



Make Prevention a CHOICE

HOMECOMING: A Time of Celebration and Change

Homecomings can be a time of celebration as well as change. Family members experience a variety of feelings before and after being reunited. Many of these emotions are perfectly normal. In fact, we know that there are three stages that many of us experience during homecomings: **anticipation, readjustment, and stabilization.**

Anticipation:

The last weeks and days before a homecoming are filled with mounting excitement, tension, and even nervousness. Days may be spent in busy preparation for a spouse's return. Fantasies of an even better relationship may surface, taking the place of reality as the day of reunion draws closer.

Readjustment:

As the experience of homecoming fades, it is often followed by a stage of renewal and the possible renegotiating of roles and responsibilities. Experts have identified two stages of readjustment:

Stage One - Honeymoon (usually until the first serious disagreement)

- Feelings of euphoria, relief
- Blur of excitement
- Catching up and sharing experiences
- Beginning to re-establish intimacy

Stage Two - Readjustment (approximately 6-8 weeks)

- Intensified pressures
- Sensitivity to spouse's presence
- Tension as the idealized relationship confronts reality

Tips for a Successful Readjustment

Reestablish communication. Be open and listen to each other. Be aware of new feelings and needs within yourself which may affect your relationship.

Renegotiate the relationship; redefine your roles. During deployment you may have realized new skills and abilities. This can frighten the returning spouse, who may believe that he or she is no longer needed.

It is often helpful for couples to talk about the differences between being needed and wanted.

Expect that it will take time to reestablish intimacy. Sexual relationships may be awkward at first; couples need time together to become reacquainted before achieving the level of intimacy that existed before the separation.

Remember to include your children in activities. Just as you have changed during the separation, so have your children. They have grown physically, emotionally, and socially. They may feel confused and unsure. Make sure that you set aside special time to listen to their concerns and to address their feelings.

Stabilization:

The amount of time it takes for families to readjust varies. Many families will experience only minor difficulty in adjusting to new routines. For others, readjustment may be a longer process.

Programs are available to help you through the stages of reunion. Please call your Air Force Family Support Center, Army Community Services Center or the Navy Family Services Center.

How to Contact Us:

Naval CBC Gulfport Center
Phone: (228) 871-2581/3000
Fax: (228) 871-3610/2384

Navy at Stennis Space Center
Phone: (228) 813-4070
Fax: (228) 688-5561

Toll Free: (800) 342-3525