



Tough Topics Series Learning and Teaching Support

WELCOME HOME

Military Kids, Homecoming & Reunion

Homecomings and reunions are the last stage in the deployment process and is a time of celebration as well as change. Military family members, particularly kids, experience a wide variety of feelings before, during, and after being reunited. All of these feelings are perfectly healthy and normal given the fact they have been separated for several months and have adapted to life without one another. In fact, there are three stages military families experience as a result of the reunion experience and these are as follows: anticipation, readjustment, and stabilization.

Anticipation:

The weeks and days before homecoming and reunion are filled with excitement, nervousness, tension, and relief. During deployment family members have learned to adjust to the absence of the soldier/loved one in day-to-day activities. Reuniting again simultaneously brings both joy and anxiety because daily life as a military family is about to change again.

Readjustment:

As anticipation of the homecoming and reunion fades, and the family is reunited once again, daily roles, responsibilities, and rules are renegotiated. Experts have identified two time periods specific to this sometimes challenging stage:

Honeymoon (Usually until the first serious disagreement)

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

Readjustment (Approximately 6-8 weeks)

- ◆ Pressures of daily life intensify
- ◆ Sensitivity to soldiers/loved ones presence
- ◆ Increased tension as daily relationships confront reality

Stabilization:

The amount of time it takes families to stabilize during homecoming and reunion varies. Many of them encounter only minor difficulties in adjusting to new routines. For others, however, readjustment may be a longer process that requires additional support. Seeking assistance, if needed, is critical to helping all families navigate homecoming and reunion in a healthy and positive manner.



