

Airmen, Civilians and Family Members REINTEGRATION GUIDE

HEADQUARTERS, AIR FORCE SPACE COMMAND



FOREWORD

Welcome home from your deployment. Thank you for all you have done to support our Nation's cause.

The range of challenges you have overcome during your deployment has been extremely complex. On a daily basis, your families and friends have witnessed, with freedom-loving people around the globe, the hardships and risks you have endured. Your training, sense of pride, and commitment ensured your success.

The goal now is to ensure you are effectively reintegrated into your community with your family and friends, formally recognized by the command for your achievements, and prepared to return to a more normal military lifestyle. Commanders at all levels have taken and will continue to take an active role in assisting you—individually and as a unit. The reintegration process is designed to assist Airmen, civilian employees, and family members who have endured hardships and sacrifices associated with deployment.

Air Force leaders have coordinated with the major agencies supporting the Air Force to ensure your reintegration goes smoothly. This manual provides information about the reintegration process, a reintegration checklist, telephone numbers, and other information you will need as you embark on the road to reintegration.

Thank you for everything you did and continue to do in our pursuit to secure freedom for future generations.

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ROAD TO REINTEGRATION

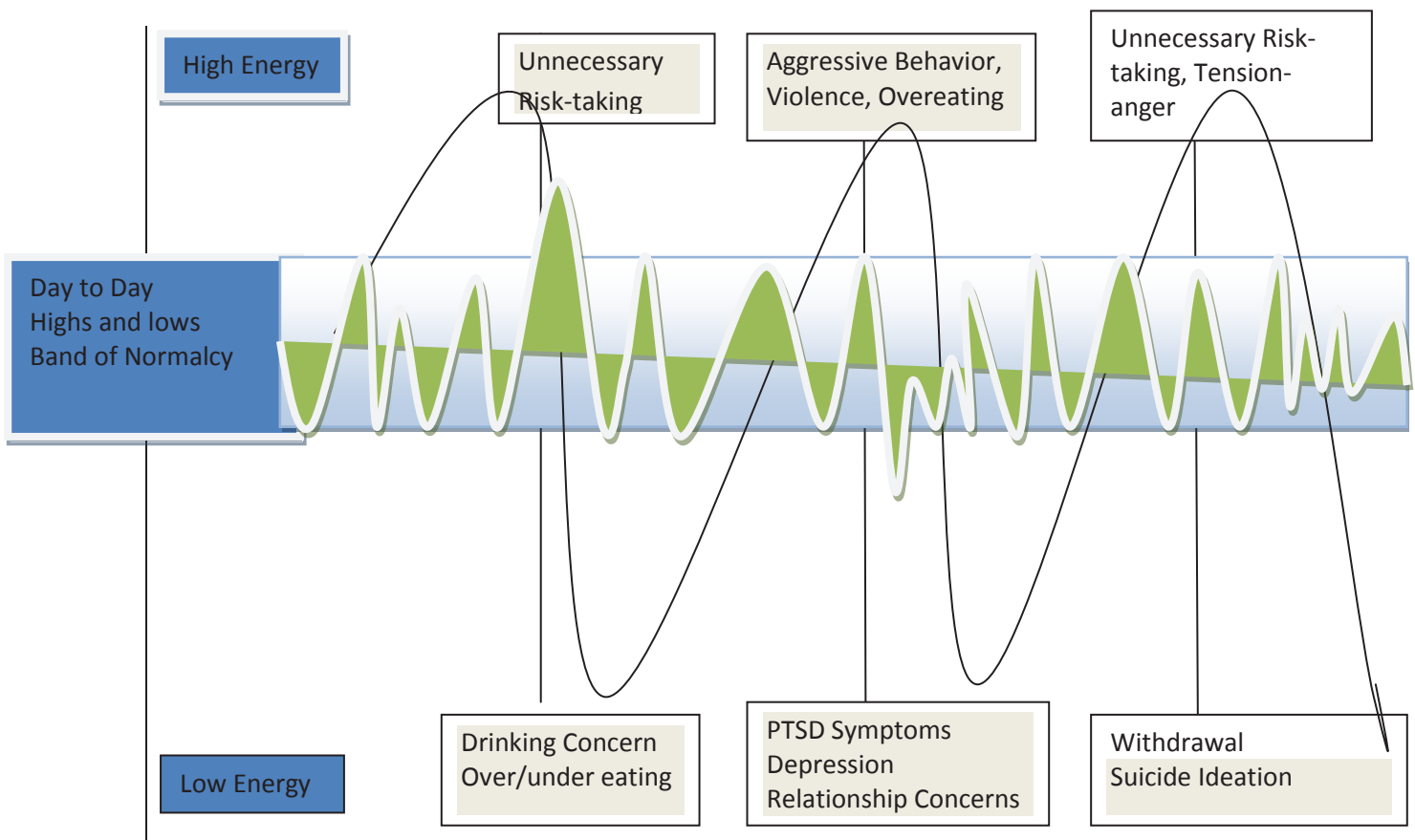
WHAT IS REINTEGRATION?

