardizes a method for the Navy to account, assess, manage and monitor the recovery process for personnel and their families affected and/or scattered by a wide-spread catastrophic event. To ensure that your family can be located, update your NFAAS profile with current contact information for all immediate family members. NFAAS should be updated twice yearly and any time you change your location or contact information. For more information, go to [NFAAS](#).

### Military Relief Organizations

Military relief organizations provide financial assistance to active-duty, retired and activated Reserve personnel and their family members in emergencies. Examples of financial assistance include: food, rent and utilities; emergency transportation and vehicle repair; and funeral expenses. Generally, financial assistance is provided in the form of interest-free loans. For more information about your service branch's relief organization, visit the appropriate link:

- [Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society \(NMCRS\)](#)
- [Air Force Aid Society \(AFAS\)](#)
- [Army Emergency Relief \(AER\)](#)
- [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance \(CGMA\)](#)

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**NOTE:** Military relief organizations do not pay bills for nonessentials; finance ordinary leave, liberty or vacation; or help service members and their families live beyond their means.

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### Authorization for Emergency Financial Assistance

Emergency financial assistance must be authorized by the service member or a person who has been granted authority to act for the service member. Family members can demonstrate their authority by presenting a power of attorney or a preauthorization form. Preauthorization forms are signed by the service member before deployment and grant permission to receive financial assistance from the relief organization while the service member is deployed.

You need to apply for emergency assistance. You will be required to provide identification and demonstrate financial need. Visit the website of the appropriate service relief organization for more information about the application process.



## The American Red Cross (ARC)

The ARC works in partnership with the military relief organization to provide round-the-clock financial assistance to eligible families. Examples of assistance provided by the ARC include:

- Emergency travel.
- Burial of a loved one.
- Emergency food assistance.

Contact your local ARC chapter to request assistance. You can find the location of the chapter nearest you through the [American Red Cross Chapter Directory](#).

## Emergency Leave

Emergency leave may be authorized for family emergencies. It can be granted for emergencies involving immediate family members or a sole surviving relative. Emergency leave must be approved by the commanding officer and may only be authorized when the military situation permits.

The military must confirm that an emergency exists and that the presence of the service member can help to alleviate the emergency.

- **Medical Emergencies.** Medical emergencies can happen at any time during a service member's deployment. Through the American Red Cross, family members can notify their service members of the medical emergency and possibly have their service members return home for a period of time.
- **Definition of Medical Emergency.** It is important to understand what the military considers to be a medical emergency and how to use the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Communication Services to contact deployed service members. Medical emergencies are defined as the death, critical illness or critical injury of an immediate family member. Immediate family consists of:
  - Spouse.
  - Parents.
  - Children.
  - Grandparents.
  - Guardians who raised the service member.

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**NOTE:** The birth of a child or non-life-threatening health conditions such as broken bones do not constitute medical emergencies.

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- **American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Communication Services:** When sending an emergency message through the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Communication Services, you will need to provide the following information:
  - The service member's name, rank, Social Security number and duty station.
  - Information about the deployed command.
  - The caller's relationship to the service member.
  - A description of the medical emergency.
  - The name of the doctor, hospital or funeral home associated with the situation.

**NOTE:** Do not send emergency information through a letter or email. Using the ARC to deliver messages ensures that the command is aware of the situation and that the emergency has been verified. This ensures the service member has all the proper support in place when receiving difficult news. Commands can provide support to the service member, if needed.

## You can access the ARC through several methods



- Active-duty service members and their immediate family members who are stationed in the United States: Call toll-free at 1-877-272-7337 or visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). Immediate family members of deployed Reserve members should also contact the ARC by this method.
- Other family members, retirees and civilians may access ARC services through their local ARC chapter.
- Service members overseas should call the installation ARC office.

### Emergency Contact Information

Before deploying, service members should provide commands with emergency contact information for spouses and anyone who may be called to assist in an emergency. This may include family, friends or neighbors who can provide support. Include the names of people authorized to pick up children from school or day care. This information does not replace the DD Form 93, *Record of Emergency Data*.

**TIP:** Disaster preparedness requires advance planning. Keep your contact information current, create a disaster kit and prepare a plan with your family to reduce the stress and uncertainty caused by a disaster.

### Family Care Plan

Is your Family care plan up-to-date? Family care plans are mission-planning tools for service members. They establish and document plans for the care of their minor children and dependent adult family members while absent. It is required for single parents, dual military and blended families. However, all Navy families can benefit from the peace of mind of a well-planned family care plan. Deployment support specialists at your FFSC can coach you on the elements of a well-prepared family care plan. Your Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) can help you prepare your will, power of attorney(s) and/or review custody documents. Finally, file your family care plan with supporting documents through your command's family care plan coordinator.



# Disaster Preparedness

**Be Informed:** The American Red Cross and Ready Navy suggest some basic steps to ensure your safety in an emergency:



- Discuss how to prepare for and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work and play.
- Plan what to do in case you are separated during an emergency.
- Plan ahead for your pets.
- Choose two places to meet:
  - Outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
  - Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.

**Make a Plan:** Your family may not always be together when emergencies happen; you should have plans for making sure you are able to contact and find one another. If your family decides to remain in your home during a disaster, you should:

- Identify a safe room in the house.
- Contact the command or ombudsman and inform them that you are not evacuating.
- Dispose of perishable food in the refrigerator and freezer except for a small amount you can keep in a cooler with ice.
- Fill bathtubs and additional coolers with water to flush toilets, bathe, cook and clean.

If your family decides to evacuate, you should:

- Pack and take all relevant supplies from the basic disaster supply kit.
- Notify the command or ombudsman that you will be leaving.
- Secure your home inside and out. Turn off electricity, water and gas at a main connection.

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**TIP:** If your community has experienced a disaster, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) and select the prompt for “Disaster” to seek assistance with reunification.

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**Build a Kit:** Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. Your kit should include the basic supplies listed below:

- Water: 1 gallon per person per day (three-day supply for evacuation, two weeks for home)
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Food: nonperishable, easy-to-prepare items (three-day supply for evacuation, two weeks for home)
- First-aid kit

For detailed emergency preparedness checklists and kits, go to:

- [Ready Navy](#)
- [American Red Cross Prepare Your Home and Family](#)
- [Ready.gov Disaster Supplies Kit](#)
- [Ready Navy Fact and Activity Sheets](#)



## Coping with Separation



Deployments can be stressful for all family members. This section is designed to help service members, spouses, children and parents cope with deployment.

During the deployment phase, service members and families will experience the next three stages in the emotional cycle of deployment. Common emotions during this phase include:

### Emotional Disorganization

The non-deploying partner may feel an initial sense of relief followed by guilt. Many feel disorganized, depressed, overwhelmed, lonely or restless. This sense of disorganization is short-lived. Soon you should begin to realize you are fundamentally resilient and able to cope with the deployment. If you become stuck in this stage, seek support from your family, friends or professionals, such as those available at your Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) or via Military OneSource. Seeking support can prevent problems throughout the remainder of the deployment.

Family	Service Member
<b>Disorganized and unfocused</b> <b>Overwhelmed</b> <b>Empty, lost</b> <b>Worried</b> <b>Can get stuck in this stage</b>	<b>Relief followed by guilt</b> <b>Mission-focused</b> <b>Sad or lonely</b> <b>Worried</b>

### Recovery and Stabilization

Those at home have begun to feel more comfortable with their new roles and responsibilities. They also may develop increased confidence, new sources of support and a positive outlook.

Family	Service Member
<b>Increased confidence</b> <b>Independent</b> <b>More positive outlook</b> <b>Lonely but coping</b>	<b>Settled into routine</b> <b>Accomplishing tasks</b> <b>Focused on mission</b> <b>Found their “sea legs”</b>

### Anticipation of Return

Spouses and partners who remained at home realize that they have not finished everything they wanted to during the separation. There is a feeling of joy and excitement in anticipation of being together again. Feelings of apprehension surface that the service member may not like some of the decisions made during their absence. Service members are excited and anxious, wondering if they will be accepted or needed by their families and if their children will remember them.



Single service members may not feel the anticipation of homecoming until they are sure they are actually returning to homeport. When homecoming becomes a reality, they report being eager for some time away from the command. They may also be concerned that the close friendships they developed may change.

Family	Service Member
<p><b>Excited</b></p> <p><b>Happy</b></p> <p><b>Increased energy</b></p> <p><b>Anxious</b></p> <p><b>Relief</b></p>	<p><b>Excited</b></p> <p><b>Happy</b></p> <p><b>Worried</b></p> <p><b>Anxious</b></p>

### Coping with Separation for Spouses and Family Members

Keeping your stress in check and maintaining a positive mindset during deployment may benefit you and your service member. Not only may it be a support to your loved one, but it may give you strength as well. Here are some tips for staying positive:

- **Daily affirmations:** Use positive statements (aloud or in writing) to challenge and overcome negative thoughts. Regular affirmation practice may foster positive change and resilience.
- **Exercise:** Physical activity benefits your mind and body. Even just a 10-minute walk around the block may boost your mood.
- **Foster connection:** Tap into your network of support. Friends, family and fellow Navy family members may be a source of strength on tough days.
- **Develop a routine:** Following a regular schedule may promote better stress levels, improve sleep, and enhance physical and mental health.

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**NOTE:** If your service member confides in you about their stress, sometimes just being an ear to listen may be enough. Be mindful of resources you can recommend. For example, you may recommend connecting with a shipmate, command leader, deployed resiliency counselor (DRC) or chaplain. Additionally, please encourage them to take advantage of deployment support programs offered aboard ship.

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Although deployment can feel disruptive to your norm, the opportunities to keep busy are endless! Now is not the time to put life on hold. Stay active and social to fuel a positive mindset. Some ideas include:

- **Schedule activities and events:** Activities and events will give you (and the kids, if kids are involved) something to look forward to and pass the time. Connect with FFSC and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) for recommendations. Remember to make time for rest and rejuvenation.
- **Choose a project to work on:** Sign up and train for a 5K, complete an art project, try a new hobby. Team up with family and friends on a joint project. Find a new focus to stay motivated while your loved one is away.



- **Volunteer:** Serve as a chaperone for your child's class trip. Get involved with a local spouses organization. Donate your time and talent to a charitable organization with a cause in which you believe. Not only may contributing toward the community's good boost your positivity, but volunteering may also combat depression, increase your self-confidence and enhance your life satisfaction.

