

# SECTION 3

# Homecoming and Reintegration

## Description

Homecoming and reintegration workshops are designed for spouses, partners, adult family members and children of service members who are returning from deployment. The purpose of homecoming and reintegration workshops is to help families re-establish connections with their service member by re-learning face-to-face communication, celebrating growth, managing expectations and understanding operational stress.

## Modules

Module Title	Target Audience	Minutes
<b>1: General Homecoming Brief</b>	Spouses, partners and adult family members	30-45
<b>2: Reintegrating with Partners</b>	Spouses or partners	30-45
<b>3A: Just For Kids (Parents' Edition)</b>	Spouse/partners and primary caregivers of children ages 2 to 12	30-45
<b>3B: Just for Kids (Puppet Show)</b>	Children ages 3 to 11 and their parent or caregiver	20-30
<b>4: Homecoming for Teens</b>	Children ages 12 to 18	45

## MODULE ONE

# General Homecoming Brief

## Module Description

**Purpose:** Families of returning service members are eager to talk about their homecoming goals and expectations. Typically, they feel excitement mixed with concern about what to expect. The *General Homecoming Brief* gives family members an opportunity to celebrate deployment milestones, prepare for the emotional stages of deployment and identify behaviors associated with combat and operational stress.

**Target Audience:** Spouses, partners, adult family members and friends that support the deployed service member.

**Target Dates:** 1 to 2 months before homecoming.

**Module Length:** 30 to 45 minutes. The time to facilitate this brief may be modified based on the needs and availability of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) or requesting organization.

## Trainer Notes

**Trainer Prerequisites:** Staff who facilitate this curriculum should be skilled trainers who have observed or co-presented this course before facilitating a session on their own.

**Scripts:** Trainers should become familiar with this curriculum and personalize the scripts to ensure that facilitation feels natural without compromising the course content.

**Activities:** Facilitators may modify or exchange the activities used in this curriculum to fit the needs of the audience.

**Training Tips:** Training tips are used throughout this curriculum to guide the content and recommend alternative methods of interaction.

**FFSC Resources:** An electronic or printed copy of the *Deployment Support Handbook* should be provided to participants by the FFSC.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants should be able to prepare for the return of the deployed service member.

- During the *Celebrating Milestones* activity, participants will make three lists: their successes, lessons learned and reasons to be grateful.
- During the *Three Tips* activity, participants will create a list of tips to prepare for the last three stages of deployment: “Anticipation of Return,” “Return and Renegotiation,” and “Reintegration and Stabilization.”
- During the *OSC Stress Zones* activity, participants will correctly match stress reactions to the four OSC zones: green, yellow, orange and red.

## Module Preparation

### Materials

- *Module 1: General Homecoming Brief*  
PowerPoint file or printed copy
- *Deployment Support Handbook*  
(electronic or printed copy)
- Sign-up sheets for upcoming deployment workshops
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Paper and writing instruments
- Timer

### Handouts

- *Homecoming: Emotional Cycle of Deployment*

### Optional Materials (if available)

- Computer
- Projector
- Small prizes or candy

## Course Outline

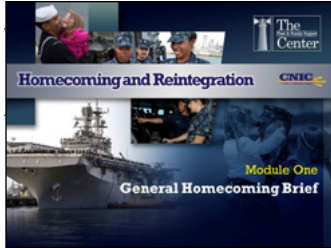
1. Welcome and Introductions (3-5 minutes)
  - a. Opening Poll
  - b. Agenda
2. Emotional Cycle of Deployment (15 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Celebrating Milestones*
  - b. Stage 5: Anticipation of Return
  - c. Stage 6: Return and Renegotiation
  - d. Stage 7: Reintegration and Stabilization
  - e. Activity: *Three Tips*
3. Navy Operational Stress Control (10 minutes)
  - a. Reintegration Realities
  - b. Stress Continuum Model
  - c. Activity: *OSC Stress Zones*
  - d. OSC Resources
4. Closing (3-5 minutes)
  - a. Upcoming Homecoming Workshops
  - b. Financial Planning Workshops

# Content

## Welcome and Introductions (3-5 Minutes)

### Slide 1: General Homecoming Brief

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*Greet participants. Provide the handouts as they enter the training area.*

*Provide a brief introduction of yourself and other co-facilitators.*

**SAY:** Welcome to the *General Homecoming Brief!*

**SAY:** There are only [insert amount of time] before our service members return!

**SAY:** Please stand, and remain standing, if you are a ...

- Spouse or partner of the deployed service member.
- Parent of the deployed service member.
- Primary caregiver to children who are affected by deployment.
- Relative, friend or part of the support system of a single service member.

*All participants should be standing. Initiate applause for the group.*

**SAY:** Congratulations! Give yourselves a hand! Deployments can bring about a lot of change, and the fact that you are here today is evidence of your family's resilience.

**SAY:** Thank you. Please take your seats.

**ASK:** What one word would best describe how you are feeling right now?

*Common responses include excited, happy, nervous, anxious, stressed, elated, cautious, hopeful, etc.*

**SAY:** Homecoming is, without a doubt, the most anticipated part of deployment. It is no surprise that you feel excitement along with some trepidation about what to expect.

**SAY:** Today we will strive to ease your nerves and help you begin your homecoming celebration with confidence.

**Slide 2: Agenda**

**SAY:** Homecoming is an event, but reintegration is a process that begins even before your service member's arrival. The goal of this workshop is to help you plan for homecoming and reintegration. You will ...

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- Reflect on your deployment experience, celebrate milestones and share lessons learned.
- Prepare to address the final emotional stages of deployment.
- Discover the signs of operational stress and where to get help.



Let participants know that this workshop does not cover children's reactions to homecoming. Provide dates and times for the Just for Kids workshop at the end of the session.

**Emotional Stages of Deployment** (15 minutes)**Slide 3: Emotional Cycle of Deployment**

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment timeline varies depending on the length of the deployment. Adjust the timeline of the stages to fit your audiences' estimated deployment cycle.

**SAY:** If you attended previous deployment workshops, you may recall the Emotional Cycle of Deployment. The stages represent patterns of emotional reactions that most people experience before, during and after a deployment.

**SAY:** The cycle comprises seven stages. You have probably experienced many of the emotions identified in each stage during the course of the deployment.

- **Stage 1:** Anticipation of Departure
- **Stage 2:** Detachment and Withdrawal
- **Stage 3:** Emotional Disorganization
- **Stage 4:** Recovery and Stabilization
- **Stage 5:** Anticipation of Return
- **Stage 6:** Return and Renegotiation
- **Stage 7:** Reintegration and Stabilization

**SAY:** Stages 1 and 2, “Anticipation of Departure” and “Detachment and Withdrawal,” likely occurred before deployment began. This may have been a time of confusing emotions for you and your service member as everyone worked hard to cope with the inevitable separation.

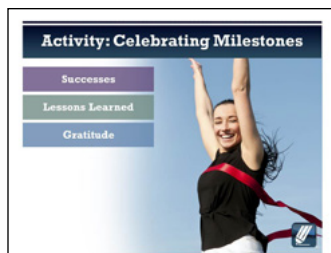
**SAY:** Stages 3 and 4, “Emotional Disorganization” and “Recovery and Stabilization,” likely occurred during the mid-deployment phase. Initially, you may have felt a sense of dysfunction, followed by a new sense of independence as you discovered ways to cope with the deployment.

**SAY:** The last three stages, “Anticipation of Return,” “Return and Renegotiation” and “Reintegration and Stabilization,” describe emotions experienced while preparing for homecoming and beyond.

**SAY:** Before we look at the final three stages, let us take a few moments to celebrate the milestones that brought us to where we are today.

#### Slide 4: Activity: *Celebrating Milestones*

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**SAY:** It is easy to be so caught up in the day-to-day happenings of life that we do not stop to appreciate the journey and celebrate our milestones and achievements. Besides birthdays, anniversaries and holidays, it may even be hard for some of us to find a reason to celebrate.

**SAY:** Mike Robbins, author of “Focus on the Good Stuff”, says, “Sometimes the best thing for us to celebrate is the mere fact that we’ve made it to this point in life, especially if things have been challenging.”

**SAY:** I am sure most of you will agree that there have been some challenging aspects to deployment. Let’s take some time now to acknowledge that making it to this point in deployment is an accomplishment worth celebrating!



*Prepare three flip charts labeled “Success,” “Lesson Learned” and “Gratitude.”*

**ASK:** Let’s start by celebrating our successes. What successes have you had from the time you learned about the deployment until now?

**SAY:** Perhaps you attained a goal, learned a new skill or met a new friend. No success is too big or too small to mention.



*Solicit three to five responses and write them on the chart paper labeled, “Success.”  
Sample responses include saved money, better health, improved relationships, finished school, etc.*

**ASK:** What lessons have you learned about deployment?

**SAY:** Your lesson learned can be big or small, practical or emotional. For example, perhaps you learned how to change a tire, the importance of self-care, how to get your teenager to communicate, or to think positively.

## SECTION 3: HOMECOMING AND REINTEGRATION



Solicit three to five responses and write them on the chart paper labeled, "Lessons Learned."

Sample responses include: learned the importance of having a power of attorney, building a support system, developing a communication plan, managing expectations, being flexible, etc.

**ASK:** What are you grateful for?

**SAY:** Being thankful for simple things, like weekly fun night with the kids, is just as uplifting as major things, like paying off debt.



Solicit three to five responses and write them on the chart paper labeled, "Gratitude."

Sample responses include: being able to communicate regularly with service member, the end of deployment is near, friends and family, ability to save money or pay off debt, etc.

**SAY:** When you acknowledge your successes, you develop a belief in yourself and build confidence in others. When you share what you have learned, you grow in knowledge and have an opportunity to help others. And by expressing gratitude, you are reminded that life is pretty good.

**SAY:** As Oprah Winfrey says, "The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."

**SAY:** Now let us return our attention to the Emotional Cycle of Deployment and identify some common reactions as we anticipate the return of our service members, adjust to their being home again and work as a family to reintegrate and stabilize.

**SAY:** We will discuss common reactions for family and friends at home, as well as common reactions of our service members.

### Slide 5: Stage 5: Anticipation of Return



Tailor the information on slides 5 through 7 to your audience. For example, skip sections that refer to parents of service members if there are no parents attending the workshop.

**SAY:** The fifth stage of the Emotional Cycle of Deployment is "Anticipation of Return." This stage typically begins four to six weeks before the service member's return.

**ASK:** By a show of hands, how many of you feel ...

- Excitement as you prepare for the return of your service member?
- Apprehension?
- Both excitement and apprehension?

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**SAY:** This stage of deployment is generally a happy and hectic time when you feel joy and excitement about your service member's return. At the same time, feelings of apprehension may surface as you anticipate dealing with upcoming changes or realize that you have not finished everything you had planned to accomplish during the separation.

**SAY:** Your service member is excited and anxious, too. With the family's newfound independence, they may be wondering where they fit in or whether the family needs them. If they have young children, they may be concerned about whether their children will remember them.

**SAY:** Single service members indicate that their anticipation of homecoming does not typically begin until they are sure they are actually returning to homeport. When homecoming becomes a reality, they report being eager for some time away from the command. They may also be concerned that the close friendships they developed may change.

**SAY:** Both family members and service members begin thinking about what "homecoming day" will be like. Family members are specifically thinking about how to greet their service member. Singles may be excited if they are expecting to be greeted by family or friends or they may feel left out if they have not made plans for homecoming.

## Slide 6: Stage 6: Return and Renegotiation

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Family	Service member
Relearn face-to-face communication	Relearn face-to-face communication
Happy but feel a loss of freedom	Adjust roles
Adapt to change	Adapt to changes
Parents are proud	Feel like a stranger at home
Renegotiate roles with children	Singles renegotiate friendships

**SAY:** The next stage is "Return and Renegotiation." This stage typically occurs four to six weeks after the deployment ends (actual timeline will vary depending on the length of the deployment). After the initial homecoming celebration, there is a period of readjustment.

**SAY:** It is not realistic to expect everything will return to the way it was before the deployment. Families must relearn face-to-face communication, adjust roles and adapt to the changes that will constitute a new "normal."

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**SAY:** Although family members are happy the service member is back home, many may also feel a loss of freedom and independence now that they must make joint decisions again. Some may be eager to give responsibilities back to the service member, while others have grown attached to their new role and have a hard time letting go.

**SAY:** Parents of service members are usually proud of their adult child's accomplishments. However, renegotiating roles can be difficult, especially in situations where the parent was the primary caregiver to young children during the service member's absence. Children will need time to readjust to Mom or Dad being in charge again.

**SAY:** Service members report that they often feel like strangers in their own homes. Single service members may need to renegotiate relationships with roommates, friends and relatives.

### Slide 7: Stage 7: Reintegration and Stabilization



**SAY:** The last stage of the cycle is “Reintegration and Stabilization.” Service members and their families are back on track until the next deployment.

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**SAY:** Family members feel more relaxed and comfortable with one another. There is a renewed sense of being a family and everyone is connected emotionally. Single service members often begin pursuing interests outside of work, such as athletics, college, hobbies and developing relationships.

**SAY:** With predictable deployment cycles, most families feel “normal” within four to six weeks after homecoming. However, some families can take up to six months to stabilize their relationship.

**SAY:** The Emotional Cycle of Deployment is a “cycle” and does not end with Stage 7. Many service members and their families will go back to Stage 1, “Anticipation of Loss,” as they prepare themselves emotionally for the next deployment.

### Slide 8: Activity: Three Tips



**SAY:** Now that we have learned about the final three stages of deployment, it is time to share some ideas on how to manage these stages.

**SAY:** In a moment, we will break into three groups. Each group will be assigned one of the stages we just covered. Your goal is to work together to make a list of tips for the stage you are assigned. You can refer to the *Homecoming: Emotional Stages of Deployment* handout that lists the reactions for each stage.

*Divide participants into three groups. Try to assign groups so that there is an experienced deployer in each group. Assign each group the task of making a list of tips for one of the stages of deployment. If possible, provide each group with a sheet of chart paper and markers.*

Group	Stage	Create a list of tips for ...
Group 1	Stage 5: Anticipation of Return	Planning homecoming celebrations
Group 2	Stage 6: Return and Renegotiation	Renegotiating roles and responsibilities
Group 3	Stage 7: Reintegration and Stabilization	Successful reintegration

**SAY:** Your goal is to come up with at least three tips:

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- Homecoming tips
- Renegotiating roles and responsibilities
- Successful reintegration

**SAY:** You will have three minutes. We will debrief by sharing your tips with the group.

*Allow three minutes for groups to create their lists.*

**SAY:** Thank you. It is time to share our tips. We will start with Group 1, "Anticipation of Return." Your task was to come up with three tips for homecoming.

*Ask Group 1 to share their homecoming tips. Then advance to the next slide for additional tips.*

## Slide 9: Tips for Homecoming

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**SAY:** Here are some additional homecoming celebration tips from experienced deployers:

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- Share homecoming ideas with your service member. Ask them what type of homecoming they would like before you make major decisions. You do not want to host a big party if they envision a quiet evening at home.
- Try to keep your plans for homecoming day as simple as possible. This minimizes stress and allows you to focus on your service member and your family and not be consumed with managing logistics.
- Have a backup plan. Changes in your service member's arrival time can happen. Be prepared and be flexible. It may be best for out-of-town family or friends to schedule their visits once the service member is settled at home.
- Do not overschedule the first days after the return. The structure and strict routine of deployment can leave service members craving unscheduled time and hoping for a relief from constant responsibilities.

*Optional: Ask participants for other tips to add to the list. Thank everyone for their suggestions.*

### Slide 10: Tips for Renegotiation

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**SAY:** Group 2 was assigned Stage 6, “Return and Renegotiation.” Please share your tips for renegotiation.

*Allow Group 2 to share their renegotiation tips. Then advance to the next slide for additional tips.*

**SAY:** Here are some additional tips from experienced deployers:

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- Resist the urge to have a “change of command” at the doorstep. Do not expect your service member to jump in and start taking care of business just as before. Give it time, talk about what needs to be done, and renegotiate roles at a pace that is comfortable for both of you.
- Honor the time it takes for your service member to get acclimated to life at home. Returning from deployment (especially from a war zone) is a tremendous adjustment. Be patient. For the vast majority, life starts to return to normal within a month.
- Communicate your needs. You may need some time alone or downtime or you may seek more quality time with your service member. They will also have needs. For example, they may want to regain a sense of privacy that was lost in the cramped quarters aboard the ship.

### Slide 11: Tips for Reintegration

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**SAY:** Group 3 was assigned Stage 7, “Reintegration and Stabilization.” Please share your tips for reintegration.

*Allow Group 3 to share their reintegration tips. Then advance to the next slide for additional tips.*

**SAY:** Here are some additional tips from experienced deployers and helping professionals:

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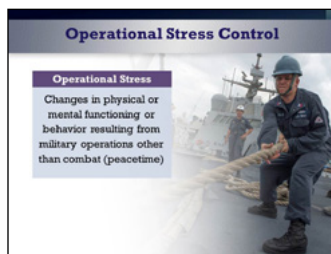
- Don’t try to anticipate and meet every need and want of your service member. Allow your service member to help you and other members of the family. Don’t criticize or point out to him/her that their way of helping and contributing is different than your way. It can be challenging to let go of that control and “way of doing things.” Patience is the key.
- Concentrate on loving your service member. Take time to get reacquainted with each other. You have changed and they have, too. Reread letters and emails as a reminder of what happened during the deployment. This can help you reconnect to your service member and understand them better.

- Enjoy the present. Don't be so focused on the next deployment that you do not enjoy the time you have now.
- Do not compare yourself to other families. Every family's deployment and homecoming experience is different.

**SAY:** When it comes to homecoming and reintegration, it is important to have realistic expectations. Even if your service member has experienced multiple deployments, it does not mean their reactions will be the same.

## Navy Operational Stress Control (10 minutes)

### Slide 12: Operational Stress Control



**SAY:** One question many family members have is how they will know whether their service member needs additional support reintegrating.

**ASK:** By a show of hands, who is familiar with the terms “combat and operational stress control”?

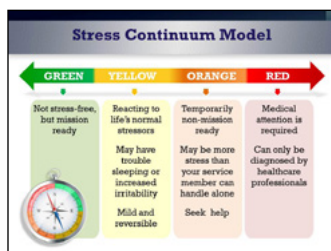
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**SAY:** “Combat and operational stress” can be defined as changes in physical or mental functioning or behavior resulting from the experience of military operations.