Reintegration is part of the overall Deployment Cycle Support. Air Force Space Command created this guide to help Airmen and civilian employees returning from long deployments to reunite successfully with their families, friends, and local community.

The reintegration process provides Airmen, civilian employees, and families with information, assistance, and other tools they need to handle problems within different aspects that often arise after a long deployment, including the physical, mental, emotional/spiritual, and environmental state of redeploying personnel and their family members.

REINTEGRATION CYCLE

Redeployment, reintegration, reconstitution, and retraining can be an emotional rollercoaster for Airmen, civilian employees, and their families. After long and arduous deployments, the process of reunion and reintegration is an initial whirlwind of change, followed by a longer period of gradual adjustments. The figure below shows how the post-reintegration period can involve a series of highs and lows, and indicates that even those within the “band of normalcy” can have issues that lead to challenging behaviors and circumstances.



The goals of reintegration are to integrate units and individuals with their families and communities, give formal command recognition for the achievements of returning units and individuals, and prepare units for success with their next mission. The overall reintegration process includes conducting required reintegration tasks, conducting formal welcome-home ceremonies, and completing a successful transition to routine operations.

Reintegration activities begin in the redeployment assembly area (RAA) and the home station about 30 days before redeployment. The Airmen or civilian employee must complete certain tasks in the RAA and at home-station sites before they may depart for leave.

Commanders will ensure that all Airmen and civilian employees returning from deployment are provided a means for personnel reintegration, family reunion, and reestablishment of personnel readiness.

During the pre-redeployment period, tasks will also be conducted at the home station for spouses and families of Airmen and civilian employees, and for the care personnel with whom Army Families will interact.

Family members and parents of Airmen who are unable to participate in home-station reintegration briefings can receive reintegration information through the Air Force Space Command Virtual Reintegration website at <http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/virtualreintegration/content2.htm>.

REINTEGRATION SUPPORT FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

The reintegration and post-reintegration periods can be as difficult for redeployed civilian employees and their family members as they are for Active Duty personnel returning from deployment. Those affected by deployments may need time off from work for reintegration. Most of the resources in the manual are available to civilian members returning for deployments. First Sergeants and Supervisors are also excellent resources for garnering additional deployment and reintegration support, resources and services.

The civilian and military leave systems and rules governing the use of personal time vary considerably. Leaders and supervisors should be familiar with civilian personnel policy and programs that govern the use of administrative time to participate in reintegration ceremonies, the application of liberal leave policy during rest and recuperation, and the use of alternate work schedules to provide flexibility in the workplace. In addition, leaders and supervisors should be familiar with the following terms:

- **Excused Absence.** Excused absence is an administrative leave and may be approved only when it clearly serves the best interest of the U.S. Government. It will not be approved when paid leave is appropriate. Generally, if an activity or task supports the mission and must be accomplished during normal duty hours (for example, attendance at family readiness group meetings), the time away from the office should be recorded as duty time or excused absence.

- **Liberal Leave Policy.** When a liberal leave policy is in effect, managers must grant annual leave or leave without pay (LWOP) unless this would adversely affect the mission. LWOP allows employees to be absent without pay for specific periods when they do not have enough accrued leave. AE Regulation 690-47 provides more information on the liberal leave policy.