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**NOTE:** During deployment, remember to connect with your command ombudsman, FRG and your FFSC for more information about local resources and opportunities.

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Even the most prepared family members may encounter situations that increase the stress they feel. To help minimize the effects of stress, it is important for you to recognize some common symptoms and take appropriate steps to cope with the stress you are experiencing. Some symptoms include:

- Crying for no apparent reason.
- Difficulty making decisions.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Feeling overwhelmed by multiple roles.
- Excessive drinking or drug use.

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**NOTE:** If you are experiencing symptoms of stress, contact the nearest [Fleet and Family Support Center](#) or [Military OneSource](#) for assistance.

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### **Coping with Separation for Parents of Deployed Service Members**

Parents of service members may have mixed emotions about their child's deployment. Pride in their accomplishments and the sacrifices they have made may be mixed with anxiety about their safety. Often, parents turn to the service member's spouse for information about the ship or unit. The following are some things you can do to make the deployment less stressful for parents:

- Encourage parents to write to the service member.
- Provide parents with unit contact information.
- Encourage parents to find support groups.

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**NOTE:** Blue Star Mothers of America is a support organization of mothers of current service members and veterans. To find a local chapter near your family, visit [Blue Star Mothers](#).

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## Coping with Deployment and Separation for Service Members

No matter your level of experience, each deployment brings new challenges and opportunities. Sometimes, you may be so focused on handling the logistics of deployment that you forget about caring for yourself and your personal well-being. To increase your personal quality of life while deployed, develop strategies to productively combat isolation and effectively cope with stress. For example:

- Build a support system.
- Make time to connect with shipmates.
- Maintain an exercise routine.
- Prioritize time for rest.
- Leverage available resources.

For tips on coping with stress, see the Proactive Stress Reduction section of this handbook on page 57.

**Note:** If you are experiencing difficulty with managing stress, make time to connect with a buddy, medical professional or a chaplain. A DRC and Embedded Integrated Prevention Coordinator (EPIC) may be available in some deployment situations. Both DRCs and EPICs are assigned to aircraft carriers (CVNs) and large-deck amphibious assault ships (LHDs/LHAs). If your deployment is with a CVN or LHD/LHA, remember that you can contact your DRC and EPIC for support.

- Your DRC is a FFSC clinical counselor embedded with large platform ships as ship's company to provide clinical counseling support and psychoeducational workshops and training related to various FFSC programs to the ship's crew.
- Your EPIC is a FFSC trained educator embedded with large platform ships as ship's company to provide small- and large-group education opportunities on building resiliency, stress management and other quality-of-life education opportunities for the ship's crew.

## Coping with Separation for Children

Reactions to separation from a parent can vary depending on your child's personality, age, experiences with separation and the reactions and coping skills of the adults in their life. You should become familiar with the more common reactions; watch for more serious symptoms to determine whether your child may need additional support or professional help. There is no one-size-fit-all solution to handling children and deployment. However, there are some things that every parent can do, regardless of their child's age, which will make a profound difference.

- **Stick to a schedule or routine as much as possible.** Most kids thrive on routine. Try to keep bath time, meal times, nap times, etc., consistent. Maintaining a regular and dependable schedule gives kids a sense of security and stability, making their environment feel safe and more predictable. Routines also create a calmer household because when all family members know what to expect, stress and anxiety are reduced.
- **Maintain household rules.** Family rules help create a structure that children can rely on and understand what behaviors are OK and not OK.



- **Spend one-on-one time with your child.** Stay positive and upbeat as much as possible. Share your thoughts and listen. Stop what you are doing, get down on your child's level, make eye contact and give them your full attention.
- **Be aware of available support systems.** Take advantage of the programs available to help you with the separation. On military installations, deployment readiness programs, command ombudsmen, FRGs, Key Spouse Groups, chaplains, the school liaison officer (SLO) and children and youth programs can offer support.
- **Keep the adults in children's lives involved.** Make sure your children's teachers, coaches, day care providers and community leaders are aware of the deployment.
- **Plan new activities.** Do not confuse consistency with rigidity. Some change may be beneficial to you and your children. Make time to talk, cuddle or add new outings to your routine. Plan activities that give your children something to anticipate and help pass the time. Family activities such as walks, bike rides, visits to the library or craft projects at home may provide much-needed distractions.
- **Watch behaviors and seek help if children need it.** Be aware of any changes that may interfere with your children's usual routine and activities. Do not hesitate to ask your FFSC for assistance.

# Children and Deployment



Tell your children about the upcoming deployment. Do not assume they are aware and understand that a parent is deploying. Reassure them that they will be cared for while Mom or Dad is away. Encourage them to ask any questions they might have.

Allow children to miss their parent and to feel sad about their absence. Encourage communication with your children and allow them to express their feelings. Children are often confused, angry, worried and insecure. It is important to maintain your child's daily routine and be consistent in discipline.

Most military children are resilient and will bounce back. If your child is struggling, do not hesitate to contact your child's school counselor, the SLO, the Fleet and Family Support Center, a chaplain or Military OneSource for assistance.

The following chart provides some tips on what to expect from your child.

Age	What to Expect	Ways to Help
<b>Infants &amp; Toddlers</b>  	They may seem fussier, clingy, may eat less and have trouble sleeping.	<b>Have your spouse/child's caregiver:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record video- or audio-taped stories.</li> <li>Post pictures of deployed parent.</li> <li>Provide extra hugs and cuddles.</li> <li>Maintain routine.</li> <li>Take care of themselves to be better able to care for children.</li> <li>Be mindful that the child's reaction to deployment is based primarily on how their caregiver responds and the degree of change in their environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Preschoolers</b>  	May feel their behavior caused their parent to leave.  May become more fearful/irritable.  May regress in potty training/thumb sucking/ etc.  May have trouble sleeping.	<b>Have your spouse/child's caregiver:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record video- or audio-taped stories.</li> <li>Create a waterproof photo album or picture book of deployed parent and child doing things together.</li> <li>Provide extra hugs and cuddles.</li> <li>Maintain routine.</li> <li>Not get too concerned if the child wants to sleep in Mom and Dad's bed while you're gone. It often provides a sense of security. Move your child back to their bed a few weeks before your expected return.</li> <li>Include your child in letter writing or drawing photos for their deployed parent.</li> <li>Name your child's behaviors and model healthy ways of dealing with emotions.</li> </ul>



<p><b>School-age</b></p> 	<p>Behavioral issues at school or home.</p> <p>May see a decline in academic performance.</p> <p>Angry outbursts mixed with clinging.</p> <p>May worry about deployed parent's safety.</p> <p>Increased complaints of illnesses (e.g., headaches, stomachaches).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have a family discussion before deployment.</li> <li>● Involve teachers, church, neighbors. Enroll in Big Brothers Big Sisters Program.</li> <li>● Communicate regularly.</li> <li>● Reassure about safety training/drills/equipment.</li> <li>● Play games via email, regular mail or online (if available).</li> <li>● Schedule fun activities.</li> <li>● Help your child compile care packages to send to deployed parent.</li> <li>● Limit the viewing of TV news about world events.</li> <li>● Help your child to send care packages, letters and cards to their parent and others serving.</li> <li>● Encourage positive friendships and get to know their friends.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teens</b></p> 	<p>May be ambivalent.</p> <p>May be moody/withdrawn.</p> <p>May test rules.</p> <p>May take on an adultlike role at home.</p> <p>May experience academic problems at school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate regularly.</li> <li>● Do not expect your teen to take on your household responsibilities.</li> <li>● Ask the spouse/caretaker to maintain rules, curfews and discipline as much as possible.</li> <li>● Maintain routines for stability and ensure that teens get enough rest, exercise and eat properly.</li> <li>● Let teens know that the feeling of loss when a parent deploys is common and be honest about your own feelings ("I'm sad about this sometimes, too").</li> </ul>

# Deployment Activities for Kids

Below are sample activities that are available to help make deployments and separation easier for children. Contact your local military family support center or Military OneSource for additional ideas.

<p><b>Paper Chain</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This chain is made with strips of construction paper, glued into cylinder shapes and linked together. Children tear off a link for each day (or one for each week) until homecoming day, when the last "link" is left. This helps children mark the passage of time.</li> <li>The paper chain can also be used as a journal. As each link is removed, the children can write something that happened that day (or week) and mail it to the deployed parent or share it upon the deployed parent's return.</li> <li><b>CAUTION:</b> If deployment timelines change, this may be hard for children. When it is near the end and deployment is extended, it can be shocking. This activity should be done with care and the understanding that there needs to be flexibility and potential pivots in the future.</li> <li>Alternative option: Each day/week, a link can be added to build a chain, including an activity done during that day/week written on the link. When the service member returns, they can read what was accomplished during the deployment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Command Gear</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These items can be given to children to wear while separated from the deployed parent.</li> <li>School-age children wear them as a sign of pride in the deployed parent and as a way to feel closer to that parent.</li> <li>Take photos of your child in command gear and send them to the deployed service member to help them feel closer to their child.</li> <li>If your child plays a sport or participates in an extracurricular activity, send the service member some gear (i.e., sports team pennant, scout troop T-shirt, etc.) and encourage them to send photos to your child to facilitate connection across the miles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deployment "Grab-Bag"</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill any type of bag with scraps of paper that have activities written on them, such as go to the zoo, whisper all day, read a book, take a walk, etc.</li> <li>Draw an item from the bag and do the activity with your child.</li> <li>Send a picture of you and your child doing the activity to the deployed parent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deployment Journal</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This can be any type of notebook, scrapbook, diary, etc., used by the child or parent to write letters, thoughts or to share feelings with one another.</li> <li>Adding memorabilia, such as a baseball game ticket, ballet program, postcard, etc., along with journaling thoughts or feelings at the time, can make the event come alive. Remembering these events and special occasions help make the deployed parent feel more involved.</li> <li>This is especially useful if mail will be slow or if there will be no mail (as with some submarine deployments).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Calendar Pages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This can be a purchased calendar, one created on a computer or hand-drawn pages.</li> <li>Mark off the passing days of a deployment.</li> <li>Use the calendar as a journal to write in daily activities.</li> <li>Each page can be mailed or reviewed at the end of the deployment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leaf Letters</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help your child create a tree trunk using construction paper.</li> <li>Cut out about 10 leaves (more or less if you wish).</li> <li>Explain to the child the importance of writing and how everyone likes to receive mail.</li> <li>Have the child put the tree trunk someplace where they will see it (i.e., on the refrigerator),</li> <li>The child can decorate the leaf and put a message on it for their deployed parent.</li> <li>The child can then send it to their deployed parent, who will write a message on the back and return the leaf to the child.</li> <li>When the child receives the leaf in the mail, they can paste or tape it to the tree trunk.</li> <li>Make sure that there are enough leaves to make a full green tree by the end of deployment.</li> <li>When the deployed member returns, they can discuss the messages together.</li> </ul>



## Post-Deployment Phase



The post-deployment phase requires some adjustments for all family members. The return of your service member from deployment may result in changing roles, responsibilities and daily routines. This section can help you and your family members prepare to meet these challenges.