**SAY:** The difference between the two is that “combat stress” is combat related and is a consequence of lethal force or its aftermath. “Operational stress” is related to stressors that occur during military operations other than combat.

**SAY:** For this workshop, we are going to focus on operational stress. For more information on combat stress, please visit the Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) website. You can find the website address in your *Deployment Support Handbook*.

### Slide 13: Stress Continuum Model



**SAY:** The Navy Operational Stress Control (NOSC) has a tool called “The Stress Continuum.” The stress continuum is a color-coded chart with four zones representing how service members may react to different levels of stress. Your service member is aware of this model, and you should be, too.

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**SAY:** The four zones are:

- Green “ready” zone
- Yellow “reacting” zone
- Orange “injured” zone
- Red “ill” zone

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**SAY:** Service members are in the green “ready” zone when they are able to cope with their current stressors and manage their personal well-being. In other words, they are not stress-free, but they are mission ready.

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**SAY:** When a combat or operational stressor occurs, such as deployment, a service member may move into the yellow “reacting” zone. The yellow zone represents behaviors that are normal responses to stress. However, the service member may experience trouble sleeping or increased irritability.

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**SAY:** The service member can adapt and move back to the green zone, or if they find it difficult to cope, they can move into the orange “injured” zone. In this zone, it is important to admit that stress may be more than your service member can handle alone and they need to seek help. Service members usually heal from these stress injuries when given proper care.

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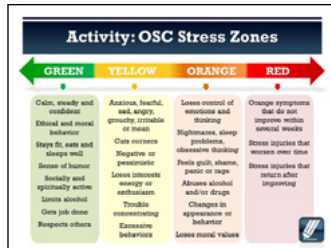
**SAY:** If the orange “injured” behaviors persist, get worse or get better and then come back worse than before, the service member may move to the red “ill” zone. In this zone, medical attention is required. Medical disorders that fall within the red “ill” zone include:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Major depression
- Certain anxiety disorders
- Substance abuse disorders

**SAY:** If you suspect your service member is in the red zone, you should refer them to medical staff immediately. Only a medical or mental health professional can make the distinction between stress injuries (orange zone) and stress illnesses (red zone).

**SAY:** This may sound frightening, so you need to know that stress illnesses are treatable. The majority of service members who receive treatment finish their tours of duty and many continue to serve. Early detection and treatment is the key.

**Slide 14: Activity: OSC Stress Zones**



**SAY:** To detect what zone our service member is in, we need to know some of the common behaviors found in each zone. To help us understand this better, we are going to do a matching activity.

**SAY:** I will list some characteristics of each zone. See if you can determine which zone I am describing.

**Question 1:** What zone might your service member be in if they display the following behaviors?

- Remains calm, steady and confident
- Exhibits ethical and moral behavior
- Eats healthy, exercises regularly and gets proper sleep
- Keeps a sense of humor and remains active socially and spiritually
- Uses alcohol in moderation, if at all
- Gets the job done and shows respect for fellow shipmates

**Answer:** Green “ready” zone.

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**Question 2:** What zone might these behaviors indicate?

- Loses control of one’s emotions or thinking
- Has nightmares, sleep problems or obsessive thinking
- Feels guilt, shame, panic or rage
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Changes significantly in appearance or behavior
- Loses moral values

**Answer:** Orange “injured” zone. If you suspect your service member is in the “orange” zone, refer them to a leader, chaplain, medical personnel or FFSC counselor.

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**Question 3:** What zone might these behaviors describe?

- Feels anxious, fearful, sad, angry, grouchy, irritable or mean
- Cuts corners on the job
- Is negative or pessimistic
- Loses interest, energy or enthusiasm (no longer enjoys usual activities)
- Has trouble concentrating
- Becomes excessive in spending, Internet use, playing computer games, etc.

**Answer:** Yellow “reacting” zone. Remember, the behaviors in this zone are normal reactions to stress. Good coping skills can return them to the green “ready” zone.

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**Question 4:** What zone do these symptoms describe?

- Has orange zone symptoms that do not significantly improve within several weeks
- Has stress injury symptoms that worsen over time rather than improve
- Has stress injury symptoms that return after improving

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**Answer:** Red “ill” zone. I must reiterate the importance of referring your service member to a medical professional if you suspect they are in the red zone.

### Slide 15: OSC Resources

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**SAY:** Getting help is a sign of resilience. The following resources are trained to recognize the symptoms of stress, recommend appropriate treatment and eliminate the stigma associated with getting help.

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- Chaplain
- Chain of command
- Command Ombudsman
- FFSC
- Military OneSource
- Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control

**Slide 16: Additional OSC Resources**



**SAY:** Additional resources include:

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- **Safe Harbor** is a Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) program that provides Sailors and Coast Guardsmen and their families with non-medical care such as lodging and housing adaptation, child/youth care, transportation needs, guardianship issues, education and training benefits, respite care and more. The program allows families to focus on recovery without distractions.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** connects service members and their families in crisis with qualified responders that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If your service member expresses suicidal or homicidal thoughts, please seek help immediately by calling the toll-free hotline, 1-800-273 TALK (8255), Option 1. You can also text for help by sending a text to 838255.

**SAY:** Caring for someone who has operational stress is difficult. If your service member needs help coping, chances are you also need support. Please refer to the resources listed or make an appointment with one of our licensed clinicians at FFSC.

**Closing and Resource Update** (3-5 minutes)

**Slide 17: Homecoming Workshops**



*Provide dates, times and locations of upcoming workshops. If possible, have a sign-up sheet available so participants may register to attend.*

**SAY:** If you have additional questions about the emotional cycle of deployment or combat and operational stress, please see us after the workshop or stop by the FFSC for additional information.

**SAY:** Also, consider attending the following homecoming support workshops:

- *Reintegrating with Partners*
- *Just for Kids (Parents' Edition and Puppet Show)*
- *Homecoming for Teens*

### Slide 18: Financial Planning Workshops

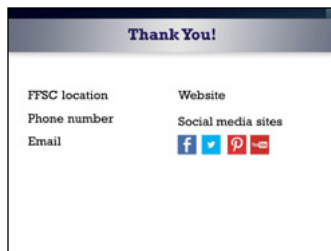
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**SAY:** The *Financial Planning Following Deployment* workshop provides information to help your family handle the financial changes that occur after a deployment, make informed decisions to adapt to these changes and achieve financial stability.

### Slide 19: Thank You

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**ASK:** Does anyone have any questions about the topics we covered today?

*Respond to questions. For questions that require a lengthy response, ask participants to remain after the session for more information.*

**SAY:** To conclude, I want to remind you to celebrate your successes, share your lessons learned and find reasons to be grateful for the journey that deployment brings.

**SAY:** Thank you for your time today.

# HOMECOMING Emotional Cycle of Deployment



Stage	Family Members	Service Members
<p><b>Stage 5: Anticipation of Return</b></p> <p>Families and service members begin thinking about what "homecoming day" will be like.</p>	<p>Generally a happy and hectic time with feelings of joy and excitement.</p> <p>Feelings of apprehension may surface as families anticipate dealing with upcoming changes or realize they have not finished everything they had planned to accomplish during the separation.</p> <p>Begin thinking about how to greet their service member.</p>	<p>Service members may wonder how they will fit in the family or whether the family needs them.</p> <p>Parents with young children may be concerned about whether their children will remember them.</p> <p>Single service members are typically eager for time away from the command. They may be concerned that their friendships may change.</p> <p>Singles may be excited if they are expecting to be greeted by family or friends, or they may feel left out if they have not made plans for homecoming.</p>
<p><b>Stage 6: Return and Renegotiation</b></p> <p>Families must relearn face-to-face communication, adjust roles and adapt to the changes that will constitute a new "normal."</p>	<p>Family members are happy the service member is home, but they may also feel a loss of freedom and independence now that they must make joint decisions again.</p> <p>Some may be eager to give responsibilities back to the service member, while others have grown attached to their new role and have a hard time letting go.</p> <p>Parents of service members who were the children's primary caregiver may have difficulty renegotiating roles.</p> <p>Children will need time to readjust to Mom or Dad being in charge again.</p>	<p>Service members may temporarily feel like strangers in their own homes.</p> <p>Single service members may need to renegotiate relationships with roommates, friends and relatives.</p>
<p><b>Stage 7: Reintegration and Stabilization</b></p> <p>Service members and their families are back on track until the next deployment.</p>	<p>Family members feel more relaxed and comfortable with their service member.</p> <p>There is a renewed sense of being a family and everyone is connecting emotionally.</p>	<p>Service members have regained their sense of purpose in the family.</p> <p>Single service members often begin pursuing interests outside of work.</p>



## MODULE TWO

# Reintegrating with Partners

## Module Description

**Purpose:** *Reintegrating with Partners* helps spouses and partners prepare for reintegrating with their service member by focusing on four areas: re-establishing connections, celebrating change, recognizing operational stress and restoring intimacy. This module is similar to the *Return and Reunion: Reintegrating with Partners* workshop that may have been provided to the deployed service member.

**Target Audience:** Spouses or partners of deployed service members.

**Target Dates:** One month before homecoming.

**Module Length:** 30 to 45 minutes. The time to facilitate this training may be modified based on the needs and availability of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) or requesting organization.

## Trainer Notes

**Trainer Prerequisites:** Staff who facilitate this curriculum should be skilled trainers who have observed or co-presented this course before facilitating a session on their own.

**Scripts:** Trainers should become familiar with this curriculum and personalize the scripts to ensure that facilitation feels natural without compromising the course content.

**Activities:** Facilitators may modify or exchange the activities used in this curriculum to fit the needs of the audience.

**Training Tips:** Training tips are used throughout this curriculum to guide the content and recommend alternative methods of interaction.

**FFSC Resources:** An electronic or printed copy of the *Deployment Support Handbook* should be provided to participants by the FFSC.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, spouses and partners of deployed service members should be prepared to re-establish face-to-face connections by building on the strengths in their relationship.

- During the *Three Doors* activity, participants will practice listening and responding to three questions about their relationship and deployment.
- During the *Homecoming Change* activity, participants will make a list of changes that have occurred in six areas: home environment, daily routines, personal, emotional, children and social changes.
- During the *Intimacy Journal* activity, participants will review four scenarios and share strategies for restoring intimacy.

## Module Preparation

### Materials

- *Module 2: Reintegrating with Partners* PowerPoint file or printed copy
- *Deployment Support Handbook* (electronic or printed copy)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Rubber bands (one for each participant)
- Markers
- Paper and writing instruments
- Timer

### Handouts

- *20 Questions*
- *Homecoming Changes*
- *Scenarios: Intimacy Journals*
- *Tips for Restoring Intimacy*

### Optional Materials (if available)

- Computer
- Projector
- Small prizes or candy

## Course Outline

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Rubber Band Hand*
  - b. Agenda
2. Re-establishing Connections (5-8 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Three Doors*
  - b. Open Communication
  - c. Balancing Time
3. Celebrating Growth and Changes (8-10 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Homecoming Changes*
  - b. Discussing Change
  - c. Finding Common Ground
4. Navy Operational Stress Control (5 minutes)
  - a. Stress Continuum Model
  - b. OSC Resources
5. Restoring Intimacy (10-15 minutes)
  - a. Types of Intimacy
  - b. Activity: *Intimacy Journals*
6. Closing (3-5 minutes)
  - a. Upcoming Homecoming Workshops
  - b. Financial Planning Workshops

# Content

## Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

### Slide 1: Reintegrating with Partners



Greet participants. Provide the handouts and rubber bands as they enter the training area.

Provide a brief introduction of yourself and other co-facilitators.

**SAY:** Welcome to *Reintegrating with Partners*! Our goal for today is to help you prepare to re-establish connections with your service member, who also is anticipating their return home.

### Slide 2: Activity: Rubber Band Hand



Ensure that all participants have a rubber band.

**SAY:** Some of you may be wondering why we distributed rubber bands and what the rubber bands have to do with homecoming. We are going to use them to test your relationship resilience and see just how ready you are to reconnect with your partner.

**SAY:** Here's the test. Listen closely to my instructions.



Demonstrate how to perform the exercise.

1. Loop the rubber band over your right thumb.
2. Pull the rubber band along the back of your hand and loop it over your little finger. Bring the loop as far down as it will go on your finger.
3. Your goal is to get the rubber band off your little finger so that it is hanging off your right thumb again (just as when we started). But wait! We have three rules. You may not use:
  - a. Your other hand.
  - b. Your teeth or any other part of your body.
  - c. A table or any other object.

**SAY:** Good luck!

Allow 15 to 20 seconds as participants struggle to complete the exercise.



*If a participant is able to complete the test, commend them for being one of the few persons to master the challenge.*

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**ASK:** It looks like most of you are struggling to pass the test. Do you need a hint?

**SAY:** We had three rules, but we did not say you cannot get help from another person.

*Watch as participants help one another release the rubber band.*

**ASK:** What would you say is the purpose of this activity?

*Solicit feedback. Look for: teamwork.*

**SAY:** Reintegrating with your spouse or partner after deployment is a two-person job. Both you and your service member must be committed to engaging fully in the homecoming experience. In other words: There is power in two.

**SAY:** This workshop is about how to go from being two individuals to being a couple again. Much of what we will discuss has hopefully been shared with your service member during their Return and Reunion workshop.

### Slide 3: Agenda

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**SAY:** There are four topics we will cover today, all of which require the power of two:

[CLICK to animate slide]

1. Re-establishing connections with your service member.
2. Celebrating growth and change as individuals and as a couple.
3. Recognizing operational stress and where to go for help.
4. Restoring intimacy and closeness.



*Let participants know that this workshop does not cover the Emotional Cycle of Deployment. The Emotional Cycle of Deployment is in the Deployment Support Handbook. The final stages, Stages 5, 6 and 7 are covered during the General Homecoming Brief.*

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**SAY:** Because we have limited time, please hold your questions until the end of the session. Use the space on your handout to take notes to help you remember. Now let us start with our first topic: re-establishing connections.

## Re-establishing Connections (5-8 minutes)

### Slide 4: Activity: *Three Doors*



Solicit a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Ask the volunteer to introduce themselves by their name and how many deployments their service member has served.



**OPTION for quiet audience:** Have participants vote on which door to choose instead of soliciting a volunteer.

**OPTION for large audience:** Ask participants to pair up and assign a door (1, 2 or 3) to each pair so all questions are discussed.

**SAY (to the volunteer):** On the slide, there are three doors. Behind each door is a question about deployment and homecoming. You are the lucky person who will get to choose which door to open.

**SAY (to participants):** Once [volunteer's name] selects a door, pair up with someone and take turns sharing your answer to the question.

**SAY:** When it is your turn to listen, you must listen without judgment to what your partner expresses. This means respecting their thoughts and feelings and appreciating their willingness to share.

**ASK (volunteer):** [Volunteer's name], which door do you choose?

*Thank the volunteer and ask them to join the rest of the group and pair up with another participant.*

[CLICK the door to reveal the question]

- **Door 1:** What was the most difficult part of deployment for you?
- **Door 2:** What did you miss most about your partner?
- **Door 3:** How do you want to celebrate homecoming?

**SAY:** Please pair up with someone and take turns answering the question. You will have two minutes total; each person should have one minute to share.

**SAY:** The questions require simple responses, so do not get long-winded. Make sure your partner has an opportunity to talk.

**SAY:** If you feel that the question is too personal, it is OK to say so. However, instead of avoiding the question altogether, let your partner know what you are comfortable discussing.

*Keep track of time. At the halfway mark (60 seconds), announce that it is time to switch.*

## Slide 5: Open Communication



**SAY:** This activity was meant to give you practice asking and responding to open-ended questions. Face-to-face communication with your partner after a long separation can be awkward at first.

**SAY:** Open-ended questions will encourage meaningful conversations to strengthen your relationship, instead of closed-ended questions which, at a minimum, only require a “yes” or “no” response.

*Refer to the 20 Questions handout.*

**SAY:** The *20 Questions* handout is a communication game for you to share with your partner. It is similar to the activity we just did, except some of the questions are a lot more interesting! If your service member attended a Return and Reunion brief, it is likely that they learned about this game, too.

**SAY:** To play, you can cut questions out and use them as a deck of cards. The questions are a starting point for addressing topics that you and your partner may be thinking but are hesitant to discuss.

- Deployment and Homecoming
- Relationship and Intimacy

**SAY:** You will notice that there are some empty cards. These blank cards are for you and your service member to add your own questions.

**SAY:** When playing this game with your partner, it is important to follow the rules on the card deck. These tips are also useful when communicating in general.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY:** We encourage you to play whenever you want to feel closer to each other, when you feel communication is becoming an issue, or even if you just want to have fun! It will help you build honesty, openness, trust and restore intimacy.

## Slide 6: Balancing Time



**SAY:** Finding quality time with your partner can be a little tricky when you have children, relatives and/or friends who are also eager to see your service member. You and your partner will need to discover how to balance time with each other, time alone and time with family and friends.

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- **Quality time vs. quantity time.** There will be moments when you and your partner will need time alone. It is important to honor these moments without feeling guilty or fearing that love is lost. When needing alone time, reassure each other that the relationship is safe and still intact.
- **Couple time vs. family time.** This can be especially challenging when you have children and other relatives who are eager to be a part of your homecoming. Just remember: A loving marriage is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your children and your extended families. Don't feel guilty about getting a baby sitter or asking your relatives to visit after your family has had a chance to reunite. Most relatives will understand.

**SAY:** Now it is time to address our second topic, "change."

## Celebrating Growth and Change (8-10 minutes)

### Slide 7: Activity: *Homecoming Changes*



**SAY:** Many service members indicate that they experience "culture shock" when they return home. This is because day-to-day life during a deployment is very different from everyday life at home.

**SAY:** The feeling of culture shock is multiplied when your service member returns and things are different from when they left. Remember that the subtle changes you have made may appear drastic to your service member because they have not been home to experience the progression.

**SAY:** As we go over various areas where the family dynamics may have changed during deployment, use the *Homecoming Changes* handout to take notes. This list will help you get started. You can finish it later when you have time.

[CLICK to animate slide]

- **Home environment.** What changes have taken place at home? Did you buy new furniture, paint the house or remodel the kitchen? Did you hire someone to take care of the lawn? Is a new vehicle parked in the driveway?
- **Daily routines.** Does your day start earlier and end later? Has dinnertime changed? Are you working longer or shorter hours? Do you clean the house once a month instead of once a week?
- **Personal.** Have you gained or lost weight? Did you change your hairstyle? Did you get a new job or promotion? Did you acquire a new hobby? Do you have new habits that change life at home? For example, did you become a vegetarian and no longer cook meat?

