

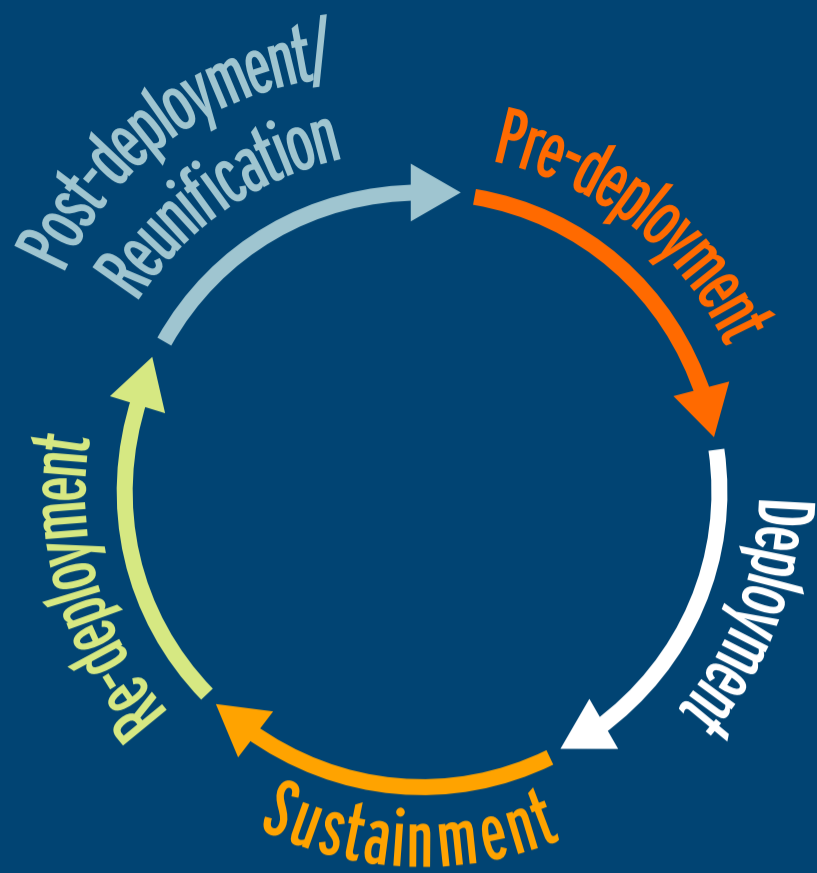
Emotional Cycle of Deployment – for Service Members and Families



Stressors for service members and military families can begin before deployment and last into the post-deployment phase, and they can be different for everyone. Common stressors occur during both combat and non-combat related deployments.



Knowing the common stressors during all phases of the deployment cycle (and the resources you can turn to) could be helpful during this period of uncertainty.



PRE-DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS: From notification to deployment (timeframe varies)

SERVICE MEMBER

- Marital disagreements and feelings of detachment from one's family
- Preparing home and family for extended absence
- Financial concerns
- Training up/long hours away
- Uncertainty
- Fluctuating emotions

SPOUSE & CHILD(REN)

- Marital disagreements and feelings of detachment from service member
- Preparing home and family for spouse's extended absence
- Anticipation of loss

DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS (1st month of deployment)

SERVICE MEMBER

- Irregular communication with home
- Combat and operational stressors
 - Sleeping less than 7 hours a night
 - Workload "op-tempo" extremes
 - Emphasis on force protection
- Redefining roles with spouse
- Financial concerns
- Sadness over missing family events, milestones, etc.

SPOUSE

- Redefining roles with spouse
- Sole responsibility for household and childcare
- Feeling disoriented and overwhelmed
- Sleep difficulties
- Irregular communication
- Providing emotional support to children
- Lack of understanding about deployment from community members
- Sadness and loneliness

SUSTAINMENT STRESSORS (2nd – final month)

- Mission focus, staying safe
- Nostalgia for home

CHILD(REN)

- Observing parental stress
- Fear of parental loss
- Assuming more household responsibilities
- Sadness over parent missing family events, milestones, etc.

RE-DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS (Final month)

- Anticipation vs. apprehension about returning home
- Workload "op-tempo" extremes

POST-DEPLOYMENT/REUNIFICATION STRESSORS (3-12 months after deployment)

SERVICE MEMBER

- Homecoming experience vs. expectations
- Physical intimacy vs. emotional distance
- Conflict regarding role in the family
- Conflict regarding family issues
- Irritability
- Sleep issues
- Adjustment and renegotiating routines

SPOUSE

- Conflict over changing role in the family
- Conflict over changing relationship with the service member
- Adjustment and renegotiating routines
- Resentment over loss of independence

CHILD(REN)

- Apathy and anxiety around parent returning
- Confusion about parental roles



DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

- Policy & Oversight: Defense Health Agency, Public Health Division, Deployment Health Branch information and guidance can be found at: https://info.health.mil/hco/phealth/deployment_health/DeploymentHealthProductLine/Forms/AllItems.aspx (CAC required)
- Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC): Counseling is available to address improving relationships at home and work, stress management, adjustment difficulties, parenting, and grief or loss
- Military chaplains: Consulting with your chaplain is strictly confidential