During the post-deployment phase, service members and families will experience the final two stages of the emotional cycle of deployment: “Return and Renegotiation” and “Reintegration and Stabilization.”

### Return and Renegotiation

This stage, there is a period of readjustment. It is not realistic to expect everything will be the way it was before the deployment. Couples have to make major adjustments in roles and responsibilities; relationships may not be the same as before the deployment. Partners and family members have had new experiences and have grown in different ways, and these changes must be accommodated. Being aware of each other’s needs is crucial at this point.

Family	Service Member
<b>Increased tension</b> <b>Loss of independence</b> <b>Happiness</b> <b>Anxiety</b> <b>Excitement</b>	<b>Increased tension</b> <b>Stranger in own home</b> <b>Adjusting to changes</b> <b>Happiness</b> <b>Frustration</b>

### Reintegration and Stabilization

Service members and their families are back on track until the next deployment. There is a renewed sense of being a couple and a family. They are back on the same wavelength emotionally and can enjoy the warmth and closeness of being together again.

Family	Service Member
<b>Relaxed</b> <b>Comfortable</b> <b>Renewed sense of family</b> <b>Enjoy being a couple again</b>	<b>Relaxed</b> <b>Comfortable</b> <b>Renewed sense of family</b> <b>Enjoy being a couple again</b>

The emotional cycle of deployment is a “cycle” and does not end with the last stage. Many service members and their families will go back to the first stage, “Anticipation of Loss,” as they emotionally prepare themselves for the next deployment.



## Return and Reunion

Preparing for homecoming is an exciting time, but there may also be a level of stress involved. You may experience a wide range of emotions as you work to finalize homecoming preparations. Once your service member has returned home, you will need to talk about your expectations and find ways to establish a new “normal” for your family/relationship.

### Expectations Leading Up to the Reunion

If you do not discuss your expectations about homecoming, you will be left making a lot of assumptions. Save yourselves time and hardship by having a conversation about realistic expectations, instead of hoping you will hit the mark. When it comes to homecoming expectations, here are some points to consider:

- Do not expect this reunion to be just like others you have experienced.
- Do not expect everyone to acclimate at the same rate.
- Expect there to be an adjustment period for just about everything.
- Expect that some things about your partner (and life together, in general) will be different.

### The Reality of a Reunion

As homecoming day approaches, it is important to remember that everyone in the family has changed during the deployment. All family members will need to make adjustments and allow for the changes that have taken place. Encourage everyone to be flexible during this time.

## Tips for Planning for the Reunion

Be aware that homecoming plans can change. While you can never prepare for all of the possibilities, the following tips can help make homecoming go smoothly:

- **Communicate before the reunion.** Service members should keep family members updated on any changes in the schedule. They should also describe their preferences for the reunion.
- **Budget for the reunion.** Control costs by creating a spending plan for your reunion. Homecoming expenses can escalate quickly, so consider cost when making your reunion plans.
- **Involve children in the planning.** Have children participate in planning by having them make a welcome home banner, small gift or help prepare the homecoming meal.
- **Decide who will be part of the reunion.** Who does your service member want at homecoming? Some service members may want to see only immediate family, while others may enjoy having extended family and friends.
- **Get enough rest the night before the reunion.** The excitement and anticipation of reunion may make it hard to rest, but homecoming day is likely to be long and tiring. Try to get as much sleep as possible the night before homecoming.
- **Manage your expectations.** With reunion comes many unseen hopes, and so many expectations can be overwhelming. Homecoming brings a lot of commotion, and it can cause tension and anxiety for partners, children and service members. Most reunions are not like what is seen on viral social media videos. If the moment of reunion is not what you expect, take it slow and give it time. There are a lot of things going on and managing expectations can be helpful, especially for children.



Reuniting after a long deployment can be one of the best things about Navy life. Enjoy homecoming and be prepared to renegotiate your relationship as you reconnect.

<b>Cooperation</b>	Each of you has been making daily decisions for yourself. Now you'll have to relearn cooperation. What television show are you going to watch? What do you want for dinner? What time are you going to get up in the morning? Keep talking. Communication can help you reconnect as a couple and as a family.
<b>Responsibilities</b>	Homecoming provides a great opportunity to reevaluate and reassign family chores. Who manages the money, mows the grass, does laundry and walks the dog are the types of daily chores that must be done. Discover which family member enjoys doing a particular chore and divide the unpleasant jobs fairly.
<b>Friendships</b>	You both may have made some very good friends during the deployment. You may miss the camaraderie and daily connection. Make time for your family. Limit time with friends until you've settled into a comfortable routine at home.
<b>New Stresses</b>	You may be feeling the physical, social and psychological consequences of deployment. Changes at home, such as the birth of a child, a serious illness in the family, a PCS move or other significant event can increase your level of stress. If you need assistance in dealing with stress, contact your local FFSC, a chaplain, Military OneSource, a psychologist, or a psychiatrist through your local medical department.
<b>Communication and Change</b>	<p>Learning to cooperate and navigate changes together can be challenging because your communication skills may be rusty. Service members may have to soften their communication style because they are used to giving and receiving orders without much discussion.</p> <p>You're not used to reading your partners nonverbal skills. "What did he mean by that sigh?" "Did she roll her eyes when I said that?" Watch for those non- verbal signals and calmly ask if you're not sure what is being "said."</p> <p>Those at home may have to help their service member catch up with missed experiences. Service members may have to clean up their language and social skills. You may have to adjust to different access to privacy than you experienced during deployment.</p> <p>If you or your partner feel uncomfortable with change, be patient with each other and discuss these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What makes you uncomfortable about this change? What is causing the resistance?</li> <li>2. What is positive about this change? In what ways is this change good?</li> <li>3. What can you do to make it easier to accept this change?</li> <li>4. What support is necessary to honor the changes that have taken place?</li> </ol> <p>If you or your partner feels so strongly about change that you reach an impasse in your discussion, you might consider counseling. If you are not comfortable seeking counseling, you can find support through professional organizations, network groups or faith-based entities that offer tools and resources to aid your situation. For example, contact Navy 311 at 1-855-NAVY-311 or text <a href="mailto:Navy311@navy.mil">Navy311@navy.mil</a> to connect with a chaplain in your area, or visit the <a href="#">Military OneSource website</a> for a listing of non-clinical relationship resources, including personalized relationship coaching options.</p>



## Tips from Experienced Navy Couples

- Court your significant other — even before homecoming day — through letters, emails and phone calls.
- Be careful not to get caught in the “Who Had It Worse” game.
- Plan time together as a couple and make “love” every day, including doing things with and for each other — smiles, kisses, gentle touches, cleaning the car, cooking meals, etc.
- Share your feelings. It’s natural to have mixed emotions at this time.
- Be realistic. The perfect reunion fantasy is just that — a fantasy.
- Expect to be more exhausted than you think; fatigue is a common homecoming reaction for everyone.
- Intimacy involves two types of closeness: emotional and physical. Expect intimacy to be awkward at first. Talk about each other’s expectations for reconnecting physically.
- Communicating openly and honestly with your partner is a sure way to help make this homecoming the best it can be!
- If homecoming day is also a duty day, plan to make the best of it. Have dinner together!
- Tell your partner how much you love and appreciate them; respect and trust each other.

## Updating Documents

After a deployment, you should review some of the administrative details you arranged before the deployment. You may need to make changes to keep your information current.

- **Update DEERS.** You may need to make changes to your information upon your return from deployment. Complete instructions for updating DEERS can be found on the [Rapids ID Card Office](#) website.
- **Revisit Legal Documents.** You may also need to review the legal documents you created before deploying, including powers of attorney, a living will, and last will and testament. Some of these may need to be revoked or rewritten to reflect your current situation. Contact your Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) for help. You can find the nearest office through the [RLSO Office](#) locator.

## Revisiting Financials

When you return from deployment, be sure to review the following:

- **Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).** Service members may receive additional pays and allowances during deployment. When you return from deployment, your pay is likely to change. Take time to carefully review your LES to be sure it is correct. You can view your LES through [MyPay](#), the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s online system. You can also access your tax statements and view any allotments through this site.
  - **Special pays and allowances.** During deployment you may have received special pays and allowances that increased your income. When you return home, these pays and allowances should stop. Check your LES to be sure that any deployment-related pays or allowances (e.g., Family Separation Allowance [FSA], flight pay and imminent danger pay) have stopped. If you are still receiving the additional money, do not spend it. Any overpayments you receive must be returned.



Set the money aside and contact your command administration department to notify them of the error.

- **Allotments.** If you scheduled any allotments during the deployment, you may want to stop them and resume paying these obligations yourself. You can start, stop and change allotments by completing DD Form 2558, *Authorization to Start, Stop, or Change an Allotment*, and turning it in to your command administration department.
- **Tax status.** During your deployment your earnings may have been tax-free if/when you were in a combat zone. Enlisted personnel and warrant officers have no income limit for this tax exclusion; there is a limit on nontaxable income for officers. Your W-2 for that year will reflect the reduction in your taxable income.
- **Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).** If you qualified for any financial protections under SCRA, these may be expiring if you are leaving active duty.
- **Emergency Assistance Preauthorizations.** You may also wish to revoke any unexpired preauthorizations now that you are home.

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**TIP:** Create a new spending plan. When you return from deployment, your income is likely to change. This may be an excellent time to create a new spending plan based on current income. Your Command Financial Specialist or the personal financial management staff at the FFSC can help you create a new plan.

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**Assistance with Controlling Finances.** If you need help creating a spending plan or managing your finances, it is available through the personal financial management program at your military family support center or by contacting the financial counselors at Military OneSource.