- **Emotional.** In what areas have you grown more independent? Have you grown sensitive or desensitized to certain topics?
- **Children.** What changes have occurred with children? What are their new habits, hobbies and interests?
- **Social.** What does your social life look like? Have you met new friends or dropped former friends? How often do you go out with friends? How often do you entertain guests at home?

**SAY:** Remember, these changes may seem minimal to you because you were the one who implemented them and had an opportunity to adjust to these changes slowly. Your service member will be thrust into these changes upon their return.

**SAY:** To minimize the culture shock, talk with your service member about these changes before they return home. This will help them prepare mentally. However, understand that adjusting to these changes will still take some time. Be patient.

### Slide 8: Discussing Change

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**SAY:** Your service member has probably changed, too. Just as it will take time for them to adjust to changes at home, you will need to adjust to the changes they bring to the relationship. Some of these changes will be easier to deal with than others.

**SAY:** If you or your partner feels uncomfortable with change, be patient with each other and discuss these questions:

[CLICK to animate slide]

1. What makes you uncomfortable about this change? What is causing the resistance?
2. What is positive about this change? In what ways is this change good?
3. What can you do to make it easier to accept this change?
4. What kind of support is necessary to honor the changes that have taken place?

**SAY:** If you or your partner feels so strongly about change that you reach an impasse in your discussion, you might consider counseling. If you do not feel comfortable seeking counseling, you can find support through professional organizations and network groups that offer tools and resources to aid your situation.

**SAY:** As you address these issues by adapting to or renegotiating change, be sure to acknowledge your resilience as a couple to overcome these challenges.

## Slide 9: Finding Common Ground



**SAY:** When things get difficult, some couples automatically begin mentally creating an “exit strategy” for their marriage (e.g., begin saving money so they can move out or begin distancing themselves emotionally and physically).

**SAY:** Accept that challenges are going to happen. Instead of creating an exit strategy, create an “entrance strategy.” Here are two tips to help:

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**SAY:** There is a saying: “How can two walk together unless they meet on common ground?” One of the most productive ways to adjust to change is to acknowledge the positive characteristics of your relationship that remain constant.

**SAY:** Ask yourself, “What has not changed that is more important than what did change?”

**SAY:** If you and your service member attended the *Couples and Deployment* pre-deployment workshop, we conducted an activity where you shared three things you liked about each other. This activity gave us an opportunity to appreciate our partners, express gratitude and focus on the positive aspects of our relationships.

**SAY:** It is important to build on what we started by reminding each other of what you like and trying to maintain consistent with these personal qualities. For example, if your partner said they love your sense of humor, becoming too serious can be difficult for your partner.

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**SAY:** Our second tip is to “celebrate the growth that change brings.” Change is not always easy, but it usually helps us grow as individuals and as a couple. Ask yourself, “How will this change make our relationship stronger?”

**SAY:** It may be helpful for you and your service member to sit down and answer these questions together. Be sure to take time to acknowledge each other and celebrate these changes.

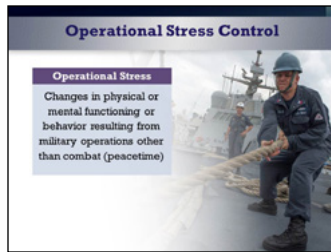
**SAY:** It is time to discuss another important topic, operational stress.

## Navy Operational Stress Control (5 minutes)



*Poll the audience to see how many participants attended the General Homecoming Brief. If majority of the participants attended the brief, you may give a high-level overview of this section. If you cover the content in full, let participants know that although some of them already received this information, you will cover it again because understanding operational stress is important.*

## Slide 10: Operational Stress Control



**SAY:** One question many family members have is how they will know whether their service member needs additional support with reintegration.

**ASK:** By a show of hands, who is familiar with the terms “combat and operational stress control”?

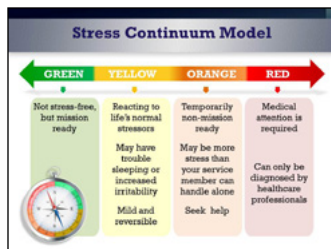
[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY:** “Combat and operational stress” can be defined as changes in physical or mental functioning or behavior resulting from the experience of military operations.

**SAY:** The difference between the two is that “combat stress” is combat related and is a consequence of lethal force or its aftermath. “Operational stress” is related to stressors that occur during military operations other than combat.

**SAY:** For this workshop, we are going to focus on operational stress. For more information on combat stress, please visit the Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) website. You can find the website address in your *Deployment Support Handbook*.

## Slide 11: Stress Continuum Model



**SAY:** The Navy Operational Stress Control (NOSC) has a tool called “The Stress Continuum.” The stress continuum is a color-coded chart with four zones representing how service members may react to different levels of stress.

[CLICK to animate each zone]

The four zones are:

- **Green “ready” zone:** not stress free, but mission ready.
- **Yellow “reacting” zone:** reacting to life’s normal stressors.
- **Orange “injured” zone:** temporarily non-mission ready.
- **Red “ill” zone:** medical attention is required.

## Slide 12: OSC Stress Zones



**SAY:** Here are some characteristics of the green zone. Service members are in the green “ready” zone when they are able to cope with their current stressors and manage their personal well-being. In other words, they are not stress-free, but they are mission ready.

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- Remains calm, steady and confident
- Exhibits ethical and moral behavior
- Eats healthy, exercises regularly and gets proper sleep
- Keeps a sense of humor and remains active socially and spiritually
- Uses alcohol in moderation, if at all
- Gets the job done and shows respect for fellow shipmates

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**SAY:** When a combat or operational stressor occurs, such as deployment, a service member may move into the yellow “reacting” zone. The yellow zone represents behaviors that are normal reactions to stress. Here are some examples:

- Feels anxious, fearful, sad, angry, grouchy, irritable or mean
- Cuts corners on the job
- Is negative or pessimistic
- Loses interest, energy or enthusiasm (no longer enjoys usual activities)
- Has trouble concentrating
- Becomes excessive in spending, Internet use, playing computer games, etc.

**SAY:** Remember, these reactions are normal. The service member can adapt and move back to the green zone or, if they find it difficult to cope, they can move into the orange “injured” zone.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY:** Orange “injured” zones are invisible stress injuries, but the wounds are literal and result from persistent distress. Here are some reactions:

- Loses control of one’s emotions or thinking
- Has nightmares, sleep problems or obsessive thinking
- Feels guilt, shame, panic or rage
- Abuses alcohol or drugs

- Changes significantly in appearance or behavior
- Loses moral values

**SAY:** If you suspect your service member is in the “orange zone,” it is important to admit that stress may be more than they can handle alone and they need to seek help. Service members usually heal from these stress injuries when given proper care.

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**SAY:** If the orange “injured” behaviors persist, get worse or get better and then come back worse, the service member may move into the red “ill” zone. The following medical disorders are in the red zone.

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Major depression
- Certain anxiety disorders
- Substance abuse disorders

**SAY:** If you suspect your service member is in the red zone, you should refer to them to medical staff immediately. Only a medical or mental health professional can make the distinction between stress injuries (orange zone) and stress illnesses (red zone).

**SAY:** This may sound frightening, so you need to know that stress illnesses are very treatable. The majority of service members who receive treatment finish their tours of duty and many continue to serve. Early detection and treatment is the key.

### Slide 13: OSC Resources

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**SAY:** Getting help is a sign of resilience. The following resources will help you recognize the symptoms of stress, recommend appropriate treatment and eliminate the stigma associated with getting help.

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- Chaplain
- Chain of command
- Command Ombudsman
- FFSC
- Military OneSource
- Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control

## Slide 14: Additional OSC Resources



**SAY:** Additional resources include:

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- **Safe Harbor** is a Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) program that provides Sailors and Coast Guardsmen and their families with non-medical care such as lodging and housing adaptation, child/youth care, transportation needs, guardianship issues, education and training benefits, respite care and more. The program allows families to focus on recovery without distractions.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** connects service members and their families in crisis with qualified responders that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If your service member expresses suicidal or homicidal thoughts, please seek help immediately by calling the toll-free hotline, 1-800-273 TALK (8255), Option 1. You can also text for help by sending a text to 838255.

**SAY:** Caring for someone who has operational stress is difficult. If your service member needs help coping, chances are you also need support. Please refer to the *Deployment Support Handbook* on how to contact these resources, plus many others.

## Restoring Intimacy (10-15 minutes)

### Slide 15: Types of Intimacy



**SAY:** We have saved the best topic for last: intimacy. Many of you have probably started to think, or even fantasized about, your first encounter with your partner.

**SAY:** Everything we have discussed today — open communication, balancing time, celebrating change and understanding operational stress — contribute to restoring intimacy in your relationship.

**SAY:** There are many forms of intimacy: intellectual, emotional, physical and, of course, sexual intimacy.

**SAY:** Deployment created the opportunity to enhance intellectual and emotional closeness with our partners (e.g., through letters, email, phone calls, photos, videos and care packages). Homecoming gives us an opportunity to rediscover physical touch and sexual intimacy.

**SAY:** This can be a source of anxiety and stress for couples. It is normal to have concerns about intimacy, especially when you have been separated from your partner for an extended time.

**SAY:** Couples who have experienced deployment and homecoming express anxiety about ...

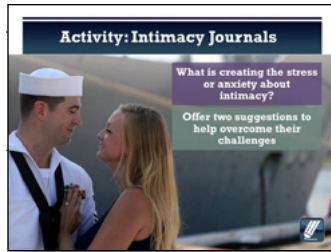
- Sexual performance.
- Dealing with children and relatives.
- Being naked in front of each other.

**SAY:** Spouses who are pregnant or who have recently given birth expressed feeling self-conscious about their appearance. Partners who have gained weight or lost considerable weight have expressed similar fears.

**SAY:** Understand that anxiety is a normal part of the reunion process. Sex may seem awkward at first. Expect some tension. Allow each other time and space by not rushing. Here are some tips to enhance your relationship and make sexual intimacy more comfortable:

[CLICK to animate bullets]

- **Do what you did when you first fell in love.** You probably came together because you enjoyed each other's company, so use this time as an opportunity to date again. Both of you have changed, so take the time to get to know each other. Go out to dinner, walk in the park or on the beach, put on some music and dance, leave notes around the house, buy flowers, etc.
- **Start with touch.** Physical intimacy is not the same as sexual intimacy (although it can lead to it). Start with small acts of touching, like holding hands, sitting close to each other, stroking your partner's hair, giving a shoulder or foot massage, soft kisses on the cheek, hand or forehead. Sometimes less is more.
- **Communicate your love.** Communication can bring you closer. Partners may experience high or low sexual interest, and for the other partner, that may cause disappointment, disagreement or a sense of rejection. This may pass, but it is important to reassure your partner that you still love them.
- **Discuss feelings, frustrations or anxieties.** It is easy to let our imagination get the best of us and create anxiety. For example, a spouse who just had a baby may feel self-conscious about her appearance, while their spouse finds them sexy. By sharing these feelings, the partner can help ease that concern.
- **Talk about sex.** This can be fun in itself. Talking about your sex life is the single best method for improving it! Remind your partner of what you like (or dislike), and talk about what you feel comfortable doing (or not doing). It is important to have a light heart when having these discussions. If your conversation is too serious, you may end up becoming frustrated or offending each other.
- **Prioritize intimacy.** Do not put so much emphasis on the sex aspect of intimacy (whether good or bad) that it overshadows the joys of being a couple. Allow the emotional, intellectual and physical (touching) aspects of affection to be building blocks to sexual intimacy.

**Slide 16: Activity: *Intimacy Journals***

Select two or three scenarios to discuss with the group. Each scenario grows in complexity (i.e., Scenario 1 is less complicated than Scenario 4). Scenarios 3 and 4 deal with operational stress.

**SAY:** Now that we have had an introduction to restoring intimacy, it is time to read the journal entries of couples who are expressing intimacy issues after deployment. The journals are based on fictional characters. However, their situations describe issues that many couples face when it comes to restoring intimacy.

**SAY:** Our job is to help these couples by ...

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1. Identifying what is creating the stress or anxiety about intimacy.
2. Offering at least two suggestions to help them overcome their challenges.

**SAY:** As we help these couples, think about everything we discussed about re-establishing connections through open communication, balancing time, celebrating growth, honoring change and even operational stress.

**SAY:** You will need the *Intimacy Journals* handout.

*Read or solicit volunteers to read the scenario from the Intimacy Journals handout.*

**Scenario 1**

**Spouse/Partner:** My partner returned home from deployment with sex on the brain! That would be great if our parents weren't visiting and we didn't have three children. I told my partner that I do not feel comfortable having sex in a house full of people. On top of that, I am exhausted from taking care of everyone. He thinks I am just coming up with excuses. He says our parents expect us to have sex and that the kids can't hear us. Why doesn't he get it?

**Service member:** During deployment, I had these incredible fantasies about being intimate with my partner. I don't know if I set myself up for failure or what, because sex has been nothing like I imagined it to be. Every time I try to be intimate with my partner, something gets in the way. Our parents came for back-to-back visits and, of course, our three children. I wish my partner would just relax.

**ASK:** What might be creating stress or anxiety for this couple?

*Possible responses include different views on when sex is appropriate is causing frustration. Spouse/partner may feel stressed and overwhelmed tending to family and children.*

**ASK:** What suggestions might help this couple overcome their challenges?

*Possible responses include respect each other's feelings and compromise. Ask the parents to watch the kids and get a hotel room. Space out future visits from extended family so the couple can have quality time alone.*

**SAY:** This couple needs help balancing couple time with family time. They may need to be reminded that a loving marriage is one of the greatest gifts they can give to their children and extended families. They may also need to sit down and renegotiate their roles and responsibilities.

## Scenario 2

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**Spouse/Partner:** Since my partner returned home, sex has been fantastic! But I have noticed that when we are not being intimate, we don't talk at all. I still don't know what my partner's deployment experience has been like. And my partner doesn't seem interested in hearing what life was like for me at home juggling things while they were away. We both have changed so much. Outside of the bedroom, I feel like we don't know each other anymore. I just want us to hold each other and have a meaningful conversation.

**Service member:** Since coming home, sex has been incredible! Unfortunately, that is the only thing worth bragging about. Nothing else is as I expected it to be. I don't agree with some of the changes my partner made while I was away, but I don't want to be offensive changing everything back to the way it was before. Having sex is far better than having an argument.

**ASK:** What might be creating stress or anxiety for this couple?

*Possible responses include not spending enough time communicating. Service member is avoiding dealing with the changes. Sex is defining the relationship.*

**ASK:** What suggestions might help this couple overcome their challenges?

*Possible responses include agree to talk before or after making love or play the 20 Questions game. Spend time together in a public setting (e.g., dinner, walk in the park, etc.) where they do not have the opportunity to have sex.*

**SAY:** Although sex is good, this couple needs help sharing their experiences and addressing the changes that have taken place in their household. Spending time in a public place where they can talk without the distraction of sex is a good idea. Because initiating conversation is difficult, this would be a great time to play the 20 Questions communication game.

### Scenario 3

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**Spouse/Partner:** My partner has returned from deployment and doesn't seem interested in sex at all. Our love life was great before the deployment began, so it must be because of the weight I gained while we were apart. My partner says I look fine, but I don't believe it. If I were attractive, we would make love more often. I am trying to lose weight, but it's hard.

**Service member:** Deployment was tough. I'm happy to be home, but I am physically and mentally tired and, quite frankly, sex is the last thing on my mind. My partner has gained some weight and thinks that is the reason why. I tried to explain that this is not true. I just need some down time. I want to relax in my comfortable bed, soak in the tub and catch up on doing nothing. I want to talk about my experience, but no one understands what I've been through.

**ASK:** What might be creating stress or anxiety for this couple?

*Possible responses include partner is insecure and rejected; service member just wants to relax, possible operational stress.*

**ASK:** What suggestions might help this couple overcome their challenges?

*Possible responses include sharing their experiences, discussing change, dealing with insecurity by exercising or improving diet, giving the service member space, and focusing on other aspects of intimacy.*

**SAY:** The partner is obviously feeling insecure and the service member may be dealing with some operational stress. They may also need to balance time with each other and time alone.

**SAY:** To help, this couple may benefit from communicating their love by prioritizing intimacy. Sharing their experiences, lessons learned and goals will build emotional and intellectual intimacy. Communicating their love and engaging in physical touch (holding hands, sitting close to each other, etc.) takes the pressure off sex and builds security in the relationship.

**SAY:** Exercising together and making other lifestyle changes to improve health can be a source of bonding. These changes are good for the partner's body image and help the service member deal with operational stress.

**SAY:** If the service member continues to struggle with operational stress, they should seek professional help.

## Scenario 4

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**Spouse/Partner:** My partner returned home from deployment two weeks ago. So far, we have only been intimate once and it was extremely awkward. I know my partner wants more sex, but I'm just not in the mood. I thought by now we would have readjusted roles in the family, but I am still managing the entire household. Sex feels like another chore. My partner is getting impatient and has even accused me of having an affair. I wish I wanted to have sex, but I am just not interested.

**Service member:** I was deployed to a combat zone and returned home two weeks ago. My partner and I had sex once and it was bad . . . OK, it was really bad! I can't blame her for not wanting to try again, but on top of all the other stress in my life, I am sexually frustrated. I am starting to believe my partner had an affair while I was risking my life! When I confronted her about being unfaithful, she broke out crying. What in the world does that mean? Was she unfaithful or not?

**ASK:** What might be creating stress or anxiety for this couple?

*Possible responses include issues with all forms of intimacy (intellectual, emotional, physical and sexual). Partner is tired and overwhelmed; service member may have operational stress.*

**ASK:** What suggestions might help this couple overcome their challenges?

*Possible responses include sharing their experiences, discussing the renegotiation of roles and responsibilities, self-care, and focusing on other aspects of intimacy.*

**SAY:** Let's address the partner first. The partner may be tired and overwhelmed and is ready to renegotiate roles and responsibilities. The service member returned two weeks ago. Most families feel "normal" within four to six weeks after homecoming. Some families can take up to six months to stabilize their relationship. The partner's expectations are probably unrealistic.

**SAY:** The service member may also have unrealistic expectations regarding intimacy. Operational stress may be an underlying issue.