I. POTENTIAL BUMPS AND HAZARDS ON THE ROAD TO REINTEGRATION

SAFETY

General

You are returning from a high-threat, high-risk tactical operation into a much more controlled environment. You must consciously and deliberately approach risk decisions from a different perspective to protect yourself, your subordinates, and your loved ones. There is no reason to bend the rules back home. Ensure you and your Airmen know the standards, train to the standards, and adhere to the standards!

The areas listed in this section must be reemphasized to highlight key concerns in the prevention of accidents and deaths.

Composite Risk Management

The composite risk management process applies to everything you do—both on and off duty. You have made it home, and you might be tempted to think that you can do anything. Do not be fooled. Things here can kill you just as easily as enemy action. Adjust your assessments and decisions to the threats in the regulated European environment. For example, family trips are not made under the threat of hostile fire, but speed, drowsiness, alcohol, and lack of seatbelt use are all waiting in ambush. Decisions on driving technique, trip length, weather, traffic, and route must be adjusted accordingly. Operationally, pass risk decisions to the appropriate level.

POV Safety

You are out of practice with driving under “normal” conditions. There are rules of the road, and they are enforced. Refresh yourself on the rules, especially right-of-way rules, and adjust your speed to conditions.

Seatbelts

While deployed, some high-threat operational-risk decisions may have allowed you to forget your seatbelt. Those risk decisions are not valid back home. Seatbelts are always mandatory.

Drinking and Driving

Statistics show that drinkers die in vehicle accidents at a higher rate than nondrinkers do. Do not drink and drive.

Refusing a blood alcohol content test may result in an automatic suspension of your drivers license. There is a lot more to lose than a license if caught driving under the influence. Use a designated driver..

Defensive Driving

Defensive driving is the key in vehicular-accident prevention. Defensive driving skills, also called “accident-avoidance skills,” allow you to take control of developing situations by giving you time to recognize, plan, and escape potential road crashes. Maintaining situational awareness is critical. That means that you need to be alert and focused on the driving task. Scan surroundings for any potential problem in your path, constantly evaluating and asking “what if...” In good conditions, maintain at least 3 seconds of separation distance. When road or traffic conditions are less than ideal, reduce your speed and increase your separation distance. Together, these factors give you time to recognize and react to road hazards without losing control of your vehicle.

Motorcycle Safety

A free motorcycle operator's course is recommended as a refresher for Airmen and civilian employee motorcycle riders. Contact your unit Supervisor or First Sergeant for additional training or course information.

ALCOHOL

High-Risk Drinking

High-risk drinking is any drinking of alcohol resulting in mental impairment. High-risk drinking is associated with—

- Arrests.
- Assault.
- Child abuse.
- Exposure to sexually transmitted diseases.
- Injuries and death.
- Property damage.
- Sexual assault.
- Spouse abuse.

Alcohol Poisoning

Alcohol poisoning can result from drinking large amounts of alcohol over a short time period. The blood alcohol content rises rapidly and the body is unable to process the high alcohol level. Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, resulting in—

- Slow, irregular breathing.
- Pale, blue-gray skin tone, and blue lips.
- An unconscious and unresponsive person.

Alcohol poisoning is an emergency and requires medical attention.

Lack of medical attention could result in—

- Respiratory arrest.
- Cardiac arrest.
- Death.

Watch out for your wingman. You covered each other while deployed, now cover each other back home. It is better to have someone angry than to have someone dead.

Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) Program

At each home installation the U.S. Air Force offers an Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) program to promote readiness and health through the prevention and comprehensive treatment of substance abuse problems. The ADAPT program seeks to minimize the negative consequences of substance abuse to the individual, family, and Air Force. It also provides comprehensive education and treatment to individuals who experience problems attributed to substance abuse. Ultimately, the ADAPT program is chartered to return identified substance abusers to unrestricted duty status or assist them in their transition to civilian life, as appropriate. At the base level, assessment and treatment is conducted by mental health care providers, usually psychologists or social workers and certified substance abuse counselors who are mental health care technicians.