- **Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP).** The PFMP offers instruction and individual counseling on financial topics to help military families achieve their financial goals. You can find the nearest military family support center through [Military Installations](#).
- **Financial Counseling through Military OneSource.** Military OneSource has partnered with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) to provide face-to-face financial counseling through local NFCC offices. Financial counseling is also available over the phone for those who cannot attend in-person sessions. Visit [Military OneSource](#) for more information.
- **Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED).** FINRED offers educational products to show you ways to make the most of your money. Visit the [FINRED website](#) for financial education materials covering topics from pay and savings to major purchases, credit and taxes.
- **MyNavy Financial Literacy App.** This app supports training via financial readiness touchpoint courses (including pre- and post-deployment touchpoints), and a collection of in-app and online resources. Visit [applocker.navy.mil](http://applocker.navy.mil) to learn more and download the app.



## Reintegration Phase



Once the excitement of homecoming ends, service members begin to reintegrate into their normal lives. This is an adjustment for all members of the family, including spouses, parents and children. This section of the handbook addresses the challenges service members and their families face as they adjust to being reunited.

### Reintegration Tips for Single Service Members

- Be prepared for change. People and situations may have changed while you were away.
- Make plans for the return. If you do not have family nearby, make plans with friends to do something special to celebrate homecoming.
- Be careful with spending. It may be tempting to spend some of the money you have saved, but be cautious about making large purchases.
- Avoid drinking excessively or turning to drugs. Seek professional help if you are having difficulty sleeping or experiencing unusual anger or feelings of anxiety.
- Do not be afraid to seek help if you need it. Contact the nearest military family support center, a chaplain or Military OneSource if you need assistance.

## Reintegrating with Partners

It takes time for couples to reconnect after deployment. Both service members and spouses have undergone changes during their time apart. The following tips should help couples reintegrate successfully.

### Tips for Service Members and Spouses

- Be prepared for change.
- Be patient. Take time to settle back into your routines.
- Get reacquainted with your spouse.
- Ease back into roles and responsibilities.
- Be patient when reestablishing intimacy with your spouse.
- Do not be afraid to seek help if needed. Contact the nearest military family support center, a chaplain, or Military OneSource if you need assistance.

### Building Trust

Part of reintegration for couples is establishing trust after a long time apart. Be sure to:

- Pay attention to your partner's needs. If you are attentive to your partner's needs, they will be attentive to yours.
- Be a person of your word. Following through tells your partner that you value them and the relationship.
- Take responsibility for your actions. Acknowledge when you misstep and how it affects your partner.
- Agree to forgive and forgo. Learning how to receive a sincere apology is just as important as learning how to give one.



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**NOTE:** You may need help to rebuild trust. Seek professional help if you need it.

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### **Balancing Time**

After homecoming, additional time demands are placed on both service members and spouses. You will need to recognize the need for:

- Quality time vs. quantity time. There will be times when you and your partner will need time alone. When needing alone time, reassure each other that the relationship is safe and still intact.
- Couple time vs. family time. This can be especially challenging when you have children and other relatives who are eager to be a part of your homecoming. Just remember, a loving marriage is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your children and extended families.

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**NOTE:** A long-term, loving relationship is more than enjoyable, it gives you emotional support and strength. Whether you are dating or have been married for years, it is important to nurture and grow your relationship. [Love Every Day](#), a free relationship resilience tool from Military OneSource, is a fun and interactive way to improve the quality and stability of your connection.

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# Twenty Questions

Twenty Questions is a communication game that builds intimacy, honesty, openness and trust. Use these questions whenever you want to feel closer to each other, when you believe communication is becoming an issue, or even when you just want to have fun!

## Twenty Questions: Deployment and Homecoming

<b>How would you describe your overall deployment experience?</b>	<b>What surprised you most about homecoming?</b>	<b>What do you wish I would do more (or less)?</b>
<b>What was the best (or most difficult) part of deployment?</b>	<b>What did you miss most (or least) about home?</b>	<b>What are your expectations for reintegrating?</b>
<b>In what ways has deployment changed you?</b>	<b>How did you spend your downtime during deployment?</b>	<b>What would constitute a perfect day for you?</b>
<b>What was your greatest fear about homecoming?</b>	<b>How will you let me know when you need time alone?</b>	<b>What would make our home more comfortable?</b>
<b>What changes make you uncomfortable?</b>	<b>For what do you feel most grateful?</b>	<b>How would you like to spend quality time?</b>
<b>How will we know when/if we need help adjusting?</b>	<b>What makes you feel most relaxed?</b>	<b>What are your expectations for how we maintain our home?</b>
<b>What are your expectations for how we maintain our home?</b>	<b>What new things did you learn during deployment?</b>	<b>What changes are you pleased to see?</b>



## Leverage Preferences for Affection

There are many ways to express love, and preferences for receiving affection vary from person to person. Trust grows when love is present. Learning how your partner prefers to receive affection will help you know the best way to demonstrate your love and caring. When you are committed to learning someone else's preference for affection, you are focused on their needs rather than your own.

Attending to your partner's preference may be one of the simplest ways to strengthen your relationship. At the same time, communicating to your partner how you would like to receive affection will help them express love in a way that makes you feel that they care. Research has found some overarching preferences for receiving affection. See a description of each preference below.

### Encouraging Words

This preference is about expressing affection through words, praise or appreciation. People with this preference enjoy kind words and reassurance. Uplifting quotes, love notes and cute text messages that give compliments can make this person's day.

### Heartfelt Actions

When this is someone's preference, love and appreciation are felt when people do nice things for them. Small heartfelt actions go a long way and could even include things like doing the dishes, putting gas in the car or putting the kids to bed.

### Special Moments

People with this preference want quality over quantity; giving undivided attention is key. Appeal to someone with this preference by putting down electronic devices, making eye contact and actively listening. When you are together, ensure you are fully present.

### Tangible Contact

A person with this preference feels loved through tangible affection. Aside from sex, someone with tangible contact as their preference feels loved with contact such as hand-holding, massages or touches on the arm. Ultimately, they want to be physically close to their partners.

### Thoughtful Presents

For someone with this preference, thoughtful presents are symbolic of love and affection. They treasure not only the present but the time and effort the gift giver put into it. When giving a gift to someone with this preference, they value the meaning behind the present more than the size or expense.

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**NOTE:** Military OneSource provides free resources to rekindle, repair and reset your relationship, including [Re the We](#) and [Building Healthy Relationships](#).

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## Reintegration with Parents



Parents fill various support roles for their military children. As service members begin to reintegrate into their families, parents can help them by considering some of the following recommendations:

- Be prepared for change.
- Be patient. Give your service member time to get comfortable being home again.
- Get reacquainted with the service member.
- Work as a team with the service member's spouse.
- Provide support to the service member's spouse.
- Encourage service members and their spouses to seek help if needed.

## Reintegration with Children



Service members need to recognize that their children have changed during deployment; they have made new friends and acquired new skills. Children may also be feeling stress from the changes to their household after the service member's return.

### 10 Tips for Reuniting with Children

1. Honor developmental ages and stages.
2. Ask the at-home parent about changes.
3. Appreciate your child's contribution.
4. Maintain routines and ask your child for help.
5. Celebrate growth and normalize change.
6. Encourage the sharing of feelings.
7. Discuss changes as a family.
8. Be patient with yourself, the at-home parent and your child.
9. Focus on your love for your child.
10. Ask the at-home parent about how to strengthen bonds with your child.



## Tips for Rebonding and Rebuilding

While returning home from deployment brings adjustments for all family members, investing time into rebonding and rebuilding your relationship with your child, and with the whole family unit, is critical for reintegration success. Sometimes, at-home parents may have difficulty giving returning service members suggestions to reconnect with children. That is OK. Here are five ways you can help make reintegration easier for your child, adapted from Military OneSource (<https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/reunion-reintegration/family-members/five-tips-to-support-children-during-reintegration/>):

1. **Plan special reunion activities with children.** Spend individual time with each child. Time with your child does not have to be complicated or expensive. It could be going out for ice cream or playing a game together. Prioritize having fun and spending time together.
2. **Make time to let children talk.** Children are inquisitive and may be curious about deployment experiences. Be careful about what you reveal. It will also benefit your child if you make time to listen to their thoughts, respect their feelings and address their concerns. Children need to express their emotions and receive support.
3. **Recognize and adapt to how they have changed.** There may have been significant changes in home routines during deployment. It can help if you learn about changes to your child's schedule and maintain a flexible mindset regarding new approaches, responsibilities, interests or even changes in personality. It may comfort children if you make time to get to know them, learn about their new interests and recognize their growth and achievements.
4. **Monitor changes in behavior.** Stress may appear differently in children when compared with adults. If you or the at-home parent notice a change in your child or unusual behavior, or changes in sleeping and eating habits or academic performance, you may want to talk to a professional. There are many resources to help you, such as FFSC child counselors, and an SLO may be able to connect you with a school counselor.
5. **Let children adjust at their own pace.** As mentioned, be patient. Each child responds to reintegration differently, and it may take time to adjust.

Not sure where to start in planning your family's post-deployment bonding experiences? Make time to check out these resources and enjoy a new experience together!

- **Navy Getaways** provides exciting recreational getaway experiences for military families. Vacation rentals, RVs and camping sites are the ideal places to rest and recharge. Visit <https://get.dodlodging.net/> to find a getaway that suits your family's desires.
- The **Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation**, or CREDO, sponsored by the Navy Chief of Chaplains, offers personal and spiritual growth workshops, retreats and seminars. These programs and events help service members and their families develop the spiritual resources and resiliency necessary to thrive in the military environment. Contact your local chaplain's office for more information.
- **Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)** conducts activities and events and provides services including fitness centers, tickets and travel, a digital library and more. Visit [www.navymwr.org](http://www.navymwr.org) for more information.

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**TIP:** Sometimes we need extra support to help our children reintegrate. The FFSC and the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) are excellent resources to help build resilience with children. The NPSP is available to parents who are expecting a child (prenatal) through parents with children younger than age 4. Because of deployment, your family may be considered for priority services. Contact your local FFSC for more information about the NPSP. If you would like information regarding resources for children older than age 4, please contact your SLO.