**SAY:** To help, this couple may benefit from communicating, managing expectations and implementing a self-care plan that allows them to spend quality time together and alone. Focusing on intellectual, emotional and physical intimacy will help build trust and sexual intimacy.

**SAY:** If the service member is showing signs that are in the OSC orange "injured" or red "ill" zones, they should seek professional help.

## Slide 17: Tips from Couples



**SAY:** Here are some additional tips from couples who have experienced deployment:

[CLICK to animate slide]

- Court your spouse even before homecoming day through letters, emails and phone calls.
- Make "love" every day, to include doing things with and for each other — smiles, kisses, gentle touches, cleaning the car, cooking meals, etc.
- Expect intimacy to be awkward at first. Start with tried-and-true techniques.
- Tell your partner how much you love and appreciate him/her.
- Respect and trust each other.

*Solicit additional suggestions from participants.*

**SAY:** The *Tips for Restoring Intimacy* handout and *Hints for a Happy Homecoming* section found in the *Deployment Support Handbook* offer additional tips to enhance your relationship.

## Closing and Resource Update (5 minutes)

### Slide 18: Homecoming Workshops



*Provide dates, times and locations of upcoming workshops. If possible, have a sign-up sheet available so participants may register to attend.*

**SAY:** If you have additional questions about reintegrating with your service member, operational stress or restoring intimacy, please see us after the workshop or stop by the FFSC for additional information.

**SAY:** Also, consider attending the following homecoming support workshops:

- *General Homecoming Brief*
- *Just for Kids (Parents' Edition and Puppet Show)*
- *Homecoming for Teens*

## Slide 19: Financial Planning Workshops

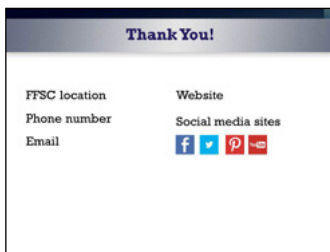
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**SAY:** The *Financial Planning Following Deployment* workshop provides information to help your family handle the financial changes that occur after a deployment so that you can make informed decisions to adapt to these changes and achieve financial stability.

## Slide 20: Thank You

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**ASK:** Does anyone have any questions about the topics we covered today?

*Respond to questions. For questions that require a lengthy response, ask participants to remain after the session for more information.*

**SAY:** One of the positive aspects of deployment is that the emotional and intellectual intimacy you experienced while you were apart can enhance your physical and sexual intimacy. Homecoming is like a first date.

It provides you the opportunity for a fresh start. Thank you for participation!

*End the session but remain in the training area to answer questions.*

# REINTEGRATING WITH PARTNERS

## 20 Questions

*20 Questions* is a communication game that builds intimacy, honesty, openness and trust. The questions are a starting point for addressing two topics that you and your partner may be thinking about but are hesitant to discuss:

- Deployment and Homecoming
- Relationship and Intimacy

Play *20 Questions* whenever you want to feel closer to each other, when you believe communication is becoming an issue or even when you just want to have fun!

### Rules of Engagement

1. Pick a topic and play in a private and intimate setting when you and your partner will have uninterrupted time together. Be comfortable, face each other and do not be shy. Give eye-to-eye and hand-to-hand contact!
2. Decide how long the game will last. For example, you can agree up front how many questions each of you will ask. Another option is to set a time limit on the game. Only play longer if you both agree you want to continue.
3. Take turns answering each question, using as much time as you need to respond. In spite of your discomfort in answering some of the questions, try your best to answer them, even if you have to “pass” until the end of the game.
4. Respect your partner’s feelings. When it is your turn to listen, do so without judgment, opinion or interrupting.
5. The blank cards are for you to customize with your own questions. Be imaginative and include other topics such as finances, faith or fun topics that explore your passions and dreams.



---

## 20 Questions: Deployment and Homecoming

**Tip:** Print or copy the cards (pages 199-210) from front to back. Laminate and cut the cards and store them in a safe place.

How would you describe your overall deployment experience?

What surprised you most about homecoming?

What was the best (or most difficult) part of deployment?

What did you miss most (or least) about home?

In what ways has deployment changed you?

How did you spend your downtime during deployment?

What was your greatest fear about homecoming?

How will you let me know when you need time alone?

---

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

---

What changes make you uncomfortable? What changes are you pleased to see?

What has been your biggest adjustment?

How will we know when/if we need help adjusting?

What do you wish I would do more (or less)?

What new things did you learn during deployment?

What are your expectations for reintegrating?

What makes you feel most relaxed?

What would constitute a perfect day for you?

---

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

---

What are your expectations for  
how we maintain our home?

What would make our  
home more comfortable?

For what do you feel  
most grateful?

How do you like to  
spend quality time?

---

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

**20 Questions**  
Deployment and Homecoming

---

## 20 Questions: Relationship and Intimacy

What three things do we have in common?

What do you think is our greatest strength (or weakness) as a couple?

What do you believe it takes to have a good relationship?

What do we do really well together?

What concerns you most about our relationship?

What do you need most from me?

Have I ever hurt you in a way you have never told me about?

What song best describes our relationship and why?

---

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

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How do you prefer to handle differences?

What is the most important expression of love?

What past experience (good or bad) can affect our future? How?

What would you like us to spend more (or less) time doing?

What are we doing when you feel closest to me?

What does intimacy mean to you?

What do you want me to know about you?

In what ways do you wish I would express my love for you?

---

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

---

What are you feeling in  
this very moment?

How would you define a  
good sexual relationship?

How often would you  
like to have sex?

What do you believe is  
your purpose in life?

---

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

**20 Questions**  
Relationship and Intimacy

# REINTEGRATING WITH PARTNERS

## Homecoming Changes

**Instructions:** Use the space to indicate what changes have taken place during the deployment. Consider how these changes will affect your service member. If possible, speak with them about these changes before they return home, to minimize culture shock.



**Home environment**

**Daily routines**

**Personal**

**Emotional**

**Children**

**Social**

**Other**

# REINTEGRATING WITH PARTNERS

## Scenarios: Intimacy Journals

### Scenario 1

**Spouse/Partner:** My partner returned home from deployment with sex on the brain! That would be great if our parents weren't visiting and we didn't have three children. I told my partner that I do not feel comfortable having sex in a house full of people. On top of that, I am exhausted from taking care of everyone. He thinks I am just coming up with excuses. He says our parents expect us to have sex and that the kids can't hear us. Why doesn't he get it?

**Service member:** During deployment, I had these incredible fantasies about being intimate with my partner. I don't know if I set myself up for failure or what, because sex has been nothing like I imagined it to be. Every time I try to be intimate with my partner, something gets in the way. Our parents came for back-to-back visits, and of course, our three children. I wish my partner would just relax.

### Scenario 2

**Spouse/Partner:** Since my partner returned home, sex has been fantastic! But I have noticed that when we are not being intimate, we don't talk at all. I still don't know what my partner's deployment experience has been like. And my partner doesn't seem interested in hearing what life was like for me at home juggling things while they were away. We both have changed so much. Outside of the bedroom, I feel like we don't know each other anymore. I just want us to hold each other and have a meaningful conversation.

**Service member:** Since coming home, sex has been incredible! Unfortunately, that is the only thing worth bragging about. Nothing else is as I expected it to be. I don't agree with some of the changes my partner made while I was away, but I don't want to be offensive changing everything back to the way it was before. Having sex is far better than having an argument.

### Scenario 3

**Spouse/Partner:** My partner has returned from deployment and doesn't seem interested in sex at all. Our love life was great before the deployment began, so it must be because of the weight I gained while we were apart. My partner says I look fine, but I don't believe it. If I were attractive, we would make love more often. I am trying to lose weight, but it's hard.

**Service member:** Deployment was tough. I'm happy to be home, but I am physically and mentally tired and, quite frankly, sex is the last thing on my mind. My partner has gained some weight and thinks that is the reason why. I tried to explain that this is not true. I just need some down time. I want to relax in my comfortable bed, soak in the tub and catch up on doing nothing. I want to talk about my experience, but no one understands what I've been through.

### Scenario 4

**Spouse/Partner:** My partner returned home from deployment two weeks ago. So far, we have only been intimate once and it was extremely awkward. I know my partner wants more sex, but I'm just not in the mood. I thought by now we would have readjusted roles in the family but I am still managing the entire household. Sex feels like another chore. My partner is getting impatient and has even accused me of having an affair. I wish I wanted to have sex, but I am just not interested.

**Service member:** I was deployed to a combat zone and returned home two weeks ago. My partner and I had sex once and it was bad ... OK, it was really bad! I can't blame her for not wanting to try again, but on top of all the other stress in my life, I am sexually frustrated. I am starting to believe my partner had an affair while I was risking my life! When I confronted her about being unfaithful, she broke out crying. What in the world does that mean? Was she unfaithful or not?

# REINTEGRATING WITH PARTNERS

## Tips for Restoring Intimacy

### **Learn to talk about it.**

The most important step is to start (and maintain) a dialogue with your partner—one that is free of blame and focuses on ways to be more intimate. Be open about sharing your fears and concerns, and set manageable goals together.

### **Spend quality time together without distraction.**

Carve out time, go for a long walk, meet for coffee or plan a weekend getaway.

### **Think about sex in a different way.**

Even if you are unable to engage in sexual intercourse as frequently as you used to, it does not mean that your sexual relationship has to end. Broaden your idea of “sex.” Learn what feels good to you and your partner.

### **Experiment, experiment, experiment.**

Think of creative ways to show your affection—try cuddling, caressing and massage.

### **Agree on a nonverbal sign.**

Think of a visual way to let your partner know you are available and willing to try. For example, you might light a candle, draw a bath or use a specific pillowcase.

### **Make a date.**

Schedule time to be physically intimate with your partner. Pick a time of day when you have the most energy and are least likely to have interruptions.

### **Relax.**

It may be easier said than done, but it is important to relax and feel vulnerable with your partner. Begin by using simple breathing exercises.

### **Seek professional help.**

Find a healthcare provider or qualified sex therapist willing to work with you and your partner. Many medications can reduce your interest in sex (libido) or ability to get or stay aroused. Talk with your healthcare provider about possible alternatives.



Adapted from Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Top Ten Tips for Restoring Intimacy



## MODULE THREE A

# Just for Kids (Parents' Edition)

## Module Description

**Purpose:** Deployed service members have a parenting “experience gap” due to separation from their children. *Just for Kids (Parents' Edition)* helps non-deployed parents facilitate a successful reintegration between the returning parent and their child. This workshop is similar to the *Return and Reunion: Reintegrating with Children* workshop presented to deployed service members.

**Target Audience:** Non-deployed parent or caregivers for children of deployed service members. This workshop is ideal for families with toddler to school-aged children (2 to 12 years old) of all family structures, including single parents and parents in adopted or blended families.

**Target Dates:** One to two month before homecoming.

**Module Length:** 30 to 45 minutes. The time to facilitate this brief may be modified based on the needs and availability of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) or requesting organization.

## Trainer Notes

**Trainer Prerequisites:** Staff who facilitate this curriculum should be skilled trainers who have observed or co-presented this course before facilitating a session on their own.

**Scripts:** Trainers should become familiar with this curriculum and personalize the scripts to ensure facilitation feels natural without compromising the course content.

**Activities:** Facilitators may modify or exchange the activities used in this curriculum to fit the needs of the audience.

**Training Tips:** Training tips are used throughout this curriculum to guide the content and recommend alternative methods of interaction.

**FFSC Resources:** An electronic or printed copy of the *Deployment Support Handbook* should be provided to participants by the FFSC.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, non-deployed parents and caregivers should be able to apply strategies to facilitate a successful reintegration between their child and deployed parent.

- During the *Homecoming Story* activity, participants will create a homecoming book to share with their child that addresses four topics:
  - Child's perspective about homecoming
  - Common reactions to homecoming
  - Growth and changes during deployment
  - Child's contribution to homecoming
- During the *Reintegration Top 10* activity, participants will make a list of at least three homecoming tips based on the information in the workshop.

## Module Preparation

### Materials

- *Module 3A: Just for Kids (Parents' Edition)* PowerPoint file or printed copy
- *Deployment Support Handbook* (electronic or printed copy)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Crayons
- Paper (colored or construction paper is optional)
- Arts and crafts supplies (optional)
- Writing instruments
- Timer

### Handouts

- *Hooray for Homecoming* sample book
- *Over There (Mommy Version)* and *Over There (Daddy Version)*

### Optional Materials (if available)

- Computer
- Projector

## Course Outline

1. Welcome and Introductions (5-8 minutes)
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Activity: *Homecoming Story*
2. Homecoming Reactions (10 minutes)
  - a. Common Concerns
  - b. Children's Reaction
  - c. What Parents Can Do
  - d. Blended Families
3. Celebrating Growth and Change (10 minutes)
  - a. Physical
  - b. Emotional
  - c. Independence
4. Suggestions for Reintegration (5 minutes)
  - a. 4 Ps of Managing Change
  - b. Reintegration Tips
5. Closing (5 minutes)
  - a. New Parent Support Home Visitation Program
  - b. Upcoming Homecoming Workshops

# Content

## Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

### Slide 1: Just for Kids (Parents' Edition)



Greet participants with enthusiasm. Provide the handouts as they enter the training area.

Provide a brief introduction of yourself and any co-facilitators.

**SAY:** Welcome to *Just for Kids, Parents' Edition!*

**SAY:** Please raise your hand if your child is ...

- Less than 2 years old.
- 3 to 5 years old.
- 6 to 12 years old.
- 13 to 18 years old.

**SAY:** Homecoming for children of all ages can be both exciting and scary. As a parent or caregiver, you might feel some excitement and anxiety about homecoming yourself.

**SAY:** It has been a long time since your child has had their deployed parent at home. Many things have probably changed, including your child's relationship with you as their primary caregiver and their long-distance relationship with the deployed parent.

### Slide 2: Agenda



Let participants know that this workshop is not designed to address reintegrating with teenagers. The Homecoming for Teens workshop is for children ages 13 to 18.

**SAY:** This workshop will help your family embrace the excitement of homecoming and address the challenges children may have when reuniting with their deployed parent.

**SAY:** We will cover the same topics that may have been presented to your service member during the *Reintegrating with Children* return and reunion workshop. This can help ensure that both parents and caregivers receive the same information. The topics include:

[CLICK to animate slide]

1. Common concerns and reactions to homecoming.
2. Growth and changes during deployment.
3. Suggestions for reintegration.

**SAY:** If you attended the *Children and Deployment* and *My Parent is Deployed* workshops, you may recall that our focus was putting ourselves in the minds of our children so we can understand how deployment looks and feels in their world. Today, we will take the same approach about homecoming.

### Slide 3: Activity: Homecoming Story



Provide the *Hooray for Homecoming!* sample book for parents to use as guide. Other sample books include "Over There (Mommy Version)" and "Over There (Daddy Version)."

**ASK:** Do you and your child have a favorite deployment or homecoming book? Why do you like it?

Popular books include:

- "Love Spots," by Karen Panier
- "Mommy, You're My Hero," by Michelle Ferguson-Cohen
- "Daddy, You're My Hero," by Michelle Ferguson-Cohen
- "I Miss You!": A Military Kids Book About Deployment, by Beth Andrews
- "Night Catch," by Brenda Ehrmantraut

**SAY:** Children have incredible imaginations and often develop stories in their minds. What if you and your child could write your own book personalized to your child's deployment experience?

**SAY:** Today, we are going to do just that. I know that seems like a large task, but it is easier than you might think. The goal is to create a simple story about homecoming from your child's perspective. If you have more than one child, consider writing a family book that includes something for each child.

**SAY:** The information we discuss about homecoming from your child's point of view will be used in your book. We will also provide you with helpful tips on storytelling along the way. You can also use the *Hooray for Homecoming!* sample book as a guide.

Ask participants if they have any questions. Answer any questions and reassure them that the task is simple.

**SAY:** Reading the book with your child will help you start a conversation about homecoming and reuniting with the deployed parent. The book will help your child express their feelings so you will know how to help them prepare for the adventure ahead.

**SAY:** Here are some general tips before we get started.

[CLICK to animate slide]

- **Keep it short and simple.** Most children have a short attention span, and they will lose interest if the book is complicated.
- **Use playful and expressive language.** Help your child label and express their feelings. Funny words and phrases used often help keep their interest and make them laugh.
- **Cater to your child's interests.** If your child likes adventures, fairy tales, funny stories or mysteries, then write a book with that theme in mind.
- **Be creative.** This is your chance to write something silly, whimsical, or whatever inspires your child. If you are the poetic type, you can use words that rhyme.
- **Think like a child.** Most children believe that little people can triumph over big things, and that magic is realistic and inanimate objects can come to life. These beliefs make for a very interesting book!
- **Let your child be the hero.** Chances are, your child thinks of you and their deployed parent as heroes. Through the book, you can let them know that you see them as a hero, too.
- **Know what message you want to convey.** What do you want your child to know, feel or do after engaging with this book?
- **Leave room for your child to finish the book.** Create space for your child to draw pictures or fill in blanks. For example, when discussing feelings, your child can write or draw how they feel.

**SAY:** The first thing you may want to do is create an opening statement. Here are some suggestions:

- Once upon a time ...
- This is a story about ...
- Meet [child's name] ...
- This is [child's name] ...
- There was a (girl/boy) named ...
- [Child's name] is ready for homecoming ...
- [Child's name] waited a long time for ...
- Homecoming is ...

**SAY:** It is time to start creating your book. Use the materials at your tables and draw from the inspiration you receive as we talk about children and homecoming.

### Slide 4: Perception is Reality



**ASK:** By a show of hands, who attended the *My Parent is Deployed* workshop?

**SAY:** During this workshop, we discussed that “perception is reality,” especially for children. Because we are writing this book based on your child’s perception, the first step is to identify their perception.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**ASK:** What is your child’s perception about homecoming? If your child were to complete the sentence, “Homecoming is \_\_\_\_\_,” what would they say?

*Sample responses include exciting, fun, good, scary, etc.*

**SAY:** Feelings are important. By tapping into your child’s feelings, you can help them express their excitement or deal with their uncertainties.

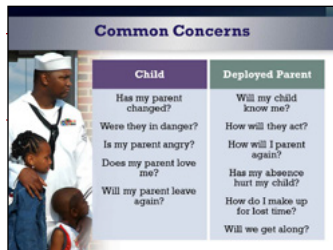
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**SAY:** Your book can be based on influencing their perceptions. For example, if your child’s perception is negative (e.g., scary) your book can help them see homecoming as something positive (e.g., exciting). If their perception is already positive, you can reinforce that belief.

