

Veterans: What to Expect When You Return from Deployment

Returning from deployment is a time of expectation, excitement, and change. However, many military families find that the reunion can be more stressful than being apart. Many families go through an adjustment period that can last for weeks or even months. Knowing what to expect can make the transition easier.

Some phases you might go through when you return home:

- *Pre-entry.* You may be excited to come home and might spend a lot of time thinking about what things will be like. You plan things to do at home, at work, and with your family.
- *Reunion.* The honeymoon phase that occurs just after you come home. It is a time for you to reconnect with people and relax.
- *Disruption.* Problems may come up as you realize how much things changed while you were away. Your family may have new routines, and it may take time for you to adjust. You might be surprised that your family managed as well as they did without you, or you might feel like they don't need you anymore. It is normal to feel envious or resentful during this period.
- *Communication.* It is important to talk to your family about how things have changed. You and your family may need to set up new routines. You might need to discuss physical changes, money, decision-

making, and changes in the relationships with your spouse and children.

- *Normalcy.* You and your family accept the changes and adjust routines. Even though there may be problems, this transition often leads to unexpected growth at home and at work.

Resources

Websites for veterans and their families about deployment, coming home after deployment, and health care for deployment-related issues.

- Military OneSource
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil>
- American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Deployment-and-Military.aspx>
- Military Child Education Coalition
<https://www.militarychild.org/>
- Sesame Street for Military Families
<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/>
- National Military Family Association
<https://www.militaryfamily.org>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

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- Military Kids Connect: Online community for military children 6 to 17 years of age
<https://militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil/>
- Joint Services Support—Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
<https://www.yellowribbon.mil/>
- American Red Cross
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/military-families/deployment-services.html>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Mental Health
<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>
- Consortium for Health and Military Performance
<https://www.hprc-online.org/page/deployment-phases/deployment>

Websites for health-related information for veterans and their families

- Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
<https://dvbic.dcoe.mil>
- Veterans Crisis Line/National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255
<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: National Center for PTSD
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Transition and Care Management
<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>

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