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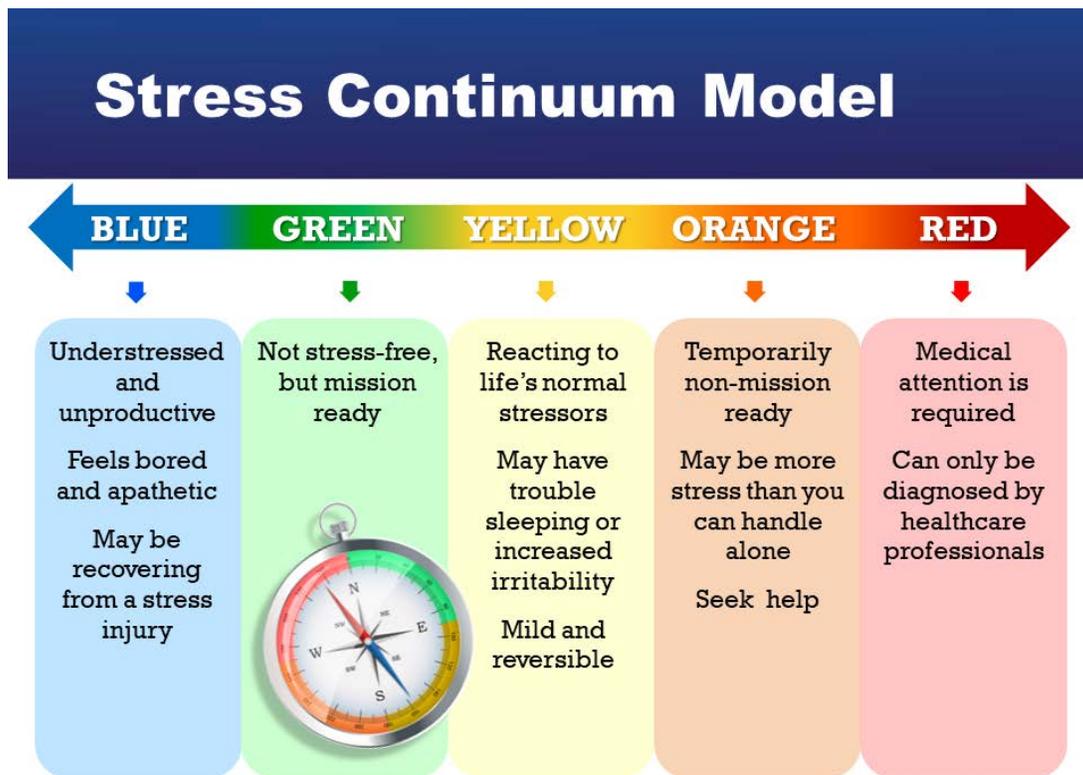
## Stress Reduction, Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention



Family and friends may notice changes in mood or behavior in their service members. Some of these may be warning signs for service members at risk for suicide or suffering from combat and operational stress or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Below are potential warning signs, ways family and friends can help, and organizations that offer support and counseling for service members and their families.

### Stress Continuum

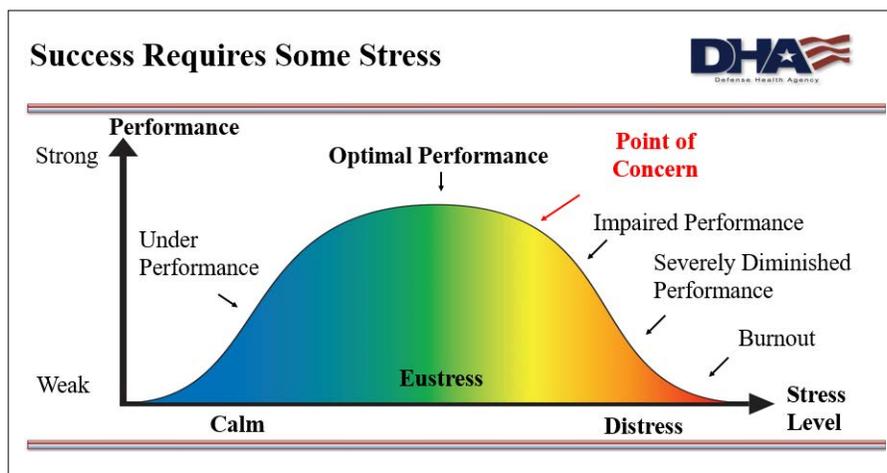
The stress continuum consists of five stages: Idle, Ready, Reacting, Injured, and Ill. Features of each stage include:





### Proactive Stress Reduction

Awareness of the stress continuum can support service members' and family members' efforts to reduce stress. Stress reduction's goal is to ensure that you experience optimal health and performance. The Expanded Operational Stress Control (E-OSC) Program uses the model below to demonstrate that not all stress is bad. In fact, people often need to move out of their comfort zone to perform at their peak. However, if stress grows to the point of diminished health and performance, you have the power to apply techniques and seek supports to bring you back to the sweet spot.





Choosing healthy coping behaviors to reduce stress and taking care of yourself can increase your ability to thrive. To help yourself reduce stress, consider your existing coping habits. If your habits are likely to increase stress (in other words, negative), gradually replace negative coping habits with positive coping habits. Below is a list of positive and negative coping habits.

Positive Coping Strategies	Negative Coping Strategies
Create a problem-solving plan and follow through	Avoid friends and family
Eat a balanced diet	Bite nails
Exercise (run, lift weights, yoga, etc.)	Blame others for problems
Get a massage	Decline help to tough it out
Laugh or cry	Drive fast
Listen to music	Eat too much or too little
Meditate or practice mindfulness	Engage in self-criticism
Nurture social connections	Excessive gaming
Play sports	Hit, throw or kick something
Play with a pet	Increase alcohol use
Pray or go to a religious service	Lash out at others
Practice deep breathing or muscle relaxation	Misuse medication
Prioritize sleep	Overconsume caffeine
Seek counseling or other support	Overschedule your social life to avoid problems
Spend time outdoors	Overuse smartphone or other technology devices
Take a bath or a shower	Participate in reckless behaviors
Talk to someone trustworthy	Spend irrationally (gambling, shopping, etc.)
Use positive affirmations	Stop exercise
Volunteer to help others	Use tobacco/nicotine
Write, paint or do another creative activity	Watch endless hours of TV

Make time to consider the actions you can take to reduce or stop your use of the negative coping strategies and develop more positive coping habits. Connect with a family member, friend or shipmate and ask for their support in keeping you accountable to your plan.

**NOTE:** Self-care is an important part of wellness that deserves the same thoughtfulness as any other important event. For information on how and why to develop a self-care plan, visit the [Project 1 Small Act](#) blog.



Here are some additional stress-reduction techniques. These techniques are only a snapshot of those identified with the Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (NCCOSC) and the Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE). Add these techniques to your coping toolkit.

- **Calming breath:** Inhale deeply through the nose and exhale through rounded lips, as if blowing out a candle. Feel free to make sound as you exhale, simply blowing out the air or blowing out with a sighing, releasing sound. Allow the head to drop toward the chest as you exhale, thus releasing the back of the neck. Imagine that all tension and stress is being released with each of these exaggerated out-breaths.
- **Brief In-the-Zone (ITZ) exercises:** Brief ITZ exercises help reduce tension and anxiety quickly. Brief ITZ allows you to STOP, BREATHE, REFLECT and CHOOSE in the middle of a stressful experience. The STOP is a call to slow down, pause, relax and focus on BREATH (or any ITZ technique) to become mindful of others, our situation and ourselves. With this increased awareness, we can then REFLECT on the stressful situation and CHOOSE how to view and react to the situation in a way that is most helpful and consistent with our values. The Brief ITZ returns our wandering or scattered attention to the present moment. After the Brief ITZ, we may notice an adequate stop in our stress that allows us to have improved awareness and better choose what is best to do. Brief ITZs lead to being more mindful throughout our day. These exercises use diaphragmatic breathing. If you have trouble with this, try slowly inhaling through your nose and slowly exhaling through your mouth. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. Try putting your hand on your stomach to feel the rise and fall. Relax your stomach muscles. Diaphragmatic breathing is not possible if you are holding your stomach in!
  - Brief ITZ Practice
    1. Pick a word, phrase or image. You may also choose to focus solely on the rhythm of your breath.
    2. Close your eyes.
    3. Relax your muscles.
    4. Breathe slowly and naturally and, as you do, repeat your focus word or phrase, or picture your chosen images, as you exhale.
    5. Assume a nonjudgmental attitude. Don't worry about how well you're doing. When other thoughts come to mind, simply say to yourself, "Oh well," and gently return to the repetition.
    6. Continue until you feel comfortable with the relaxation. If you are practicing at home, you might want to have a clock nearby to check how much time has passed.
    7. Practice this technique once or twice daily.



- **Recalibration:** This form of mindful breathing can also help you return to the present moment. It goes a step further with guided intentions to follow along with as you practice slow, steady breathing. For example, breathing in peace and relaxation and breathing out tension or stress.
  - Recalibration Practice
    1. Sit quietly and focus on your breath, breathing in slow, easy breaths down into your belly. Breathe in a feeling of peace and relaxation and breathe out tension or stress.
    2. Think of a box. It can be any size, any color. Take any worries or concerns—anything you might feel anxious about—and put them in the box.
    3. Close the box and put it safely on a shelf. Remember, you can take the box down at any time, but right now, you can leave it safely on the shelf.
    4. Breathe in and out, slowly. Each time you breathe in, inhale peace. Each time you breathe out, let go of tension or discomfort. Feel yourself relaxing.
    5. Now, slowly bring yourself back to the room, knowing you can return to this quiet place at any time.
- **Focused Attention: Sometimes, our minds go around in circles thinking about the past or worrying about the future.** You cannot change either, but you can focus your attention on the here and now by concentrating on your senses instead of your thoughts.
  - Focused Attention Practice
    1. Sight: Name things you see as you slowly scan the environment.
    2. Sound: Listen to the noises inside and outside the room.
    3. Touch: Feel objects around you (e.g., a rock, a ring, the rough bark of a tree).
    4. Taste: Take a bite of food and consider the texture and flavors.
    5. Smell: Notice the smell of leaves and plants around you.

**NOTE:** To learn more techniques like those outlined above, attend Mind Body Mental Fitness (MBMF) classes. MBMF classes are hosted by FFSC and available online or in person. Sign up to learn proactive ways to achieve mental fitness, find balance in mind, body, spirit and social domains of your life and gain practical skills that can be used daily. Contact your local FFSC for more details!

