

As a parent, extended family member, or friend of an Airman who is just coming home or is arriving soon, you are probably both excited and nervous about the homecoming.

Even if you've been through a deployment before, each deployment can be very different from all others.

Regardless of your experience and the member's assignment, there will be a period of adjustment. You may find this tip sheet helpful in ensuring a successful homecoming and readjustment.

What to Expect When Your Airman Comes Home

- ◆ You have certainly missed your deployed member, as they have missed you. Re-establishing relationships will take time and intentional communication.
- ◆ It's normal for the returning member to "need space" upon their return.
- ◆ It's normal to feel nervous and anxious about the homecoming. Plan for homecoming day, but after that day, allow the returning member to schedule the next few days and/or weeks.
- ◆ Expect things to be different. Take time to understand how they have changed. Be prepared and flexible.



- ◆ They may have seen or experienced some things that were very upsetting. Some normal reactions to these abnormal situations are fear, nervousness, irritability, fatigue, sleep disturbances, startled reactions, moodiness, trouble concentrating, feelings of numbness, and frequent thoughts of the event. Talking with others who were there and/or counselors trained in crisis stress reactions is very important. They may be facing a change in job assignment or a move.
- ◆ Readjustment and job transition cause stress. This may be especially true for demobilizing Guard and Reservists who are transitioning back into civilian life.

Making the Reunion Easier

- ◆ Take time to get re-acquainted. Communicate your love and concern.
- ◆ COMMUNICATE!! Tell each other how you feel—nervous, scared, happy, that you love and missed them. Listen to each other. The best way to get through the re-acquaintance jitters and regain closeness is to talk and actively listen.

Go Slowly

- ◆ Reassure the member they are needed, and you are happy he/she has returned safely.
- ◆ Be calm and assertive, not defensive, when discussing events that have taken place during his/her absence. The Airman may need to hear that it wasn't the same doing these things alone, that you're glad he/she's back, and that you'd like to discuss problems and criticisms calmly.
- ◆ Prepare children of the extended family for homecoming and involve



Take Time for Yourself

- ◆ Make time to rest. Negotiate social events and activities.
- ◆ Limit your use of alcohol. Remember alcohol was restricted during the Airman's deployment and tolerance is lowered.
- ◆ Go slowly in getting back into the swing of things. Depend on family and friends for support. You are part of the Airman's support network.

Remember

Go slowly – don't try to make up for lost time.

Accept that your Airman may be different.

Take time to get reacquainted.

Reassure your loved ones.

Seek help for family members, if needed.

Get the rest, nutrition and exercise you need to take care of yourself!

Community Resources

If you feel like you are having trouble coping with adjustment, contact one of the agencies listed below.

- ◆ **Mental Health**
Crisis Intervention
Stress Management
- ◆ **Family Advocacy**
Prevention program
New Parents Support Program
Consultation and Referral
- ◆ **Airman & Family Readiness Center**
Financial Counseling
Air Force Aid Society/Give Parents A Break
Personal and Worklife Education
Military Family Life Consultants
- ◆ **Chapel**
Counseling Sessions
Marriage Enrichment
- ◆ **Youth Center**
Child and Youth Behavioral Military Family Life Counselors
- ◆ **DoDDS Counselors**

Web Resources

www.deploymentconnections.org
www.militarychild.org
www.hooah4health.com
www.militaryonesource.com
www.usuhs.mil/psy.courage.html

HQ USAF Caring for People
Airman and Family Services Division
201 12th Street South, Suite 413
Arlington, VA 22202-4306



**CARING
AIR FORCE
PEOPLE**

Coming Home
A Guide for Parents,
Extended Family
Members, or Friends of
Airmen Returning from
Deployment

