



Preparing your family for when your deployed partner returns home

Defence Community Organisation

The reunion of your family is a good time, but you may find that everyone needs to make a few adjustments to manage this life change.

Reading through the following list of considerations will be useful as you prepare your whole family for the reunion.

- Being both excited and worried about the deployed parent's return home is natural and okay. Your child may have the same confusing feelings you do – worry, fear, happiness and excitement.
- The actual reunion with your partner may not match what you have imagined. Be realistic about what to expect.
- Everyone in your family has grown and changed while the deployed parent has been absent. Remember to be flexible.
- Things may never be the same as they were before the deployed parent left.
- It will take time and patience to readjust to being together again.
- Change is stressful for children as well as adults.
- Young children change so rapidly that a deployed parent may be surprised at how much a child has changed or how different family life has become.
- If the deployed parent is returning with a life-altering injury that occurred during the deployment, your family may need to make major life changes.

- Sharing your feelings about the deployed parent's return with your family and others will help.

At any stage you can feel overwhelmed and unsure about your ability to cope. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness – it's a sign that you care about yourself and your family.

If you're feeling so sad or anxious that you're having difficulty taking care of everyday tasks and routines, you may benefit from some professional help. Contact Defence Community Organisation through the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608. Our staff can help assess your needs and connect you with a counsellor or other community supports.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

The best way to access these services is to call 1800 624 608. The Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

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