**Having trouble reducing stress? These resources can help.**

- FFSC: [https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html)
- Military OneSource: [www.militaryonesource.mil/](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/), 1-800-342-9647
- Veteran’s Crisis Line: [www.veteranscrisisline.net/](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/), 1-800-273-8255 (press 1), text 838255



## Combat and Operational Stress

Engaging in or witnessing the aftermath of combat can result in service members feeling fear, sadness and horror. These emotions can have an effect on all aspects of the service member's life, including personal relationships and work performance.

Combat and operational stress is not an illness; it may be the result of stressful conditions during training, deployment, humanitarian missions, government support missions and other assignments. For more information, go to the [Navy's Expanded Operational Stress Control \(E-OSC\) program](#) and the [Navy Marine Corps Public Health Center](#).

**Risk Factors:** All service members are at risk for stress injuries. Contributing factors include:

- Job environment, including unpredictability and being away from family/support network.
- Losing a close friend or valued leader.
- Being physically injured, especially if seriously.
- Suffering a traumatic brain injury.
- History of previous stress injuries, whether suffered during or before service.

## Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety condition that can result from experiencing a threat of death, serious injury or a physical threat such as military combat, car accident, sexual assault or physical assault. The good news: PTSD is treatable. For more information about PTSD or to get help, go to:

- [Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence](#)
- [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#)
- [National Center for PTSD](#)
- [Vets4Warriors](#)

The following list provides some examples of possible symptoms of PTSD. For some people, PTSD symptoms may start later on, or they may come and go over time. Although these symptoms are normal reactions to a traumatic event, they may be an indication of PTSD if they do not diminish with time or if they become worse.

- Avoiding things that remind you of the event.
- Flashbacks of the event.
- Having more negative thoughts and feelings than before, including nightmares.
- Experiencing persistent anxiety.
- Being easily startled and feeling on edge, like it is hard to relax or even sleep.
- Having difficulty in relationships.



## Potential Warning Signs for Suicide

Sometimes, stress responses can increase a person's risk for suicide. Family members, friends and service members can help one another get the support they need by knowing the warning signs of suicide, how to intervene and where to get professional help. The following are just a few of the warning signs:

- Exhibits sudden mood swings or changes in personality or behavior.
- Withdraws from family, friends and normal activities.
- Experiences a recent loss, such as the death of a loved one, a broken relationship or the loss of a job.
- Feels hopeless. "Things will never get better." "I can't do anything right." "It's not worth it. You're better off without me."

## Be Proactive.

Be mindful of your well-being. Seek help from a command leader, chaplain, professional counselor or a medical provider when you are struggling and push yourself out of your comfort zone when you are idle. These actions are signs of strength and resilience. Likewise, look out for your shipmates, friends and family members.

## How to Give Help

At some point, someone may confide in you that they are having suicidal thoughts. This can be overwhelming, especially if you are not sure how to respond. Ask, Care, Treat (ACT) is the Navy's call to action to encourage early intervention when a Sailor is experiencing difficulty navigating stress or may be at risk for suicide. You should be able to recognize the risk factors and warning signs that indicate a potential suicidal crisis, and you should feel confident in your ability to ACT:

- **Ask:** Ask clearly and directly, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- **Care:** Stay calm. Listen without judgment. Show that you care by telling your family member, friend or shipmate you are concerned, but do not give your opinion about suicide. Talking about suicide will not increase the risk that it will happen. You do not have to have answers; just listen and be present.
- **Treat:** Do not leave someone experiencing suicidal thoughts alone. Take threats seriously and get the person immediate assistance. Escort them to the nearest chaplain, trusted leader or medical professional for treatment. If a person does not want to get help, contact a trusted command leader. Call 911 if danger is imminent.

When all is said and done, be kind, respectful and supportive. While suicidal thoughts should never be kept secret, maintain privacy as much as possible and reassure your family member, friend or shipmate that they did the right thing by calling for or physically going to get help.



## Lethal-means Safety

During times of increased stress, the risk of suicide is heightened. Although some suicides are planned, the majority of suicide attempts occur within an hour of a crisis and are impulsive reactions to stress. Suicide is preventable, and practicing lethal-means safety has been proven as an effective way to prevent suicide. Some lethal means include, but are not limited to, firearms, certain prescription medications and structural hazards (shower curtain rods, ropes, cords, etc.). Storing personally owned firearms with a gun lock in a secured safe, separate from ammunition, can reduce suicide risk. See your FFSC, chaplain or suicide prevention coordinator (SPC) for more information about gun lock availability at your installation.

If you are struggling, reduce your access to lethal means by telling someone you trust. Ask a friend, leader, chaplain, SPC or loved one to secure your firearm and limit your exposure to environmental hazards. You can even voluntarily call security to remove weapons, and the command can arrange storage in the base armory. If you recognize someone else who is struggling, asking them about their firearm is an act of friendship, protection and connectedness.

**not feeling like yourself?**

Sailors are encouraged to consider storing their personal firearm during highly stressful periods. Commands are encouraged to work with Sailors to recognize those who need help and offer to store their weapons, per NAVADMIN 263/14.

Help is always available through your local Navy chaplain, Fleet and Family Support Center or the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (Press 1).

**Small 1ACTO**  
#BeThere for Every Sailor, Every Day

Every Sailor, Every Day [navstress.wordpress.com](http://navstress.wordpress.com)

## Where to Get Help

Here are some of the main resources available in your military community and recommended by the Navy Suicide Prevention Program:

- Chain of command: Command leaders can provide support, help and resources for Sailors experiencing suicide-related behaviors.
- [Chaplains](#): Sometimes service members and their families would prefer to trust and confide in a chaplain to receive guidance or help seeing things more clearly. Chaplains are available to talk 24/7 and are just a click or phone call away through Navy311. Communications are confidential unless the service member decides otherwise.
- [FFSC counselors](#) : Service members and their families can obtain counseling, crisis intervention and information and referral services. In the absence of an FFSC, seek support from the nearest [Military Family Support Center](#) or [Military OneSource](#).
- [Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life \(SAIL\) program](#): SAIL is a voluntary program that quickly provides support during the stressful period after a suicide-related behavior (SRB). SAIL case managers are FFSC counselors who will maintain contact with Sailors, health care providers and command leadership, helping with care coordination and engaging additional resources as needed. While SAIL does not replace mental health treatment, it is designed around a series of caring contacts within the first 90 days after an SRB, the period of highest risk.



- [Primary care manager and primary care mental health provider](#): Medical treatment facilities (MTFs) offer counseling services on site by military behavioral health professionals and doctors. The nearest MTF can be found through the TRICARE MTF locator.

### **Here are some National 24/7 Resources:**

[Veterans' Military Crisis Line](#): Connects active-duty service members and veterans in crisis with qualified and caring Department of Veterans Affairs(VA) responders through a confidential, toll-free hotline. Support is available via telephone, text or online. Visit the website or call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), Press 1.

[Military OneSource](#): Offers assistance over the phone, online or via email. Military OneSource can be contacted through their website or by phone stateside at 1-800-342-9647.

[DoD Safe Helpline](#): Serves as the sole secure, confidential and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for members of the Department of Defense community affected by sexual assault. All services are anonymous, confidential and tailored to support members of the DoD community and their loved ones affected by sexual assault. Visit the website for services online or call 1-877-995-5247.

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): Provides free and confidential support for people in distress, and prevention and crisis resources for you and your loved ones. Visit the website or call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) for assistance.

### **Additional Sources of Help include:**

[Navy Wounded Warrior](#): Provides Sailors and Coast Guardsmen, and their families, with nonmedical care while they are recovering from serious illness or injury. Providers tailor support to each enrolled service member's recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration needs. The program allows service members and their families to focus on recovery without distractions.

[Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Centers](#): The VA Vet Centers offer readjustment counseling to combat veterans and their family members. Contact Vet Centers' free, around-the-clock call center at 1-877-927-8387. The call center team is comprised of combat veterans from several eras and family members of veterans.

[Navy Marine Corps Public Health Center](#): Provides information for service members and families about stress illnesses and injuries. The website includes information on building resilience and how to manage stress.

[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#): Offers information and psychological health readiness resources, and promotes initiatives that prepare service members for military operations, support them during periods of transition, enhance psychological resilience and reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health care assistance.

[TRICARE Mental Health](#): TRICARE covers up to two outpatient treatment sessions per week in any combination of individual, family or group sessions. More information on TRICARE-covered outpatient behavioral health counseling is available on the TRICARE Mental Health website.



[Real Warriors Live Chat](#): Click the link to access a live chat with a trained health resource consultant who is ready to talk, listen and provide the guidance and resources you are looking for.

[VA Caregiver Support](#): Caregiver Support connects caregivers with programs such as peer support for caregivers, adult day health care and home-based care. Call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.

[Vet Center Combat Call Center](#): 1-877-WAR-VETS is an around-the-clock confidential call center where combat veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life.

[Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program \(YRRP\)](#): Supports National Guard and Reserve members and their families by connecting them with information and resources through Yellow Ribbon events.

## **Military Support Centers**

Building a network of support is a critical component of managing deployment successfully. Be mindful of the no-cost resources available to service members and their families. No matter your deployment circumstance, prioritize building and maintaining a reliable support network sooner rather than later. By doing so, you will foster a positive and supportive deployment and reintegration experience in which you can thrive. Keep this list handy, so you can easily access assistance when you need it!

[Fleet and Family Support Center \(FFSC\)](#): The Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) promotes self-reliance and resiliency to strengthen the military and its family members, supports mission readiness, and helps commanders plan for and respond to family readiness needs. Program areas include:

- Personal Financial Management
- Deployment Support
- Deployed Resiliency Counselors
- Deployed Resiliency Educators
- Family Employment Readiness
- Ombudsman Support
- Transition Assistance Program
- Exceptional Family Member Program
- Family Advocacy Program
- Clinical Counseling
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program
- New Parent Support Program

[Marine Corps Community Service \(MCCS\)](#): MCCS provides programs that enhance operational readiness and quality of life for Marines, their families, retirees and civilians.

[Army Community Service \(ACS\)](#): The mission of ACS is to provide comprehensive, coordinated and responsive services that support readiness of Soldiers, civilian employees and their families.

[Airmen and Family Readiness Division](#): The official website for Air Force family members.

## **Military Resources**

[Chaplains](#): Chaplains play a vital role in helping their fellow sea-service personnel and family members. Chaplains are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide spiritual guidance and help service members and their families sort through issues or concerns.

[Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation \(CREDO\)](#): The CREDO program, sponsored by the Navy Chief of Chaplains, offers personal and spiritual growth workshops, retreats and seminars. These programs and events help service members and their families develop the spiritual resources and resiliency necessary to thrive in the military environment. Contact your local Chaplain's office for more information.



[Child and Youth Program \(CYP\)](#): CYP provides child care and recreational programs and services for eligible children and youth ages 4 weeks to 18 years. Programs and services are designed to meet the needs of service members and their families.

[Command Ombudsmen](#): Ombudsmen are volunteers, appointed by a commanding officer, who serve as an informational link between command leadership and Navy families. They are not professional counselors, but they are trained to listen to questions or problems and to refer service members and family members to professionals who can help.

[Compass](#): Compass is a mentoring program by spouses for spouses. Participants create a support network with experienced spouses and learn how to face the challenges of the military lifestyle.

[Defense Finance and Accounting Service \(DFAS\)](#): DFAS ensures that service members are paid. myPay is a useful feature of the DFAS website, allowing service members to get real-time information about their pay accounts, start and stop allotments, sign up for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), change their withholding and much more.

[Family Readiness Groups \(FRGs\)](#): FRGs coordinate and conduct informational and social activities to enhance preparedness and increase the resiliency and well-being of service members and their families. FRGs help prepare service members for deployments and homecoming, provide family support during deployments and help families adjust to challenges and to support one another in times of personal, unit or area crises.

[Free Space "A" Flights for Families of Deployed](#): Spouses and children of personnel deployed 120 days or longer may be able to use military transport in the continental United States, to/from the continental United States and within/between theater, provided they have a verification letter from the service member's commander. Visit Military OneSource to read [Plan Your Trip With Space-A Travel](#).

[Joint Services Support \(JSS\)](#): JSS advocates for National Guard service members, families and veterans by coordinating a network of services including family support, transition, reintegration and behavioral health services.

[Military OneSource](#): Military OneSource provides information and resources to help balance work and family life. Consultants are available 24/7. The website has materials specifically addressing deployment-related concerns and issues.

[Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation \(MWR\)](#): Access activities, events and innovative recreation programs worldwide. Services include fitness, tickets and travel, recreational lodging, libraries and more!

[TRICARE](#): TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active-duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their familie and survivors. TRICARE offers comprehensive, affordable health coverage with several plan options, a pharmacy benefit, dental options and other special programs.

[Wounded Warrior Programs](#): The military's wounded warrior programs provide assistance and advocacy for severely wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans and their families. These programs assist service members and their families as they return to duty or transition to civilian life.

- [Navy Wounded Warrior](#): Navy Wounded Warrior is the Navy's organization for coordinating the nonmedical care of seriously wounded, ill and injured Sailors and Coast Guardsmen and providing resources and support to their families.
- [Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment](#): The Wounded Warrior Regiment provides nonmedical care to combat and noncombat wounded, ill, and injured (WII) Marines, Sailors attached to Marine units and their family members in order to maximize their recovery as they return to duty or transition to civilian life.
- [Army Recovery Care Program \(ARCP\)](#): The Army Recovery Care Program (ARCP) is the official Army program that assists and advocates for severely WII Soldiers, veterans and their families, wherever they are located, regardless of military status.



- [Air Force Wounded Warrior \(AFW2\)](#): AFW2 ensures care, service and assistance before and after wounded warriors separate or retire. Strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that wounded Airmen receive professional, individualized guidance and support to help them successfully transition out of the Air Force and return to civilian life.

## Community Resources

[American Legion Troop Support Services](#): The American Legion offers volunteer assistance, cash grants and comfort items for service members recovering in hospitals and transition units. The Family Support Network connects families of service members with posts in their local communities where they can get assistance with everything from lawn mowing to child care to financial help.

[American Red Cross](#): The organization's primary service for the armed forces is emergency communications and verifications in the event of family emergencies. Additionally, the Red Cross provides emergency financial assistance for families who are not near a Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society office.

[Families OverComing Under Stress \(FOCUS\)](#): FOCUS provides resilience training to military children, families and couples. Family members learn skills to overcome common challenges related to military life. Contact your local FOCUS program for more information.

[Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society \(NMCRS\)](#): NMCRS is a private, nonprofit organization that provides educational and financial assistance, including emergency loans and grants, to Navy and Marine Corps families.

[Operation Homefront](#): Operation Homefront is a nonprofit organization that provides emergency assistance for troops, the families they leave behind and wounded service members when they return home.

[VFW Unmet Needs](#): Unmet Needs helps service members who run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity. The program provides financial aid up to \$1,500 to assist with basic life needs in the form of a grant. This is not a loan, so no repayment is required.

Besides the top resources for military families, this list includes links to other common support resources.



# Deployment Support Resource Links

The list is not comprehensive. As you learn about others, write them down and spread the word among friends. Links are shared for informational purposes and links to non-federal entities do not imply Department of Defense or Department of the Navy endorsement.

Resource	Website
<b>4-H Military Partnerships</b>	<a href="http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org">4-hmilitarypartnerships.org</a>
<b>15 Tips for Helping Your Teenager Deal with Deployment</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-through-deployment/15-tips-for-helping-your-teenager-deal-with-deployment/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-through-deployment/15-tips-for-helping-your-teenager-deal-with-deployment/</a>
<b>21st Century Sailor</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/</a>
<b>Air Force Aid Society (AFAS)</b>	<a href="http://www.afas.org">www.afas.org</a>
<b>Air Force Key Spouse</b>	<a href="https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Key-Spouse-Program/">https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Key-Spouse-Program/</a>
<b>Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)</b>	<a href="http://www.afreserve.com">www.afreserve.com</a>
<b>Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2)</b>	<a href="http://www.woundedwarrior.af.mil">www.woundedwarrior.af.mil</a>
<b>American Bar Association Home Front</b>	<a href="http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/milvets/aba_home_front">www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/milvets/aba_home_front</a>
<b>American Legion Troop Support Services</b>	<a href="http://www.legion.org/troops">www.legion.org/troops</a>
<b>American Red Cross</b>	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>
<b>American Red Cross Chapter Directory</b>	<a href="http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html">www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html</a>
<b>American Red Cross Prepare Your Home and Family</b>	<a href="http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family">www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family</a>
<b>American Red Cross Military Families</b>	<a href="https://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/military-families.html">https://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/military-families.html</a>
<b>Armed Forces Legal Assistance Office Locator</b>	<a href="http://legalassistance.law.af.mil">legalassistance.law.af.mil</a>
<b>Armed Services YMCA</b>	<a href="http://www.asymca.org">www.asymca.org</a>
<b>Army Community Service (ACS)</b>	<a href="https://www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services/personal-assistance">https://www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services/personal-assistance</a>
<b>Army Emergency Relief (AER)</b>	<a href="http://www.armyemergencyrelief.org">www.armyemergencyrelief.org</a>
<b>Army Recovery Care Program (ARCP)</b>	<a href="https://www.arcp.army.mil">https://www.arcp.army.mil</a>
<b>Army SFRG</b>	<a href="https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2019/08/16/">https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2019/08/16/</a>
<b>Blue Star Moms</b>	<a href="http://www.bluestarmoms.org">www.bluestarmoms.org</a>
<b>Chaplains</b>	<a href="https://www.navywoundedwarrior.com/recovery/chaplain-support">https://www.navywoundedwarrior.com/recovery/chaplain-support</a>
<b>Child and Youth Program (CYP)</b>	<a href="http://www.navycyp.org">www.navycyp.org</a>
<b>Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA)</b>	<a href="http://www.cgmahq.org">www.cgmahq.org</a>
<b>Coast Guard Ombudsman</b>	<a href="http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/ombudsman">www.dcms.uscg.mil/ombudsman</a>
<b>DD Form 2558, Authorization to Start, Stop or Change an Allotment</b>	<a href="http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd2558.pdf">www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd2558.pdf</a>
<b>Military Health System Centers of Excellence</b>	<a href="https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence">https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence</a>
<b>Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)</b>	<a href="http://www.dfas.mil">www.dfas.mil</a>
<b>Department of Defense Military and Civilian Passport Matters</b>	<a href="http://passportmatters.army.mil">passportmatters.army.mil</a>



<b>Department of State Passport Information</b>	<a href="http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html">travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html</a>
<b>Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Centers</b>	<a href="http://www.vetcenter.va.gov">www.vetcenter.va.gov</a>
<b>DFAS Allotments</b>	<a href="http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/paydeductions/allotments">www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/paydeductions/allotments</a>
<b>DoD Savings Deposit Program</b>	<a href="https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/sdp/">https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/sdp/</a>
<b>Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Checklists</b>	<a href="https://esgr.mil/Service-Members-Family/Deployment-Tips-and-Checklist">https://esgr.mil/Service-Members-Family/Deployment-Tips-and-Checklist</a>
<b>Family Care Plan</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/Family-Readiness/Family-Care-Plan/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/Family-Readiness/Family-Care-Plan/</a>
<b>Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)</b>	<a href="http://www.focusproject.org">www.focusproject.org</a>
<b>Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)</b>	<a href="http://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/deployment_readiness_support/family_readiness_groups.html">www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/deployment_readiness_support/family_readiness_groups.html</a>
<b>Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Directory</b>	<a href="http://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/FFSC.html">www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/FFSC.html</a>
<b>Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP)</b>	<a href="http://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html">www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html</a>
<b>Free Space "A" Flights for Families of Deployed</b>	<a href="http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page">www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/AMC-Space-Available-Travel-Page</a>
<b>Individual Mobilization Augmentees Detachment, Marine Corps</b>	<a href="http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/Office-of-Legislative-Affairs/IMA-Det">www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/Office-of-Legislative-Affairs/IMA-Det</a>
<b>Individual Augmentee (Navy)</b>	<a href="http://www.usff.navy.mil/ia">www.usff.navy.mil/ia</a>
<b>Individual Augmentation FAQs</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Detailing/Augmentation/463-Augmentation/Augmentation-FAQs/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Detailing/Augmentation/463-Augmentation/Augmentation-FAQs/</a>
<b>Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) Program, Army Human Resources Command</b>	<a href="http://www.hrc.army.mil/STAFF/IMA%20Program%20Overview">www.hrc.army.mil/STAFF/IMA%20Program%20Overview</a>
<b>IRS Tax Information for Members of the Military</b>	<a href="http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military">www.irs.gov/individuals/military</a>
<b>Joint Knowledge Online (JKO)</b>	<a href="http://jko.jten.mil">jko.jten.mil</a>
<b>Joint Services Support</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil/national-guard/joint-services-support-program">www.militaryonesource.mil/national-guard/joint-services-support-program</a>
<b>Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS)</b>	<a href="http://www.usmc-mccs.org">www.usmc-mccs.org</a>
<b>Marine Corps Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program</b>	<a href="http://usmc-mccs.org/services/family/unit-personal-and-family-readiness">usmc-mccs.org/services/family/unit-personal-and-family-readiness</a>
<b>Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment</b>	<a href="http://www.woundedwarrior.marines.mil">www.woundedwarrior.marines.mil</a>
<b>Military Birth Resource Network</b>	<a href="https://www.militarybirthresourcenetwork.org/">https://www.militarybirthresourcenetwork.org/</a>
<b>MilConnect</b>	<a href="http://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect">milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect</a>
<b>Military and Diplomatic Mail</b>	<a href="http://www.usps.com/ship/apo-fpo-dpo.htm">www.usps.com/ship/apo-fpo-dpo.htm</a>
<b>Military Crisis Line</b>	<a href="http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line">www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line</a>
<b>MilitaryFamilyBooks.com</b>	<a href="http://militaryfamilybooks.com">militaryfamilybooks.com</a>
<b>Military Family Preparedness</b>	<a href="https://www.ready.gov/">https://www.ready.gov/</a>
<b>Military Installations Locator</b>	<a href="http://installations.militaryonesource.mil">installations.militaryonesource.mil</a>
<b>Military Kids Connect</b>	<a href="https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/">https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/</a>
<b>Military OneSource</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil">www.militaryonesource.mil</a>
<b>Military OneSource Parenting and Children</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/">www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/</a>



