



## *Reconnecting with your Family and Friends after Deployment*

Readjusting to life after deployment can be challenging. You are a different person than you were when you left. You are coming home to family and friends who have changed as well. It will take time to rebuild these relationships.

### **What you need to know**

Negative thoughts and feelings following deployment are normal. They can also be a barrier to reconnecting with your loved ones. Below are some thoughts and feelings you may have:

- Thinking that no one understands what you went through
- Feeling resented by family and friends about your deployment
- Wondering if people are afraid of you
- Feeling bitter towards the changes around you
- Worrying that that you are no longer needed at home

It is important to share how you are feeling. Allow family and friends to share their feelings as well. Learning to work through negative emotions can improve relationships.

### **What are ways to improve relationships?**

Time apart can put a strain on any relationship. It is important to accept that things are different now. It will take time for everyone to adjust to the changes.

- **Be patient.** Try not to put too much pressure on yourself or others. Give yourselves time to get to know each other again.
- **Be sensitive to the needs of others.** Take time to understand what others are feeling. Try to understand how their lives have changed too.
- **Take time to listen and talk.** Make a special effort to reach out to people. Let others know that you missed them.

- **Know that you may miss parts of deployment.** This may include your old friends and controlled lifestyle. It may also include the fast-paced schedule of deployment. Ease slowly into your new routine.

### *Tips for Reconnecting with Family and Friends*

- **Check yourself emotionally.** Be aware of any “extra baggage” you bring from the battlefield. It is normal to have negative feelings at times. Learning to work through these emotions can improve relationships.
- **Show interest in your family and friends.** Ask about any new hobbies. Talk about interests at school or work. Everyone needs a little time with you to reconnect.
- **Expect some disagreement.** Keep a cool head. Allow others time to speak. Listen carefully to what they are saying. It takes two people working together to solve problems.
- **Remain calm when there are arguments.** Take time out and return when everyone has calmed down.

### *When Should You Get Help?*

It may take about six weeks to adjust to being home. Talk to a professional if you have ongoing problems. Problems include extreme anger, intense arguing, and violent thoughts and actions. Drugs and alcohol are never the answer to problems.



## **REMEMBER...**

*Negative thoughts and feelings following deployment are normal. Learning to work through these emotions can improve relationships. It is important to accept that things are different now. It will take time for everyone to adjust to the changes. If problems are intense or last for more than six weeks, seek help.*

