

EFFECTS OF SEPARATION ON YOUTH AND TEENS

Deployments are a reality those in the military face on a daily basis. When a loved one is called away to defend our country, those left behind must learn to adapt to a life filled with change, separation and anxiety. Being separated from their loved one often has a substantial impact on youth and teens. As caring adults, it is important to be aware of what to look out for so that appropriate help can be provided.

Feelings of Guilt - Youth and teens often set very high goals for themselves while their loved one is deployed. If they do not reach those goals, they may experience feelings of guilt and fear of disappointing their loved one.

Fears of Changing - During a year-long deployment, change is inevitable; however, many youth and teens fear they will change so much during the deployment their loved one will not recognize them or still love them when he/she returns home.

Not Being Understood - It is not uncommon for only one family in a school or community to have a loved one deployed. As a result, youth and teens often experience feelings of frustration and anger because others do not understand what they are going through.

Other Common Reactions Include:

- Irritability
- Clinginess
- Changes in social behaviors
- Anxiety
- Disobedience
- Physical complaints
- Eating Disorders
- Depression
- Persistent fear/worry
- Aggressive behaviors

For more information, please contact:

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