<b>Military OneSource Plan My Deployment</b>	<a href="https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/">https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/</a>
<b>Military OneSource Wellness Apps</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness/recommended-wellness-apps">www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness/recommended-wellness-apps</a>
<b>Military Pet Foster Programs</b>	<a href="http://blog.ahrn.com/foster-military-dogs/">blog.ahrn.com/foster-military-dogs/</a>
<b>Military Youth Outreach</b>	<a href="http://www.bgca.org/about-us/military">www.bgca.org/about-us/military</a>
<b>MyPay</b>	<a href="http://mypay.dfas.mil">mypay.dfas.mil</a>
<b>National Center for PTSD</b>	<a href="http://www.ptsd.va.gov">www.ptsd.va.gov</a>
<b>National Military Family Association (NMFA)</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryfamily.org/">www.militaryfamily.org/</a>
<b>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b>	<a href="http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org">suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a>
<b>Navy 311</b>	<a href="http://www.navy311.navy.mil/home">www.navy311.navy.mil/home</a>
<b>Navy Augmentation Management Division (PERS-46)</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Detailing/Augmentation/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Detailing/Augmentation/</a>
<b>Navy App Locker</b>	<a href="http://www.applocker.navy.mil">www.applocker.navy.mil</a>
<b>Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center</b>	<a href="https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-Marine-Corps-Public-Health-Center/">https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-Marine-Corps-Public-Health-Center/</a>
<b>Navy Child Care Fee Assistance Program</b>	<a href="http://www.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/navy/navy-feeassistance">www.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/navy/navy-feeassistance</a>
<b>Navy Culture of Excellence Resources</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/Culture-of-Excellence/Resources/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/Culture-of-Excellence/Resources/</a>
<b>Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC)</b>	<a href="https://www.necc.usff.navy.mil/">https://www.necc.usff.navy.mil/</a>
<b>Navy Expanded Operational Stress Control (E-OSC)</b>	<a href="https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/E-OSC/">https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/21st-Century-Sailor/E-OSC/</a>
<b>Navy Ombudsman Program</b>	<a href="http://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/ombudsman_program.html">www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/ombudsman_program.html</a>
<b>Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS)</b>	<a href="http://www.nmcrs.org">www.nmcrs.org</a>
<b>Navy Reserve Center (NRC) Locator (formerly NOSC)</b>	<a href="https://www.mynrh.navy.mil/#/map">https://www.mynrh.navy.mil/#/map</a>
<b>Navy Wounded Warrior Program</b>	<a href="http://www.navywoundedwarrior.com">www.navywoundedwarrior.com</a>
<b>Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)</b>	<a href="http://navyfamily.navy.mil">navyfamily.navy.mil</a>
<b>Navy Getaways</b>	<a href="https://get.dodlodging.net/">https://get.dodlodging.net/</a>
<b>Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED)</b>	<a href="https://finred.usalearning.gov/Money">https://finred.usalearning.gov/Money</a>
<b>Ombudsman Locator</b>	<a href="http://www.ombudsmanregistry.org">www.ombudsmanregistry.org</a>
<b>Operation Homefront</b>	<a href="http://operationhomefront.org">operationhomefront.org</a>
<b>Operation Purple Camp</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryfamily.org/programs/operation-purple/operation-purple-camp/">www.militaryfamily.org/programs/operation-purple/operation-purple-camp/</a>
<b>Parenting and Teen Stress</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/parenting-and-teen-stress/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/parenting-and-teen-stress/</a>
<b>Parenting Youth and Teens – The Essentials</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/parenting-youth-and-teens-the-essentials/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/parenting-youth-and-teens-the-essentials/</a>
<b>IRS Form 2848, Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative</b>	<a href="http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f2848.pdf">www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f2848.pdf</a>



<b>Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE)</b>	<a href="http://www.pdhealth.mil/readiness-early-intervention/deployment-health/navy-operational-stress-control">www.pdhealth.mil/readiness-early-intervention/deployment-health/navy-operational-stress-control</a>
<b>RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator</b>	<a href="http://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco">idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco</a>
<b>Ready Disaster Supplies Kit</b>	<a href="http://www.ready.gov/kit">www.ready.gov/kit</a>
<b>Ready Navy</b>	<a href="http://www.ready.navy.mil">www.ready.navy.mil</a>
<b>Ready Navy Fact and Activity Sheets</b>	<a href="http://www.ready.navy.mil/be_informed/fact_and_activity_sheets.html">www.ready.navy.mil/be_informed/fact_and_activity_sheets.html</a>
<b>Real Warriors Live Chat</b>	<a href="https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/Real-Warriors-Campaign">https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/Real-Warriors-Campaign</a>
<b>Relationship Resources</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/relationships-resources/">www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/relationships-resources/</a>
<b>Relationship Tool: Love Every Day</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/resilience-tools/relationship-tool-helps-you-love-every-day/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/resilience-tools/relationship-tool-helps-you-love-every-day/</a>
<b>Returning Warrior Workshop</b>	<a href="http://www.yellowribbon.mil/event-listing">www.yellowribbon.mil/event-listing</a>
<b>Reunion and Reintegration for Single Sailors</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/deployment/returning-home-from-deployment/9-tips-for-reintegration-after-deployment/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/deployment/returning-home-from-deployment/9-tips-for-reintegration-after-deployment/</a>
<b>Sesame Street for Military Families</b>	<a href="https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/">https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/</a>
<b>Social Media Guide</b>	<a href="http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/ResourceGuides/Social-Media-Guide.pdf">download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/ResourceGuides/Social-Media-Guide.pdf</a>
<b>Social Media Handbook</b>	<a href="http://www.csp.navy.mil/Portals/2/documents/downloads/navy-social-media-handbook-2019.pdf">www.csp.navy.mil/Portals/2/documents/downloads/navy-social-media-handbook-2019.pdf</a>
<b>Self-care and Mental Health</b>	<a href="http://www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health/self-care/">www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health/self-care/</a>
<b>Stress and Coping Resources</b>	<a href="http://www.apa.org/topics/stress">www.apa.org/topics/stress</a>
<b>Thrive Helps Military Parents and Children</b>	<a href="https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/thrive-online-program-for-military-parents/">https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/parenting-youth-and-teens/thrive-online-program-for-military-parents/</a>
<b>TRICARE</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil">www.tricare.mil</a>
<b>TRICARE Dental Plans</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/Plans/DentalPlans.aspx">www.tricare.mil/Plans/DentalPlans.aspx</a>
<b>TRICARE Health Plans</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans.aspx">www.tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans.aspx</a>
<b>TRICARE Mental Health</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth">www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth</a>
<b>TRICARE Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) Locator</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/mtf/">www.tricare.mil/mtf/</a>
<b>TRICARE Beneficiary Web Enrollment</b>	<a href="http://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect">milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect</a>
<b>Tutor.com</b>	<a href="http://military.tutor.com/home">military.tutor.com/home</a>
<b>UPS Customs Forms</b>	<a href="http://www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm">www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm</a>
<b>Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)</b>	<a href="https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/userra">https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/userra</a>
<b>United Through Reading</b>	<a href="http://unitedthroughreading.org">unitedthroughreading.org</a>
<b>Veterans Affairs (VA)</b>	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
<b>VA Caregiver Support</b>	<a href="http://www.caregiver.va.gov">www.caregiver.va.gov</a>
<b>Vet Center Combat Call Center</b>	<a href="http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/media/Call-Center-PSA.asp">www.vetcenter.va.gov/media/Call-Center-PSA.asp</a>
<b>Vets4Warriors</b>	<a href="http://www.vets4warriors.com">www.vets4warriors.com</a>



<b>VFW Unmet Needs</b>	<a href="http://www.vfw.org/UnmetNeeds/">www.vfw.org/UnmetNeeds/</a>
<b>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program</b>	<a href="http://www.yellowribbon.mil">www.yellowribbon.mil</a>
<b>Your Virtual FFSC (courses, newsletters, handbooks and more)</b>	<a href="http://www.mynavyfamily.com">www.mynavyfamily.com</a> or <a href="https://learning.zeiders.refineddata.com">https://learning.zeiders.refineddata.com</a> (on NMCI)
<b>Zero to Three Military Family Projects</b>	<a href="http://www.zerotothree.org/our-work/military-family-projects">www.zerotothree.org/our-work/military-family-projects</a>



Commander, Navy Installations Command understands that resilient families are better able to cope with the demands of the military lifestyle. *The Deployment Support Handbook* was created to equip you with the tools you need to successfully navigate the challenges of deployment. If you need any additional assistance, please contact the nearest [Fleet and Family Support Center](#).