**SAY:** Let’s talk about some common homecoming concerns.

## Common Concerns and Reactions (10 minutes)

### Slide 5: Common Concerns



*Know who is in your audience. If your audience does not have infant children, you do not want to give homecoming tips for infants.*

**SAY:** It is normal for everyone in the family to feel a bit anxious about homecoming. Depending on their age, children may want to know ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- How has deployment affected their parent?
- Was their parent in danger?

- Is their parent angry with them?
- Does their parent love them?
- When will their parent leave them again?

**SAY:** Deployed parents are concerned, too. Many report feeling insecure about resuming their face-to-face parenting role. They want to know ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- Will their children know them?
- How are the children going to act?
- How will they become a part of the family again?
- Has their absence hurt their child?
- How can they make up for lost time?
- Will they get along?

**SAY:** As the parent or caregiver who has been at home, nurturing, protecting and developing an in-person relationship with the child, you are in a special position to be the bridge that reconnects the child with their deployed parent. They both need your help.

### Slide 6: Children's Concerns and Reactions

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**SAY:** The cycle of emotions throughout the phases of deployment can be very confusing to kids.

**ASK:** Based on your homecoming experiences, what are some behaviors and reactions of children?

*Solicit volunteers to share their child's previous homecoming experiences. Ask volunteers the age of their child, their child's behaviors/reactions and how they addressed them.*



*Try to get positive and difficult examples from the various age groups. If someone shares a difficult experience, ask how they overcame that situation.*

Possible responses include:

Age	Reaction	Technique
Infant to 2 years old	Shy, clingy, did not recognize the returning parent	Give them time to warm up to their deployed parent. Ask the deployed parent to take part in their daily care (i.e., diaper change, feeding).
3 to 5 years old	Needs time to warm up, exhibits attention-seeking behavior (positive and negative)	Do not force them to play or hug the deployed parent. Show affection to the deployed parent so they see it is safe. Give them the attention they crave but address negative behavior.
6 to 12 years old	Excited, talkative, reserved, afraid they will be disciplined for being "bad" while the deployed parent was away	Listen to them. Spend quality time as a family. Encourage one-on-one time between the deployed parent and child. Do not bring up past negative behavior. Tell them you are proud of them.

**SAY:** Your experiences confirm studies that show children may experience worry, fear, stress and excitement. Depending on your child's age and developmental level, they may not be able to express themselves using words. Instead, they may act out their feelings. For example:

[CLICK to animate bullets]

- **Infants- to 2-year-olds** have not had an opportunity to bond with the deployed parent or they may not recognize their parent. They may cry, fuss or pull away when the returning parent tries to hold them, may be shy or clingy, may throw temper tantrums or may regress to bed-wetting or thumb-sucking behaviors.
- **Three- to 5-year-olds** may need time to warm up to their deployed parent. They may misbehave to get attention or need proof that the returning parent is real (e.g., poking, playing with eyeglasses).
- **Six- to 12-year-olds** are generally excited. Depending on their personality, some may be extremely talkative while others may be quiet and reserved at first.

**ASK:** Which of these behaviors is your child likely to have? Make room for it in your book. If you do not know how your child may react, you can use an example based on their age or you can leave a blank space for your child to insert how they feel.

## Slide 7: What Parents Can Do



**SAY:** There are several things parents can do to help their child adjust to the changes that homecoming will bring. A child's reaction depends on four things:

1. Their age.
2. Their developmental stage.
3. Previous experiences with separation.
4. Reactions and coping skills of the adults in their life.

**SAY:** We cannot change our child's age, rush their natural development or change previous experiences. However, we can give them new, positive experiences by managing how we respond to and cope with homecoming. When we do this, we are able to influence their perception.

**SAY:** If the parent or caregiver is stressed about everything that needs to happen before homecoming, the child will become anxious. If the parent or caregiver is joyous and calm, the child will be, too.

**SAY:** Here are some additional tips on how to facilitate a smooth reintegration between your deployed service member and child that will work no matter what their age.

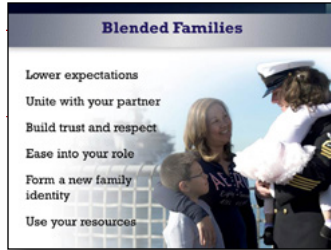
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- **Go slowly.** Do not change rules or routines as soon as your service member gets home. Do not force your child to go to the deployed parent for comfort if they are not ready.
- **Encourage involvement.** Help the deployed parent get involved with the children. Encourage playtime. Ask for their help with caretaking, such as changing your infant's diaper, helping your toddler get dressed or driving your school-aged child to ballet or baseball.
- **Communicate openly.** Commend your children for taking on extra chores, doing well in school and helping at home while the deployed parent was away. Also, thank your service member for sending letters, cards, etc.
- **Manage discipline.** Approach discipline as a team with your partner or co-parent. Do not bring up or punish behaviors that took place during the deployment. Do not give in to your child's demands because you feel guilty about the deployment.
- **Give help.** Inform the deployed parent about the changes and activity levels of the child. Offer tips on how they can strengthen their bond with the child.

- **Get help.** If you have concerns about your family's readjustment, contact the FFSC or speak with a School Liaison Officer (SLO), school counselor or your child's pediatrician. Getting help is a sign of fortitude.

**SAY:** Most kids are resilient and can readjust easily. Your responsibility as a parent is to ensure your children feel loved and safe.

## Slide 8: Blended Families (optional)



You may skip this slide if there are no blended families in your audience.

**SAY:** Please raise your hand if you have a blended family.

**SAY:** Reintegration for blended families may include an added layer of complexity. Children who have never experienced deployment may need extra reassurance and support.

**SAY:** In addition to the homecoming tips just shared, here are six steps adapted from the *Military Ready Family* website about blended military families.

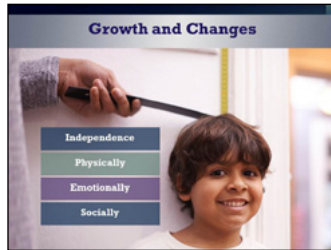
[CLICK to animate steps]

1. **Step down.** Lower your expectations of how quickly your blended family will bond. The average stepfamily needs between five and seven years to form a family identity. During this time, it is important to deal with any painful experiences that might disrupt trust.
2. **Two step.** The relationship dance with your partner is the key to success in your blended family. Make your marriage or partnership a unified foundation for your home and balance it with a strong commitment of time and energy to each other and toward your children.
3. **Step in line.** Early on, biological parents should continue to be the primary disciplinarian while the stepparent works toward building a trusting and respectful relationship with the child. Step in line with ex-spouses/ex-partners. Put your differences aside and focus on being good parents.
4. **Sidestep.** Ease into your role as a primary co-parent. Children need you to acknowledge their grief. A child who says, "You're not my dad! I don't have to listen to you!" is telling you they are sad or angry that their mom is not here to comfort them.
5. **Step through.** Commit to gradually forming a family identity over time. Maintain the tradition of celebrating important occasions, including homecoming. Create new family traditions, too.
6. **Step up.** Take advantage of your resources. Military and community resources offer guidance and support. Spiritual resources can help you find grace for each other and strength for the journey.

**SAY:** If you have any questions, be sure to ask them at the end of this workshop.

## Celebrating Growth and Change (10 minutes)

### Slide 9: Celebrating Growth and Change



**SAY:** For the next part of your book, honor how your child has grown. Think about how your children may have changed since deployment began.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**ASK:** How old were they when their parent left? Did they celebrate a birthday during deployment? In what ways have they become more independent? How have they grown physically, emotionally and socially?

**SAY:** Add two or three of your child's accomplishments to your book. Kids like to read about how much they accomplished while Mom or Dad was gone. They may have forgotten that they had a birthday, grew taller, learned to tie their shoes, received a good report card, hit a home run or made new friends.

**SAY:** Acknowledging your child's accomplishments gives them a sense of pride and encourages them to learn even more.

*Allow time for parents to add to their book.*

**SAY:** Your child will also want to know how their deployed parent has changed.

**ASK:** How might your service member have changed physically, emotionally or socially? Did they accomplish a goal you would like your family to celebrate?

*Examples may include:*

- *Physical — gained/lost weight, grew a mustache, cut hair.*
- *Emotional — increased sensitivity due to things seen or experienced during deployment.*
- *Social — enjoy alone time more than you did before the deployment.*
- *Goal — earned a degree, advanced in rank or reenlisted.*

**SAY:** Think like your child. For example, your child may not comprehend that their parent received a promotion. However, they will understand that Dad grew a moustache or Mom cut her hair. This does not mean you should not celebrate the major accomplishments. Just remember that simple, little things are a big deal to your child.

**SAY:** Add one or two ways the returning parent has changed to your book. You can also leave space on this page for the child and returning parent to complete together.

## Slide 10: Reunion Expectations



**ASK:** What is your child's greatest expectation about reintegrating with their parent?

*Solicit one or two responses from the group. Responses may include: My child expects the deployed parent to ...*

- *Be proud of them.*
- *Pick them up, swing them around, tickle, hug or play with them.*
- *Look and behave just as they remembered.*
- *Be upset with them for misbehaving while they were gone.*

**SAY:** Once you know your child's expectations, you can help manage them by ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- Being honest about what may or may not happen.
- Not making promises that you cannot keep.
- Sharing their expectations with the deployed parent. For example, if your child expects Mom or Dad to swing them around and tickle them, let the deployed parent know so they can meet this simple expectation.

## Slide 11: Managing Expectations



**SAY:** Other homecoming expectations are not as easy to manage. Most reunions are not like what you see on TV or YouTube. Even if your family has served multiple deployments, returning home is not always going to be the same.

**SAY:** A common expectation that many families do not realize they will have (until the service member gets home) is the expectation that the family will simply pick up where they left off and resume functioning in the same manner as they did before the deployment.

**SAY:** Readjusting roles can create tension as everyone tries to figure out their post-deployment routine. This can leave the kids confused about their responsibilities and which rules they should follow.

[CLICK to animate slide]

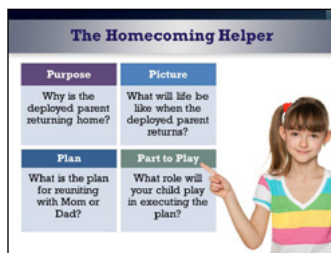
**SAY:** When your service member returns, try to maintain your child's daily routine as much as possible. You can empower your child by asking them to help Mom or Dad get reacquainted with home life. Let your child know that Mom or Dad may also need time to adjust because they have been gone for so long.

**SAY:** Let the returning parent know what rules you set during deployment. If they believe changes are necessary, discuss these changes and come to an agreement. Then, discuss the agreed-upon changes during an open family discussion.

**SAY:** A last bit of advice is to go easy on child discipline. Remember, reintegration is a journey, not an event. Everyone in the family needs time to adjust, even your kids.

## Suggestions for Reintegration (5 minutes)

### Slide 12: The Homecoming Helper



**SAY:** During the *Children and Deployment* and *My Parent is Deployed* workshops, we introduced a four-step formula to help your children feel a sense of accomplishment and belonging by helping the family succeed. The model comes from “Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change,” by William Bridges. The four steps are ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- **Purpose:** Why is change occurring?
- **Picture:** How will the changes look and feel?
- **Plan:** What is the plan for making change successful?
- **Part to play:** What is your child’s role in executing the plan?

**SAY:** Because involving your child in homecoming plans is so important, we will review these steps again.

[CLICK to animate bullets]

- **Purpose:** Why is the deployed parent returning home? This may seem like an obvious answer, but remember, your children are not adults and do not have the capacity to reason the same as you. For example, if they believed their parent left because they misbehaved, then they may believe their parent is returning to see whether they are good now. As you can imagine, this may create stress and anxiety for your child.
- **Picture:** From your child’s perspective, how might things look and feel when the deployed parent returns? What might be exciting? What might be a little scary? Try to give your child a realistic view while encouraging them.
- **Plan:** What is the plan for reuniting with Mom or Dad? Will you meet them at the pier? Will there be a celebration at home? How does the house need to be made ready? Allow your children to be a part of the planning phase. They are full of creative ideas!

- **Part to play:** What role will your children play in executing the plan? Perhaps they can decorate the welcome home banner, make cards, help bake cupcakes and, of course, help you finish the homecoming book to show to returning Mom or Dad. Think about your child's talents and interests and include them in the plan.

**Slide 13: Activity: Reintegration Tips (1 to 5)**



**SAY:** We have discussed several ways to help our children prepare to reunite with their returning parent. To summarize, let us reflect on what we learned and come up with a list of tips for reintegration.

*Solicit at least three suggestions from the group. If they need help, advance the slide for a list of 10 tips.*

**SAY:** These tips were also shared with deployed parents during the Return and Reunion workshop.

[CLICK to animate each tip]

1. Honor the developmental age and stage of your child and manage your own coping skills.
2. Inform the deployed parent about the changes and activity levels of your child.
3. Appreciate your child's contribution to the success of the deployment.
4. Maintain your child's daily routine and ask them to help their deployed parent reacquaint to home life.
5. Give your partner suggestions on how to strengthen their bond with your child.

**Slide 14: Activity: Reintegration Tips (6 to 10)**



[CLICK to animate each tip]

6. Celebrate growth and normalize change.
7. Encourage the sharing of feelings.
8. Discuss changes as a family.
9. Be patient with yourself, your service member and your child.
10. Focus on your love for your child.

## Slide 15: The Homecoming Hero



**SAY:** It is time to add the finishing touch to your story. Your ending should be positive and empowering for your child.

**SAY:** Consider making your child the homecoming helper or, even better, the homecoming hero. There are many ways for them to be the hero of the story. Perhaps they help Mom or Dad readjust. Perhaps the cookies they baked were Mom or Dad's favorite. Or maybe they helped their younger brother, sister or even the family pet reintegrate with the deployed parent.

**SAY:** Remember, most children believe that little people can triumph over big things, magic is real and inanimate objects can come to life. Think about what is important to your child and use it in your story.

**SAY:** Another option for ending your story is to leave one or two blank pages for the child and returning parent to complete together. It can include simple details about homecoming day, or describe how everyone felt when Mom or Dad came home.

*Allow a few moments for parents to end their story.*

**SAY:** The last thing you need to do with your book is give it a title. Or, perhaps you and your child can title the book together.

**SAY:** Finish the book with your child. Allow them to draw the pictures, select family photos, clip art or stickers for illustration. If you left blank spaces for your child to insert their own words, read the book together and ask them what should go in the spaces. You may even want them to help you with creating an ending for the story.

## Closing and Resource Update (5 minutes)

### Slide 16: New Parent Support Home Visitation Program



**SAY:** Creating a story and allowing your child to participate in homecoming plans are useful strategies. However, sometimes we need extra support to help our children reintegrate. The FFSC and the New Parent Support Home Visitation Program (NPSHVP) are excellent resources to help build resilience with children.

**SAY:** The NPSHVP is available to parents who are expecting a child (prenatal) through parents with children younger than age 4. Because of your deployment, your family may be considered for priority services.

**SAY:** If you would like more information about NPSHVP, or would like information for resources for children older than age 4, please seek out the School Liaison Officer (SLO) or come by after this session for additional resources.

## Slide 17: Homecoming Workshops

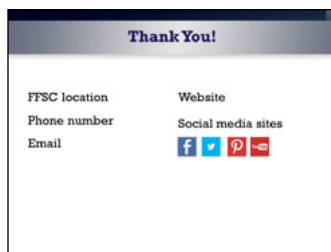


Provide dates, times and locations of upcoming workshops. If possible, have a sign-up sheet available so participants may register to attend.

**SAY:** Also, consider attending the following homecoming support workshops:

- General Homecoming Brief
- Reintegrating with Partners
- Just for Kids (Puppet Show)
- Homecoming for Teens

## Slide 18: Thank You



**ASK:** Does anyone have any questions about the topics we covered today?

Respond to questions. For questions that require a lengthy response, ask participants to remain after the session for more information.

**SAY:** Thank you for your participation. Enjoy completing your homecoming book with your child!

*End the session but remain in the training area to answer questions.*

*Back cover*

*Title page*

# Hooray for Homecoming!

By the \_\_\_\_\_ Family

*Opening Sentence*

This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_

Mom/Dad is coming home!  
Hooray for homecoming!

*Child's perception about homecoming*

*Child's emotions about homecoming*

Homecoming is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am excited to see my Mom/Dad.  
But I am scared, too.

*Address concerns*

What if Mom/Dad forgot me?  
Or what if they are mad at me?

Mom/Dad told me not to worry.  
She/he said Mom/Dad missed me!

*Address potential behaviors/reactions.*

*Acknowledge growth and changes*

When I see Mom/Dad I might be shy.  
He/she was gone for a long time.

Will Mom/Dad know who I am?  
Because I have gotten so big.

*Special occasions during deployment*

I was 5 when Mom/Dad left.

Now I am 6.

*Child's physical growth*

Mom/Dad said I grew 2 inches!

But I am not too big for Mom/Dad's hugs!

*Child's learned independence*

*How child helps at home*

I can tie my shoes all by myself.

And at home I feed our dog \_\_\_\_\_.

*Deployed parent's changes*

*Deployed parent's physical, emotional, social  
or professional changes/growth*

Mom/Dad said Mom/Dad changed, too.  
But we will still love each other.

Dad has a big, hairy mustache.  
I bet it tickles when he kisses me.

*Celebrate changes (big and small)*

We are going to have a big, hairy  
moustache party for dad!  
And a shoe-tying party for me!

We are going to have cake and balloons!  
Hooray for Homecoming!

*Homecoming helper*

I am going to help Mom/Dad  
when he/she comes home.

*Homecoming hero*

Mom/Dad says that I am the  
homecoming hero!  
Hooray for Homecoming!

*Pages for child and deployed parent to  
complete together*

*Pages for child and deployed parent to  
complete together*

Homecoming was fun!

I met Mom/Dad by the ship!

Mom/Dad hugged me for a long time!

Hooray for Homecoming!

# Over There

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your family photo here)

By the \_\_\_\_\_ family  
(write in your family name)



ZERO TO THREE gratefully acknowledges the Iraq Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund administered by the California Community Foundation for its support of the Coming Together Around Military Families project and the McCormick Tribune Foundation for making the original edition of this book possible.

A message to families and caregivers from ZERO TO THREE—

Military separations are hard on everyone. Deployment can be especially difficult for **you** as you balance the needs of your family with your own needs, feelings, and daily stresses. We hope that you are finding some time, every day, to take care of yourself and “refuel” by talking with others, getting the support you deserve, and engaging in activities that make **you** feel healthy, calm, and energized.

You are already doing so much to support your young child during this challenging time. Just by creating and reading this book you are showing how much you care about understanding and comforting him. ZERO TO THREE has developed this book to help you find the words to reassure your child that mommy or daddy is out there, thinking about and loving him from far away.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of this book:

- Use it as an opportunity to talk and share memories with your child about his deployed parent. By sharing memories, you help keep the deployed parent a part of your child’s world.
- Share the comforting messages offered in the book throughout the day, reminding your child that the deployed parent loves and thinks about him every day.
- Follow your child’s lead. You know your child best and can tell whether he’s “in the mood” for this story. Maybe he wants to sit down and think about the deployed parent, or maybe he just wants to run around and play. Perhaps your child may not be so interested in the words but enjoy carrying the book around, “holding onto” the parent in his own way. Think of this book as a tool that can be used in many different ways. It’s not a “must do”; rather, a “can do,” based on what your child is telling you about his needs at that particular moment in time.
- Tune in to your own feelings as you read this book. Is it reassuring for you? Do you feel anxious or sad talking about the separation? There are no right or wrong feelings. If you are upset or concerned, it can be very helpful to talk to someone, whether a friend, family member, or counselor. Deployment can be easier when you get the support you need.

For more information on supporting yourself and your young child during a deployment, please go to [www.zerotothree.org/military](http://www.zerotothree.org/military).

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**My daddy is away.  
And I miss him.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He is not here right now.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He is there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I do the same things here...**

**that he does there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I brush my teeth here.**

**He brushes his teeth there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I play here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He plays there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I read books here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He reads books there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I eat lunch here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He eats lunch there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I go to bed here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**He goes to bed there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I have family and friends who take care of me here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**My daddy has friends who help take care of him there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I think about my daddy here.**

**My daddy thinks about me there.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**My daddy would like to be here  
with me.**

**But he has very important work he  
must do there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**Sometimes I feel sad, or even mad...  
because my daddy's not here.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**It's ok to feel that way.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I like to look up at the moon here.**

**I feel happy that my daddy looks  
up at the same moon there.**

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**I love my daddy.**

**My daddy loves me here, there,  
and everywhere.**

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

(Place your photo or drawing here)

**My daddy is away and I miss him.**

**But he's always here in my heart.**

# Over There

(Cut along dashed line)

(Place your family photo here)

By the \_\_\_\_\_ family  
(write in your family name)



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Dear Parent,

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For more information on supporting yourself and your young child during a deployment, please go to [www.zerotothree.org/military](http://www.zerotothree.org/military).

(Cut along dashed line)

**My mommy is away.  
And I miss her.**

**She is not here right now.**

**She is there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I do the same things here.**

**That she does there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I brush my teeth here.**

**She brushes her teeth there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I play here.**

**She plays there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I read books here.**

**She reads books there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I eat lunch here.**

**She eats lunch there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I go to bed here.**

**She goes to bed there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I have family and friends who take  
care of me here.**

**My mommy has friends who help  
take care of her there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I think about my mommy here.**

**My mommy thinks about me there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**My mommy would like to be  
here with me.**

**But she has very important work  
she must do there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**Sometimes I feel sad, or even mad,  
because my mommy's not here.**

**It's ok to feel that way.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I like to look up at the moon here.**

**I feel happy that my mommy  
looks up at the same moon there.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**I love my mommy.**

**My mommy loves me here, there,  
and everywhere.**

(Cut along dashed line)

**My mommy is away and I miss her.**

**But she's always here in my heart.**

(Cut along dashed line)

## MODULE THREE B

# Just for Kids (Puppet Show)

## Module Description

**Purpose:** The emotions experienced during homecoming can be confusing for children. *Just for Kids (Puppet Show)* allows children to engage with puppets and children their age to normalize their feelings, to build confidence by identifying with how much they have grown, and to feel a sense of purpose and belonging by helping their family prepare for the return of Mom or Dad. Parents will discover ways to communicate with their child about homecoming. This workshop may be presented to children while parents attend the *Just For Kids, (Parents' Edition)*.

**Target Audience:** Non-deployed parents or primary caregivers and children ages 3 to 10 whose parent is returning from deployment.

**Module Length:** 20 to 30 minutes. The time to facilitate this training may be modified based on the needs and availability of the command or Family Readiness Group (FRG) or requesting organization.

## Trainer Notes

**Trainer Prerequisites:** Staff who facilitate this curriculum should be skilled trainers who have observed or co-presented this course before facilitating a session on their own.

**Scripts:** Trainers should become familiar with this curriculum and personalize the scripts to ensure that facilitation feels natural without compromising the course content.

**Activities:** Facilitators may modify or exchange the activities used in this curriculum to fit the needs of the audience.

**Training Tips:** Training tips are used throughout this curriculum to guide the content and recommend alternative methods of interaction.

**FFSC Resources:** An electronic or printed copy of the *Deployment Support Handbook* should be provided to participants by the FFSC.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, child participants should be able to recognize that their feelings about homecoming are normal, identify how they have grown and ask their non-deployed parent or caregiver how they can help prepare for homecoming.

Upon completion of this module, non-deployed parents and/or primary caregivers should be able to engage in meaningful conversations with their child about homecoming.

- During *Scene 1: Feelings Are Normal*, children will discuss how they are happy and sad about homecoming.
- During *Scene 2: Getting Bigger*, children will discuss how they have gotten bigger, stronger, smarter and more independent since their parent deployed.
- During *Scene 3: Homecoming Helper*, children will discuss how they can help their family prepare for homecoming.

## Module Preparation

### Materials

- *Module 3B: Just for Kids, Homecoming Helper* puppet show script
- *Deployment Support Handbook* (electronic or printed copy)
- Two to three puppets (life size or handmade)
- Puppet show stage or backdrop (if available)
- Timer

### Optional Materials

- Coloring books
- Paper
- Crayons
- Small prizes or candy

## Course Outline

1. Welcome and Introductions (2 minutes)
  - a. Opening
  - b. Meet the Facilitator
2. Scene 1: *Feelings Are Important* (5-6 minutes)
  - a. Happy and Sad
  - b. Think Positive
3. Scene 2: *Getting Bigger and Better* (5 minutes)
  - a. Growth and Independence
  - b. Service Member Changes
4. Scene 3: *Homecoming Helper* (5-6 minutes)
  - a. Helping When It's Fun
  - b. Helping When It's Not Fun
5. Debrief and Closing (5 minutes)
  - a. Parent Debrief
  - b. Upcoming Homecoming Workshops
  - c. Support Resources

# Content

## Welcome and Introductions (3 minutes)

### Hooray for Homecoming Puppet Show



**SETTING:** Jazz and Tripp are best friends. Jazz is excited about her dad returning from deployment. Tripp is sad about his mother's return and needs help. The facilitator is part of the script and interacts with the puppets and the audience to help them prepare for homecoming. The scenes can be combined or performed as one or two separate puppet shows.

**Scene 1:** *Feelings are Normal*

**Scene 2:** *Getting Bigger and Better*

**Scene 3:** *Homecoming Helper*

**Closing:** *Parent debrief and information and referral*

#### PUPPET OPTIONS:

- **Two-puppet option:** Facilitator is part of the script and interacts with the puppets and the audience.
- **Three-puppet option:** A third puppet may be used to play the role of the facilitator.

## Opening

#### FACILITATOR:

**SAY:** Good morning/afternoon everyone! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am so glad you came to visit me today.

**ASK:** Does anyone know why we are here?

**SAY:** We have been getting ready for our moms and dads to come home from deployment, and we want you to be ready, too. Your mom or dad has been away for a long time to do their job, but they are about to come home.

**ASK:** Who knows where their mom or dad works?

*Possible responses include the Navy or on the ship.*

**SAY:** That's right! Your moms and dads work for the Navy, and some of them went away with the ship. They miss you very much and they are excited to come home to see you.

**SAY:** If you will be happy to see your mom or dad, yell "Hooray!" as loud as you can.

**SAY:** If you are a little sad or worried for your mom or dad to come home, whisper "Hooray" as softly as you can.

**ASK:** Did you know that it is OK to be happy and sad at the same time?

*Children will respond “yes” or “no.”*

**SAY:** Yes, it is OK to be happy and sad. My two friends are coming to visit with us. I think they are happy and sad for their mom and dad to come home from deployment, too. Do you want to meet them?

**SAY:** Here they come ...

**Scene 1: Feelings Are Important (5-6 minutes)**

*Enter Jazz*

<b>Facilitator</b>	Hi, Jazz!
<b>Jazz</b>	(Upbeat) Hi [Facilitator’s name]!  (Looking at the audience of kids, amazed) Who are all your friends?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Jazz, these are my visitors. We are talking about being happy and sad when our moms and dads come home from deployment.  Would you like to say hello to them?
<b>Jazz</b>	(To audience) Hello, friends! My name is Jazz. What’s your name?  <i>Kids shout their names</i>  (To Facilitator) I like their names.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Yes, they do have nice names.  Hey Jazz, where’s Tripp?
<b>Jazz</b>	Tripp is sad today. He doesn’t want to play.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Maybe we can help him.  (To children) Children, Tripp is sad. Do you want to see if we can help him?  <i>Kids shout “yes” or “no.”</i>  Tripp likes manners, so when I count to three, let’s shout, “Tripp, please come out to play!”  Are you ready?  Remember, we have to say, “please.”  1-2-3  “Tripp, please come out to play!”
<b>Tripp</b>	<i>Tripp enters.</i>  (Sad) Hi, [Facilitator’s name]. Hi, Jazz.  (To audience) Hi, kids.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Hi, Tripp. We are so happy to see you. Jazz told us that you are sad today. What’s wrong?

**SECTION 3: HOMECOMING AND REINTEGRATION**

<b>Tripp</b>	My mommy is coming home from deployment soon. I love my mommy and I miss my mommy, but she has been away for a long time and I feel sad.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Feelings are important. The kids and I were just talking about feeling happy and sad when our parents come home from deployment.
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	You were?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Yes, we were.
<b>Tripp</b>	[Facilitator's name], is it bad for me to be sad?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Oh no, it is not bad at all. Feelings are important. It is OK to feel sad, even when your mom or dad is coming home. But maybe we can help you feel better.  (To children) Let's help Tripp! He is going to tell us what makes him sad, and if that makes you sad, too then raise your hand real high, like this (demonstrate reaching to the sky).
<b>Facilitator and Jazz</b>	<i>Raise hands at various times, as Tripp describes why he is sad. Remind audience to raise their hands if they would be sad, too.</i>
<b>Tripp</b>	(Sadly) Well, sometimes I don't clean my room. Mom likes my room to be clean. She's probably going to fuss at me.  <i>Pause. Allow time for kids to raise their hands.</i>  One day I was playing ball in the house and I broke Mom's favorite vase. I am not allowed to play ball in the house. What if Mom cries because her vase is broken?  <i>Pause. Allow time for kids to raise their hands.</i>  What if Mom is happy to see Daddy and Frisco the dog and she forgets about me? That makes me very, very sad.  <i>Pause. Allow time for kids to raise their hands.</i>
<b>Facilitator</b>	It is OK to be sad for a little while, but I think I can help you be happy.
<b>Tripp and Jazz</b>	You can?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Yes, I can. It sounds like you are sad because you are disappointed in yourself and you don't want to disappoint your mom.  You are sad because you didn't clean your room. Well, you still have time to clean your room. Why don't you clean it today?
<b>Tripp</b>	(Puzzled) Cleaning my room will make me feel better?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Oh yes. When you do what your parents ask you to do, it makes them happy. And making your parents happy will make you feel better!
<b>Tripp</b>	You're right! I still have time to clean my room before Mom comes home. When she sees my clean room, she is going to say, "Tripp, what a nice, clean room!"

**MODULE THREE B: JUST FOR KIDS (PUPPET SHOW)**

<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>You are also sad because you broke your mom’s favorite vase when you were playing ball in the house.</p> <p>There is a special word to use when you hurt someone or break their things. Do you know what that special word is?</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	Is the special word “sorry”?
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes, the special word is “sorry.”</p> <p>Saying sorry is very important. You can tell your mom that you are sorry for breaking her favorite vase. When you say you are sorry, your mommy will forgive you.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	(Puzzled) And she won’t be mad anymore?
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That’s right. She won’t be mad anymore.</p> <p>Everyone makes mistakes. Parents love their children too much to be angry for a long time. But Tripp ... you can’t play ball in the house any more.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	I know ...
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>You also said you are sad because you think your mommy will spend more time with your daddy and your dog, Frisco.</p> <p>Your mommy wants to spend time with everybody. Sometimes she will spend time with just your dad. Sometimes she will spend time with Frisco. And sometimes, she will spend time with just YOU!</p> <p>But guess what? Sometimes she will spend time with you, your dad and Frisco at the same time!</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	(Excited) She will?!
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes, she will. Your mom has enough love for you, your dad and Frisco!</p> <p>(To audience) There is one more thing we can do to help Tripp.</p> <p>Do you know what it is?</p> <p><i>Allow children to yell out answers. Affirm their responses.</i></p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>Oh! I know! I know!</p> <p>Tripp was only thinking about all the sad things. When I am sad, I like to think about happy things.</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Very good, Jazz!</p> <p>It is OK to think about sad things for a little while because it can help us do better. But we should also think about good things.</p> <p>Tripp, tell us some of the good things you did while your mommy was away.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>Well ... I fed Frisco every day and I learned to wash him all by myself, too.</p> <p>My teacher said I did a good job in school and she gave me a sticker.</p> <p>I hit a home run in T-ball.</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	Wow, Tripp. Those are all very good things! You deserve applause.

## SECTION 3: HOMECOMING AND REINTEGRATION

<b>Jazz</b>	[Facilitator's name], what does applause mean?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Applause is when you clap, like this (begin clapping).  (To audience) I bet our visitors did good things that deserve applause, too!  When I count to three, let's all stand up and give applause for all the good things we did.  Are you ready?  1-2-3  <i>Stand up and give a big round of applause.</i>
<b>Jazz</b>	(To Tripp) Tripp, do you feel better now?
<b>Tripp</b>	Yes! I feel happy that my mom is coming home soon!
<b>Facilitator</b>	Tripp, seeing you happy makes me happy, too!  (To audience) Jazz and Tripp have to go now, but they will be back soon. Let's tell them good-bye for now.
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	Bye! We'll be back soon!  <i>Jazz and Tripp exit.</i>
<b>Facilitator</b>	(To audience) Feelings are important.  It is OK to be sad for a little while, like Tripp. When you get sad about your mom or dad coming home, remember three things.  (Counting on your fingers)  One, if you are disappointed in yourself, talk to your mom, dad, grandparent, teacher or baby sitter to help you do better.  Two, when you think about all the mistakes you made, stop and think about all the good things you did.  Three, your mom and dad have enough love to care for your whole family.



*Brief intermission. If the children seem tired or restless, have them stand up and stretch and touch their toes, dance or give each other high-fives.*

### Scene 2: Getting Bigger and Better (5 minutes)

<b>Facilitator</b>	(Looking around at the audience)  Wait a minute. Something strange is going on here.  Did you all get bigger while you were stretching (or dancing or giving high-fives)?  I think you all have gotten bigger and better!  Jazz and Tripp are going to be surprised to see how big you have gotten!
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<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	<p><i>Jazz and Tripp enter.</i></p> <p>Hi, [Facilitator's name]. Hi, friends! We're back!</p> <p>(Pause, looking around at the audience) Wait a minute. Something strange is going on here. Did our friends get bigger?</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes, I think so!</p> <p>(Looking at Jazz and Tripp) Jazz, Tripp ... I think you have gotten bigger, too!</p>
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	<p>(Looking at each other) We have? Yay!</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>(To audience) When your moms and dads come home from deployment, they are going to see how big you have gotten.</p> <p>They will want to know how you have gotten bigger, stronger, smarter and more independent.</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>Excuse me, [Facilitator's name]. What is "independent"?</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That's a very good question, Jazz. Independent means you learned to do something all by yourself.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>Like how I learned to tie my shoes?</p> <p><i>Older children example: Wash Frisco, the dog, all by myself.</i></p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes Tripp, like learning to tie your shoes (<i>washing your dog, Frisco</i>).</p> <p>I bet our friends have gotten bigger, stronger, smarter and more independent, too.</p> <p>(To audience)</p> <p>If you have grown bigger, please stand and stretch your hands high into the sky.</p> <p><i>Children stand up and stretch to the sky.</i></p> <p>If you have grown stronger, please show us your muscles! (demonstrate showing biceps)</p> <p><i>Children show their muscles.</i></p> <p>If you have grown smarter, say "A-B-C, 1-2-3" real fast.</p> <p><i>Older children example: Pat your head and rub your tummy.</i></p> <p><i>Children say "A-B-C, 1-2-3?"</i></p> <p>Very good! Everyone can please sit down again.</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>(Looking sad)</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Jazz, what's wrong? You look sad.</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>Tripp is independent because he learned to tie his shoes (<i>wash his dog</i>). I don't know how to tie my shoes (<i>wash my dog</i>).</p>

### SECTION 3: HOMECOMING AND REINTEGRATION

<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That’s OK, Jazz. It is great that Tripp learned to tie his shoes (wash his dog), but I am sure you learned how to do something new, too.</p> <p>Think about what you can do now that you could not do before your dad left for deployment.</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>(Thinking) Hmmm ... I learned to put cereal in my bowl for breakfast.</p> <p><i>Older children example: Make my own lunch for school.</i></p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>See. That’s very good, Jazz.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>Wow, Jazz. I can’t do that. I always spill the cereal all over the table (forget to pack a healthy snack).</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Everyone learns how to do things at different times. It’s OK. As long as you keep trying, you will keep learning.</p> <p>Let’s see what our friends have learned to do.</p> <p>(To audience) What have you learned to do while your moms and dads were away? <i>Allow kids to shout out answers.</i></p> <p>Wow! You all should be very, very proud. I know your moms and dads will be very surprised to see how big, strong, smart and independent you have gotten.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>Excuse me [Facilitator’s name], what does independent mean again?</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Independent means you learned to do something all by yourself.</p> <p>Independent is a big word. Let’s practice saying it.</p> <p>(To audience) Please repeat after me:</p> <p>IN – DE – PEN – DENT</p> <p>IN – DE – PEN – DENT</p> <p>IN – DE – PEN – DENT</p> <p>Now, let’s put it all together: IN-DE-PEN-DENT</p> <p>Very good! And guess what?</p>
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	<p>What?</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>You just learned a new word, so you are getting smarter every day!</p> <p>(To audience) Kids, remember that your moms and dads have been away for a long time and they have not seen how big you are, how strong you are, how smart you are and how independent you are.</p> <p>Your parents are going to be very proud at how much you have changed!</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p>[Facilitator’s name], do you think our moms and dads got bigger, stronger, smarter and independent while they were gone, too?</p>

**MODULE THREE B: JUST FOR KIDS (PUPPET SHOW)**

<b>Facilitator</b>	Another great question! Yes! Your moms and dads have changed, too. Can you think of some ways they have changed?
<b>Tripp</b>	My mom sent me a picture and I saw that her hair changed. It got real, real, real long.
<b>Jazz</b>	(Laughing) My dad sent me a picture and he shaved his head bald! And he grew a big, hairy mustache!
<b>Facilitator</b>	(Laughing) That's very funny, Jazz. But I bet he still looks handsome. (To audience) Friends, do you know how your mom or dad has changed? <i>Allow kids to shout out answers.</i> Do you want to know something special about change?
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	Yes! Yes! Tell us something special about change.
<b>Facilitator</b>	Moms, dads and kids may change, but one thing that never changes is how much they love you! (To Tripp and Jazz) Do you think we should say the love poem?
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	Yes! Yes! (To audience) Here is the love poem, please repeat after us: Mommy, I love you More than you see When you come home You will be surprised to see me! (To audience) Now we will say the love poem for our dads. Daddy, I love you More than you know When you come home You will see how I've grown! <i>Jazz and Tripp exit.</i>
<b>Facilitator</b>	Bye, Jazz! Bye, Tripp! Remember to tell your mom and dad that you love them!



*Brief intermission. If the children seem tired or restless, have them stand up and stretch and touch their toes, dance or give each other high-fives.*

**Scene 3: Homecoming Helper (5-6 minutes)**

<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Who knows how many days remain before our moms and dads come home?</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout out the answer. Acknowledge the correct answer when given or provide the answer if no one knows.</i></p> <p>There are a lot of things to do to get ready for them to come home. What is your family doing to get ready?</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout their answers.</i></p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p><i>Enters</i></p> <p>Hey! I'm back!</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Hi, Tripp. Where's Jazz?</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>Jazz is coming soon. She had to finish the welcome home poster for her dad.</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Oh! Well, that is interesting. The kids and I were just talking about what we need to do to get ready for our moms and dads to come home.</p> <p>What is your family doing to get ready?</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>(Unexcited) My dad said we had to clean the house from top to bottom.</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>I see. Cleaning the house is not as fun as making a welcome home poster, but it is important.</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	<p><i>Enters</i></p> <p>Hi, everyone! I'm back!</p> <p>(Excited) I was making my dad's welcome home poster. It's real big and it has the American flag on it, and I got to color all the stars! Fifty of them!</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That sounds like fun, Jazz.</p> <p>You and Tripp are being homecoming helpers!</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	<p>What's a homecoming helper?</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>A homecoming helper is someone who helps the family get ready for Mom or Dad to return from deployment.</p> <p>Tripp, you are helping by cleaning the house, and Jazz is helping by coloring the poster. Both jobs are important and will make your mom and dad happy!</p>

**MODULE THREE B: JUST FOR KIDS (PUPPET SHOW)**

<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>(To audience) How are you going to be a homecoming helper? Are you going to color a poster for your mom and dad, like Jazz?</p> <p><i>Kids will shout their answers</i></p> <p>Will it be a big poster or a great, big, giant poster?</p> <p><i>Kids will shout their answers</i></p> <p>What colors will you use?</p> <p><i>Kids will shout their answers</i></p> <p>It sounds like you all are ready to be homecoming helpers!</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	Dad says I can help plan the great big homecoming party when mom gets home!
<b>Jazz</b>	(Disappointed) My family is not having a party. Mom said that daddy wants his first week at home to be quiet and relaxing.
<b>Tripp</b>	No party? Quiet and relaxing is boring.
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Whoa ... wait a minute ...</p> <p>For some people, a party is perfect when they come home. For other people, quiet and relaxing is perfect. Everyone is different and likes different things.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	I get it. Like, I love macaroni and cheese, but Jazz loves pizza!
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes! That's right.</p> <p>(To audience) Do you know what type of homecoming your mom or dad wants to have?</p> <p>If you think they want a big party like Tripp's mom, say, "Party! Party!"</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout.</i></p> <p>If you think your mom or dad wants the house to be quiet and relaxing, say, "Ahhh ... nice and quiet."</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout.</i></p>
<b>Jazz</b>	What should you do if you don't know what your mom or dad wants?
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That's a good question!</p> <p>If you don't know what your mom or dad wants, you should ... are you ready?</p> <p>You should just ask them.</p>
<b>Tripp</b>	That's it? Just ask them?
<b>Facilitator</b>	Yes, you should just ask them. The only way to know what someone wants is if you ask them what they want.
<b>Tripp</b>	I want chocolate ice cream with macaroni and cheese!
<b>Jazz</b>	I want strawberry ice cream with pizza!
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>(Laughing) It sounds like both of you want a tummy ache!</p> <p>How else can you be a homecoming helper?</p>

### SECTION 3: HOMECOMING AND REINTEGRATION

<b>Jazz</b>	I don't know.
<b>Tripp</b>	A-ha! I have an idea. We can just ask!
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>That's a smart idea, Tripp. You can ask your mom or dad, or grandma or grandpa, how you can be a homecoming helper. I am sure there are lots of ways to help.</p> <p>(To audience) What kind of homecoming helper would you like to be?</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout out answers. If they do not respond, give examples, such as help bake cupcakes, make a card, grocery shopping for their favorite foods, etc.)</i></p> <p>These are all wonderful ideas. Talk to your mom or dad at home about all of your ideas.</p> <p>Sometimes they will say "yes" and sometimes the answer will be "no." Just remember, the important thing about being a homecoming helper is "helping."</p>
<b>Jazz and Tripp</b>	Oh no. It's almost time for us to go. Today was so much fun!
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>Yes, it is. I had so much fun with you today, too.</p> <p>Before you go, I have one more question.</p> <p>Jazz, what do you think your dad is going to do when he sees you?</p>
<b>Jazz</b>	Oh! Oh! I think he is going to pick me up, swing me around and say, "Hi Jazzy, I missed you!"
<b>Facilitator</b>	Tripp, what do you think your mom is doing to do when she sees you?
<b>Tripp</b>	I think she is going to hug me and say, "Look at how my little man has grown!"
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>(To audience) What do you think your moms and dads will say when they see you?</p> <p><i>Allow kids to shout their answers.</i></p> <p>That's awesome!</p> <p>Well ... it is time to go!</p> <p>Jazz, Tripp, please say goodbye to our new friends.</p>
<b>Facilitator, Jazz and Tripp</b>	<p>Bye! Thank you for visiting us!</p> <p>Remember what we learned today:</p> <p>Feelings are important!</p> <p>You are bigger, stronger, smarter and more independent!</p> <p>Be a good homecoming helper!</p>



*Invite parents to pick up their kids. Optional: Provide children with a coloring book or simple activity while debriefing parents and answering questions.*

## Debrief and Closing (5 minutes)

### Parent Debrief

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Inform parents that the puppet show covered three points:

1. **Feelings are important:** It is OK and normal for children to feel happy and sad about their deployed parent returning home.
2. **Getting bigger:** Children should be proud of how they have grown and what they have accomplished during deployment.
3. **Homecoming helper:** Children can help prepare for their parent's return.

Parents can continue helping their children by:

1. **Helping their child express their feelings.** Help your child overcome difficult feelings by teaching them age-appropriate problem-solving. Remind your child of the positive aspects of homecoming. Reassure them that their deployed parent loves and misses them and is excited to see them.
2. **Reminding children about how much they have grown.** Encourage them to continue learning new things and to celebrate their growth and accomplishments. Let them know you are proud of them.
3. **Asking children to help prepare for homecoming.** Ask them to help with fun tasks, as well as the less-exciting tasks that need to get done. Explain why the "un-fun" tasks are important, too.

### Upcoming Homecoming Workshops

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Inform parents of upcoming homecoming workshops:

- *General Homecoming Brief*
- *Reintegrating with Partners*
- *Just For Kids (Parents' Edition)*
- *Homecoming for Teens*

## Support Resources

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Encourage parents to seek extra support if they or their children need help adjusting.

### **New Parent Support Home Visitation Program (NPSHVP)**

- NPSHVP provides parenting education and support that helps build resilience with children.
- NPSHVP is a voluntary program that is available to parents who are expecting a child (prenatal) through parents with children younger than age 4.
- Families experiencing deployment may be considered for priority services.

**FFSC Counselors:** Provide names and contact information for child and family counselors and the School Liaison Officer (SLO) for school-aged children.

**Deployment Support Handbook:** The *Handbook* provides tools and additional national and local resources.

## Thank You

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*Thank parents for bringing their children.*

*Remain in the training area to answer any questions or provide additional information and referral.*

## MODULE FOUR

# Homecoming for Teens

## Module Description

**Purpose:** Teenagers want to make a difference. When given the proper tools, they can be a key part of the reintegration process for their families. *Homecoming for Teens* focuses on readjusting after deployment, but from a teenager's perspective. The workshop provides an opportunity to network with other military teens and share tips on how they can contribute to the family's successful reintegration.

**Target Audience:** Children ages 13 to 18 whose parent is returning from deployment. Parents are welcome to attend, but their attendance is not mandatory.

**Target Dates:** One to two months before homecoming.

**Module Length:** 45 minutes. The time to facilitate this training may be modified based on the needs and availability of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) or requesting organization.

## Trainer Notes

**Trainer Prerequisites:** Staff who facilitate this curriculum should be skilled trainers who have observed or co-presented this course before facilitating a session on their own.

**Scripts:** Trainers should become familiar with this curriculum and personalize the scripts to ensure facilitation feels natural without compromising the course content.

**Activities:** Facilitators may modify or exchange the activities used in this curriculum to fit the needs of the audience. Options for using cellphones and social media to enhance activities are included in this curriculum. If you intend to use this option, research the latest social media sites in advance and be sure to announce that cellphones are welcome when promoting the workshop.

**Training Tips:** Training tips are used throughout this curriculum to guide the content and recommend alternative methods of interaction.

**FFSC Resources:** An electronic or printed copy of the *Deployment Support Handbook* should be provided to participants by the FFSC.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, military teens should be able to prepare for the emotional and day-to-day changes that may occur when their deployed parent returns.

- During the *Excited and Concerned* activity, participants will make a list of reasons to be excited and concerned about homecoming.
- During the *Status Update* activity, participants will list ways they have changed in four categories: physically, emotionally, socially and independently.
- During the *A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words* activity, participants will find at least three images that reflect their ideal homecoming.

## Module Preparation

### Materials

- *Module 4: Homecoming for Teens* PowerPoint file or printed copy
- *Deployment Support Handbook* (electronic or printed copy)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Post-it Notes or sticky notes
- Writing instruments
- Timer
- Magazines (optional)
- Paper

### Handouts (optional)

- *Deployment: It's Not a Game*

### Optional Materials (if available)

- Computer
- Projector

## Course Outline

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Tag and Add a Friend*
  - b. Agenda
2. Common Concerns and Reactions (10 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Excited and Concerned*
  - b. Common Concerns
  - c. What Teens Can Do
3. Celebrating Growth and Changes (10 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *Status Update*
  - b. Personal Changes
  - c. Family Changes
  - d. Making Adjustments
4. Planning for Homecoming (10 minutes)
  - a. Activity: *A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words*
  - b. Part-to-Play
  - c. Reintegration Tips
5. Closing (5 minutes)
  - a. Homecoming Tips
  - b. Deployment: It's Not a Game (optional)

# Content

## Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

### Slide 1: Homecoming for Teens



Greet teenagers with enthusiasm. Provide the handouts as they enter the training area. Acknowledge parents in attendance. Let them know they are welcome to stay, however the workshop will focus on the teens.

Provide a brief introduction of yourself and any co-facilitators.

**SAY:** Welcome to *Homecoming for Teens*!

**ASK:** How many of you love social media? What is your favorite social media site?

*Possible responses include Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, etc. These responses may change as new social media sites are developed and gain popularity among youth.*

### Slide 2: Activity: Tag and Add a Friend



**SAY:** To prepare us for homecoming, we are going to do several social media experiments . . . in person. The first experiment is “tagging a friend.”

**SAY:** Everyone, please stand as I explain what we are going to do.

**SAY:** Look around the room. Do you see any familiar faces from school, your neighborhood or perhaps here on base? Please approach someone you know and “tag” them by saying a quick “hello.” If you don’t see any familiar faces, introduce yourself to the person next to you.

*Allow 30 seconds for participants to say hello.*

**Cellphone option:** *Allow participants to take “selfies” with a friend. Let them know they can post the picture to their favorite social media site after the workshop.*

**SAY:** Now it is time to “add a friend.” Please introduce yourself to someone you have not met. Try to meet as many new people as you can in one minute.

**SAY:** Tell them your name, how many deployments you have experienced and share something about yourself, such as what school you attend, what sport you play, your favorite game or app, etc.

*Allow 60 seconds for participants to “add a friend.”*

**SAY:** Now that we have become acquainted with one another, let’s talk about homecoming.

### Slide 3: Agenda: Three Things



**SAY:** Homecoming can be a time that is both exciting and nerve-wracking. It has been a long time since your parent has been at home, and many things have probably changed since they left.

**SAY:** This workshop will help you embrace the excitement of homecoming and address any challenges you may face when reuniting with your deployed parent.

**SAY:** Many of the topics we will discuss may have been shared with your parent during workshops held aboard the ship. This was so your parents would receive the same information we are giving you and so the entire family can be on the same page.

**SAY:** The topics we will cover today include:

[CLICK to animate each point]

1. Your excitements and concerns about homecoming.
2. The growth and changes you experienced during deployment.
3. Plans for homecoming.

### Slide 4: Group Expectations



**SAY:** Before we begin, there are three expectations that I would like to share. The first expectation is for me to uphold, the second is for you and the last expectation is for all of us. Here they are:

[CLICK to animate each bullet]

- **Purpose:** You can expect that everything we do today will have a purpose.
- **Participation:** I expect all of you to contribute by participating in our activities and discussions.
- **Privilege:** We are all privileged to be here today. We are expected to treat each other with respect and hold everything we discuss in confidence.

**ASK:** Does everyone agree with these expectations? Are there any expectations we should add to the list?



Label a chart paper "Expectations." Add suggestions to the list.

**SAY:** Like most things in life, what you get out of today will depend on what you put into it. In other words, the success of today’s workshop depends on you. So, put on your “game face” and let’s get started!

## Common Concerns and Reactions (10 minutes)

### Slide 5: Activity: *Excited and Concerned*



Prepare two charts. Label one “Excited” and the other “Concerned.”

**ASK:** Who knows how many days remain before your mom or dad returns from deployment?

Allow participants to yell out their answers.

**ASK:** How are you feeling about homecoming? What are you excited about? What are some of your concerns?



Offer examples to warm up your audience. Use samples from the list of possible responses. **Example:** ASK: Who is excited about seeing their parent? Who is concerned about changes that will occur in the household?

Possible responses include:

- Excited about seeing their parent, filling them in on accomplishments, parent being home for the next special event or holiday, etc.
- Concerned about not living up to their parent’s expectations, changes that will occur in the household, stricter rules, less time with friends, etc.

**SAY:** It is time for a little healthy competition. In a moment, I am going to divide you into two groups. Group 1 will list all of the possible reasons to be excited about homecoming. Group 2 will list all of the possible reasons to be concerned. Afterward, we will share our lists.

**SAY:** You will have one minute, so work together and work quickly.



Divide participants into two groups. Give each group chart paper and markers. Instruct Group 1 to create a list of reasons to be excited about homecoming. Instruct Group 2 to create a list of homecoming concerns.

Allow one minute to complete the activity.

**SAY:** Thank you. It is time to stop working and share our lists.

Solicit volunteers from each group to share their list. If you have a shy audience, retrieve both lists and read them to the class.

**ASK:** We will start with homecoming excitement. Will someone from Group 1 please share their group’s list?

Allow Group 1 to share their list of reasons to be excited about homecoming. Thank the group and commend them on their list.

**ASK:** Group 2, it is your turn. Who will share your list for your group?

Allow Group 2 to share their list of reasons to be concerned about homecoming. Thank the group and commend them on their list.

## Slide 6: Common Concerns

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**SAY:** It is OK and absolutely normal to have concerns about homecoming. In fact, most families feel a bit anxious about the family coming together after a long separation.

**SAY:** Depending on your experience with deployment, the type of deployment your parent served and your relationship with your parent, you may be concerned about ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- How deployment affected your parent.
- Whether your parent was in danger.
- Whether your parent will be upset or disappointed in you.
- How much things are going to change.
- When your parent will have to leave again.
- Whether your parent loves you.

**ASK:** How many of you believe your parent has concerns, too?

**SAY:** Many deployed parents have questions about resuming their face-to-face parenting role. They may want to know ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- How you are going to act.
- How they will become a part of the family again.
- Whether their absence has hurt you and the family.
- How they can make up for lost time.
- How much you have changed.
- Whether they will get along with you.

## Slide 7: Common Reactions



**SAY:** As you see, deployment and homecoming can be a confusing time for the entire family. Here are some thoughts teenagers have expressed about homecoming. See if you can relate to them.

**SAY:** Teenagers expressed that they may ...

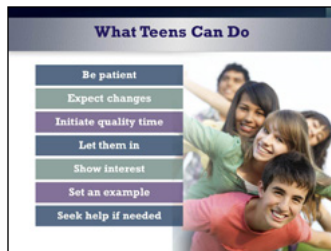
[CLICK to animate bullets]

- Be happy to see their parent but may not wear their emotions on their sleeve.
- Want to hang out with their friends a few hours after the initial reunion.
- Be stressed about rules and responsibilities changing.
- Believe they are too old to meet the returning parent with the rest of the family.

**SAY:** Additionally, teenagers have indicated that their thoughts about homecoming depend on their relationship with the deployed parent. For example, if the relationship is positive, then their attitude about homecoming is more positive. If the relationship is strained, homecoming can be a source of stress.

**SAY:** I want you to know that whether your relationship with your parent has been positive or strained, homecoming gives you both an opportunity for a fresh start!

## Slide 8: What Teens Can Do



**SAY:** As the maturing young person in the family, there are several things you can do to help your family adjust to the changes that homecoming will bring. Here are some suggestions.

[CLICK to animate points]

**SAY: Be patient.** If you have experienced deployments before, you may have heard that “homecoming is not an event, it is a process.” Be patient with the process. It is going to take time for everyone in the family to readjust.

**SAY: Expect changes.** If changes occurred before and during deployment, you can expect them to occur after deployment. The good news is that with mutual respect and open communication, you can ask to be a part of the discussion about change.

**SAY: Initiate quality time.** Because you have a social life that is often more appealing than hanging out with your mom or dad, balancing time between your family and friends can be a challenge. However, the solution is easy: If you spend quality time with your parents, you may get to spend quantity time with your friends.

**ASK:** How can you spend quality time with your parents?

*Responses may include watching a movie or sports, going shopping, bowling, cooking together, just talking, etc.*

**SAY:** When initiating quality time with your parents, seek to do things together that they enjoy (e.g., working out, washing the car, fishing). Invite them to do things that you enjoy (e.g., gaming, shopping, taking selfies). Also do simple, everyday things together (e.g., cooking a meal, watching TV, helping with chores, walking the dog together).

**SAY: Let your parents in.** Your parents care about you. One of the most important things you can do is let them in. Share what has been happening in your personal life. Introduce them to your friends. Update them on current trends, music, fashion, games and apps. Ask them to listen objectively to your concerns.

**SAY: Show interest.** Don't shy away from asking your parent questions about how they experienced deployment. When they share, give them your undivided attention. That means putting the cellphone down and listening carefully. Even if your parent is not ready (or not able) to share detailed information, they will know that you cared enough to ask.

**ASK:** Is there anything we should add to this list?

*Responses may include be cooperative, maintain responsibilities, do well in school, stay out of trouble, talk to someone, etc.*

*Thank participants for offering suggestions. Ask them to elaborate on a thought if you think it will help the group (e.g., stay out of trouble).*

**ASK:** How many of you have younger brothers or sisters?

[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY: Set an example.** Chances are, your younger siblings look up to you. Another way you can help is to set an example to help them adjust. You can do this by following the tips we just shared.

**SAY: Seek help, if needed.** Adjusting after a deployment is not always easy. If you have concerns about your family, talk with a school counselor, a church leader, teacher, your physician or a trusted relative like an aunt, uncle or grandparent. Getting help shows strength, courage and wisdom.

## Celebrating Growth and Changes (10 minutes)

### Slide 9: Activity: Status Update



Prepare four flip chart stations. Label the charts "Independence," "Physical," "Emotional" and "Social."

**SAY:** Raise your hand if you have changed since your parent deployed.

**SAY:** Chances are, you may have ...

[CLICK to animate slide]

- Become more independent (e.g., gotten a driver's license or a job, taken on more responsibility at home).
- Grown physically (e.g., gotten taller, stronger, grown facial hair, hair longer/shorter, gained or lost weight).
- Matured emotionally (e.g., become more sensitive, caring or compassionate, learned to use humor more appropriately, listens better, communicates better, manages emotions better).
- Acquired a social life (e.g., made new friends, taken up a new hobby or sport, hanging out more, online social activity).

**SAY:** Our next in-person social media experiment is to post a status update. There are four chart stations located around the room. The stations are marked "Independence," "Physical," "Emotional" and "Social." There are also Post-it Notes at each of your tables.

**SAY:** Think about how you have become independent and have grown physically, emotionally or socially. Write each change on a Post-it Note and post it to the chart paper situated around the room.

**SAY:** You will have five minutes. You can work together.

*Allow five minutes for participants to complete the activity.*

**SAY:** Thank you. Please return to your seats so we can review your posts. We do not have time to read all of them, so I will select a few.

*Read at least three posts from each chart. Congratulate the group on the many ways they have grown.*

**SAY:** Congratulations on all your growth! It is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day of life that we overlook all of our successes. I hope taking the time to acknowledge your accomplishments gives you a sense of pride and encourages you to grow even more!

**ASK:** In what ways do you think your parent has changed physically, emotionally or socially? Do you know if they accomplished a goal?

*Examples may include:*

- *Physical* — gained/lost weight, grew a mustache, cut hair.
- *Emotional* — increased sensitivity due to things seen or experienced during deployment.
- *Social* — enjoy alone time more than before the deployment.
- *Goal* — earned a degree, advanced in rank or reenlisted, saved money to buy a car.

**SAY:** Your parent has been away from home for a long time. They are interested in knowing all of the ways you have grown and changed. You should also know how deployment has changed your parent. Share each other's milestones and think of simple ways to celebrate each of your successes.

## Slide 10: Changes at Home

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**SAY:** Now think about the changes that have taken place with the family and at home since deployment began. Here are some examples:

[CLICK to animate slide]

- **Home environment.** What changes have taken place at home? Is there new furniture, has the house been painted or the kitchen remodeled? Is there a new car parked in the driveway? Did the family go vegan?
- **Daily schedule and routines.** Does the day start earlier and end later? Has dinnertime changed? Did you get a job? Is your at-home parent working longer or shorter hours? Is the house being cleaned once a month instead of once a week?
- **Household responsibilities.** Who took on the duties that your deployed mom or dad used to do? Are they being managed the same or differently?

**SAY:** Remember, you and your family at home have had an opportunity to adapt to these changes over time, but your returning parent will be thrust into these changes all at once. This can be overwhelming for anyone.

**SAY:** Here are two ways you can help.

1. Talk with your parent about these changes before they return home. This will help them to prepare mentally and minimize the "culture shock."
2. Keep your parent in the loop by informing them of what is happening and why. For example, if you have a new job and usually get home after curfew, let them know before you leave the house. If you have extracurricular activities after school, keep them posted.

**Slide 11: Making Adjustments**

**SAY:** Readjusting roles can create tension as everyone tries to figure out their post-deployment routine. This can leave you frustrated and confused about your responsibilities and which rules you should follow.

**SAY:** A common expectation that many families do not realize they will have (until the service member gets home) is the expectation that the family will simply pick up where they left off and resume functioning in the same manner as they did before the deployment.

**SAY:** Keep in mind that most reunions are not like what you see on TV or YouTube. Even if your family has served multiple deployments, homecoming is not always going to be the same. For example, if you are 16 years old, deployment and homecoming will probably be very different than it was when you were younger.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY:** Instead of letting your frustration build, speak with your parents about their expectations and share your ideas and concerns about readjusting. If you approach situations with maturity and expect a positive outcome, you are more likely to receive one.

**ASK:** How many of you agree that it's not always easy communicating with parents?

**SAY:** It is true, parents are not always the best at listening. If you do not feel comfortable speaking with your parent, you can write a letter or poem that describes how you feel, select a song that captures your emotions, or share an image or picture that best reveals your thoughts.

**Planning for Homecoming** (10 minutes)**Slide 12: Activity: A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words**

Alternate training methods if you are not allowing cellphones:

1. Research the latest social media sites in advance, connect to participants' favorite sites for images, and create an electronic vision board using input from the class.
2. If you do not have access to Wi-Fi, provide magazines, paper, markers or crayons and ask participants to draw a picture, write a poem or develop a playlist that describes their ideal homecoming.
3. Have participants write a "message post" describing their ideal homecoming.

**OPTIONAL:** Divide participants in small groups and have them create a group vision board.

**SAY:** Speaking of pictures, it is time for our next social media experiment.

**SAY:** You have probably heard the saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words.”

**ASK:** Where do you go to find the best photos or images?

*Acknowledge responses.*

**SAY:** We are going to create a vision board that describes your vision of the ideal homecoming. A vision board is a place where you display images that represent what you want in your life. Focusing on your vision board can motivate you to take steps that make your goals a reality.

[CLICK to animate slide]

**SAY:** Take three minutes to find at least three images for your homecoming vision board. Your images can be anything from the American flag to a teen hugging a parent. Pick whatever images represent how you want to experience homecoming.

*Allow three minutes to collect images from the Internet, their cellphones, magazines, etc.*

**SAY:** Thank you. It is time to stop looking for images.

### Slide 13: “Just Do It!”

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**SAY:** Creating a vision board is just the beginning. You can look at the images all day and be inspired by them, but until you take intentional steps to make the vision a reality, the images will remain images, nothing more and nothing less.

[CLICK to animate bullets]

**SAY:** The goal is to let the images motivate you to take action. Take a look at all of the images you selected. What do you need to do to make these images a reality?

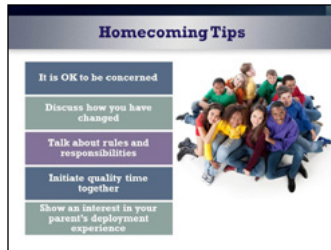
**SAY:** For example, the American flag can be achieved by purchasing a flag to wave as the ship arrives, creating a banner with the flag, baking a cake with the flag as a design, or wearing red, white and blue when greeting your parent.

[CLICK to animate bullets]

**SAY:** You can create a homecoming plan for reuniting with your parent. Share the plan with your mom or dad at home. Brainstorm ideas together. Then decide how you can be a part of executing the plan. Think about your talents and ways you can contribute and then “Just Do It.”

## Closing and Resource Update (5 minutes)

### Slide 14: Homecoming Tips (1 to 5)



**SAY:** We are almost at the end of our time together. We have discussed several ways to prepare for reuniting with and communicating our homecoming expectations with our parents. To summarize, let us make a list of what we learned today.

*Solicit at least three suggestions from the group. If they need help, advance the slide for a list of 10 tips.*

[CLICK to animate each tip]

1. It is OK to be concerned about homecoming.
2. Let your parent know how you have changed.
3. Talk about rules and responsibilities with your parents.
4. Initiate quality time together.
5. Show an interest in your parent's deployment experience.

### Slide 15: Homecoming Tips (6 to 10)



[CLICK to animate each tip]

6. Be a role model to siblings.
7. Be patient.
8. Celebrate growth
9. Help your parent adjust.
10. Get help if you need it.

**Slide 16: Deployment: It's Not a Game (optional)**

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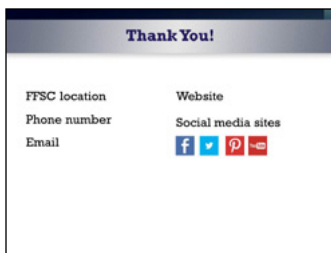


**SAY:** Before you leave, we want to give you a copy of a game developed by Iowa State University and six military kids who had experienced deployment. The game is called "Deployment: It's Not a Game."

**SAY:** The game is based on actual events in the lives of military kids whose parents served in the Army. We encourage you to play this game as part of initiating quality time with your parents. You can modify the questions and experiences to fit the Navy lifestyle.

**Slide 17: Thank You**

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**ASK:** Does anyone have any questions about the topics we covered today?

*Respond to questions. For questions that require a lengthy response, ask participants to remain after the session for more information.*

**SAY:** Thank you for your time. You all deserve a standing ovation for your participation today. Have a happy homecoming!

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# DEPLOYMENT:

**It's not a game**





**Deployment: It's not a game** was designed by the Iowa Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) team to create awareness about what it is like for military kids during the deployment cycle. Six team members were military kids who had experienced deployment and two of those had fathers deployed when the SOMK team created the game. The game highlights the rollercoaster of emotion and family life for military kids as game players roll the dice and move from mobilization to homecoming. "Good" cards and "bad" cards are based on actual events in the lives of the military kids who are part of the SOMK team. Working with the team to create the board game and tell their "story" were professional storyteller Maureen Korte and graphic artist Ray "Bubba" Sorenson who paints the Freedom Rock <http://thefreedomrock.com>.

#### **Game designers**

*Speak Out for Military Kids team*

Amanda	Halie
Brooke	Kristen
Crystal	Nicole
Danielle	Rachel
Emily	Samantha
Erin	Sarah

#### *Adult support*

La Krisha Allen  
Chris Cook-Leitz  
Marla Claussen  
Chris Gleason  
Maureen Korte  
Victoria Schmidt  
Ray "Bubba" Sorenson

Production of **Deployment: It's not a game** was made possible by a donation from The American Legion Riders Post #731. Thanks, Riders!

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Your loved one transports clean water and food for civilians where he is stationed.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You taught your younger brother to play teeball.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your loved one receives the care package you sent.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You get an important solo at a concert.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your deployed loved one helps to put up telephone and communication lines.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your deployed loved one helps to build schools for children where she is stationed.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You graduate from high school/middle school/ preschool.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your at home loved one gets a holiday bonus.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your loved one's company discovers a secret POW (Prisoner Of War) camp and saves some U.S. soldiers.  
**Roll again.**

Aid is taken into the area where your loved one is stationed and he helps to distribute it.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You taught yourself how to change the oil in your car.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

Your deployed loved one befriends a young child where she is stationed.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Someone in your community performs a random act of kindness for you and your family.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

Your deployed loved one receives a promotion.  
**Go forward 4 spaces.**

Your loved one sends gifts home for the family.  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

Your loved one sends gifts home for the family.  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

You taught your younger siblings how to tie their shoes.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You get an A in a really hard class.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

Your loved one sends home a video of him reading a storybook for his younger children.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

Your deployed loved one's company completes a mission without any KIA's (Killed In Action).  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

You get through a significant event without crying or breaking down.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

OMK holds a day of programming for military kids.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

Your loved one gets to come home for Christmas.  
**Move forward 5 spaces.**

You made a varsity sport.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You and your family receive positive support from the community.  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

# Deployment: It's not a game

## Introduction

The Speak Out for Military Kids team wants people to realize what Military Families, especially military kids, go through. This game helps show what those families must endure as a loved one is deployed. There are many trials and emotions involved. Military Families must be very strong as you will see as you play this game. Step up to the challenge and live the life of a military child.

## Set-up

1. Remove gameboard and cards from booklet.
2. Cut up page of game cards.
3. Cut out the 6 individual game pieces.
4. Stand pieces up in small binder clips as shown.



## Directions

1. Pick your game piece.
2. Roll the die, highest number goes first.
3. First person rolls the die.
  - Move the number of spaces according to the die.
4. Follow the directions for the space you land on.
  - If you land on a star space, draw a card.
  - If you land on a space with directions, follow the directions.
  - If you land on a space with a slide, move down.
5. Remaining players, follow steps 3-4.
6. Continue until you make your way from Deployment to Homecoming.
7. First player to reach Homecoming WINS.

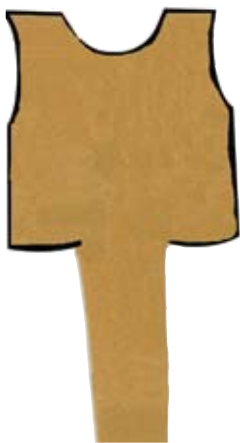
### Options

- Create your own game pieces.
- Use the blank game cards to share your own experiences.

[www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)

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# DEPLOY



# DEPLOYMENT: It's not a game...

Finally Homecoming

Friends are not supportive. Move back 1 space.

You received your driver's license! Move ahead 1 space.

You watched the news and bottled your emotions. Move back 3

Deployment for your loved one was extended. Move back 8 spaces.

Contact was lost with your loved one. Follow the slide down.

Support from a friend made you feel good. Move forward 2 spaces

The family van breaks down. Lose your next turn.

Practice was missed because you had to watch your siblings. Move back 2 spaces.

nd parent nto a . Move 1 e.

You helped plant a tree. Move forward 1 space.

You mowed the lawn. Move ahead 1 space

Web cam became available for you to use. Move ahead 3 spaces.

Computer crashes - No e-mail for 2 weeks. Slide Down

You joined 4-H. Move forward 6.

You sent a care package to your loved one. Move ahead 4 spaces.

You fell off your bike. Move back 1 space.

## ← STATE-SIDE →

Off to Battle Stations...

You are feeling good after expressing emotions with a counselor. Move forward 3 spaces



You got a starring role in the school play.  
**Move forward 1 space.**

You send pictures of your family and exciting events at home that brighten your deployed loved one's day.  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

Your loved one gets transferred to a safer area.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

You receive negative support from community members.  
**Move back 2 spaces.**

Your soldier receives a medal of bravery.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

Your loved one receives R & R (rest and relaxation).  
**Roll again.**

You receive a letter from your loved one.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

You accidentally watch a news report on the overseas conflicts. Over the next two weeks you have four nightmares.  
**Move back 4 spaces.**

Your loved one's company completes its mission early and gets to return home early.  
**Move forward 7 spaces.**

You get a surprise phone call from your loved one.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

It's your birthday! But your loved one misses out.  
**Move back 2 spaces.**

Your loved one's homecoming is delayed.  
**Move back 6 spaces.**

You have a satellite teleconference for an important event so your deployed loved one feels involved.  
**Move forward 4 spaces.**

Your loved one successfully identifies and dismantles an IED (Improvised Explosive Device).  
**Roll again.**

You experience a loss in communication with your deployed loved one.  
**Lose a turn.**

You need to do extra work at home to make ends meet, so you miss an important concert.  
**Move back 3 spaces.**

The OMK MobileTech Lab laminates pictures for children to send overseas to their deployed loved ones.  
**Move forward 2 spaces.**

You get to have a webcam conversation with your loved one.  
**Move forward 3 spaces.**

You have an anxiety attack because of deployment stress.  
**Move back 3 spaces.**

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A vertical American flag is positioned on the left side of the page, showing the stars and stripes. The top part of the flag is blue with white stars, and the bottom part is red and white stripes.

## **OMK Mission**

Iowa Operation: Military Kids builds partnerships to:

- ★ increase community capacity
- ★ support youth of Military Families

### **OMK Goals**

- ★ Provide training on the deployment cycle to public agencies, schools, community, and youth-serving organizations
- ★ Assist communities in developing locally based community support networks
- ★ Provide educational, recreational, and social program options

## **National and state partners**

U.S. Army Child and Youth Services

USDA/National 4-H Headquarters

Iowa State University Extension 4-H Youth Development

National Association of Child Care Resource  
& Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

The American Legion

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Iowa Army/Air National Guard

Reserves – Army, Navy, Air, Marine, Coast Guard

Iowa School Counselors Association

Operation Give a Hug

Inter Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC)

Iowa National Guard Officers Auxiliary



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