II. RELATIONSHIPS & STRESS MANAGEMENT

Things Airmen and Civilians Should Remember

Reenter slowly. Try to fit into the family routine, which has been working without you.

Expect changes in both your spouse and in your children. (Keep in mind that you have changed some too!) Adapt accordingly, remembering that most of the changes mean growth and maturity. If some of the changes are negative, be patient; you and your Family will have plenty of time to bring things back around to a position of comfort.

Spend maximum time with the family. If possible, postpone reunions with relatives and friends until near-normal routines have been established at home.

Do not try to alter the current financial management responsibilities. Chances are your spouse has been handling them fine.

The AFSPC Virtual Reintegration Toolkit has an interactive presentation, "Spouse Battlemind Training" to help spouses prepare themselves for reintegration.

Take it easy on the kids, especially where discipline is concerned. Do not barge in as the "heavy."

Expect that sex may be awkward between you and your spouse at first. Talk it over. Allow plenty of time for you and your spouse to readjust to each other. Avoid questioning your spouse about his or her deployment experiences. Although you may be curious about what happened "downrange," it may take time for your spouse to be able to discuss what he or she saw or did.

If possible, avoid making important, permanent decisions immediately.

Things Spouses Should Remember

Expect changes; both of you have experienced a great deal.

Remember your redeployed spouse has been subject to daily regimentation and routine, and may rebel against schedules and planned events. Leave some room for spontaneity.

Drive for a while. It may have been some time since he or she has driven.

Develop a plan for financial benefits. The redeployed spouse may believe that additional income gained from the deployment is his or hers, while you may have made plans for the money or spent it during his or her absence. Develop a mutual plan or at least discuss expectations.

Expect your redeployed spouse to be surprised or hurt that you have coped so well alone. You can reassure your spouse that he or she is loved and needed without giving up your own independence. If possible, avoid making important, permanent decisions immediately.

What to Expect When Deployed Airmen and Civilians Return

All family members must realize that people change. We notice these changes more after a long absence.

Expect love and happiness along with some anger and insecurity. These feelings need to be expressed.

Expect spouses to be different. If he or she is not different, fine. If he or she has changed, you are prepared. This goes for BOTH of you.

Expect your spouse to be surprised that you have managed so well without him or her. Your spouse will need reassurance that you still need him or her.

Expect your spouse to want a lot of attention from you.

Expect that it will take about 6 weeks to adjust to each other again. If you are not getting along well at the end of 6 weeks, counseling might help.

Expect your spouse to have trouble sleeping for a while. He or she is accustomed to a different lifestyle (and possibly time zone); it may take a week or two to adjust.

Do not grill your spouse about personal issues if they arise. Give him or her time to readjust. Swallow your curiosity. This goes for BOTH of you.

Communicating With Your Spouse

Most communication is nonverbal.

Communication involves words, tone of voice, timing, pace, body language, symbols, and effective listening. Communication is a two-way street.

Effective listening involves paying close attention, not interrupting, and asking questions that show you understand.

Skillful responses provide positive feedback (concentrate on the problem, not the person). Good face-to-face communication includes being clear and precise, appropriate eye contact, receptive body language, and the appropriate voice tone.

“I” statements, reflective feelings, and being assertive (expressing your feelings and opinions honestly, openly, and without attacking others) are keys to effective communication.

“You” statements, lecturing, giving orders, giving too much advice, making fun of others, and not listening are roadblocks to effective communication.

When someone is angry, stay calm, talk in a quiet voice, acknowledge his or her feelings, take a break if you need to, and stay on task.

*Remember, your spouse and children also serve when you serve. There may be some confusion or conflict regarding expectations on your return. Be patient, take it slow, and talk through it.

Resolving Conflict

The military generates a particular kind of stress because of frequent moves, temporary duty (TDY) assignments, and deployments. Marital conflicts are often the result of tension and stress as well as power and control issues.

Learn to concentrate on one issue at a time during a discussion, and think before speaking. Keeping a cool head goes a long way toward solving problems.

During a confrontation, allow the other person equal time to speak his or her mind. An argument is essentially a debate, and a debate cannot be successful unless both sides get a chance to express their views. There should be no winners and no losers. It is okay to agree to disagree.

When the spouse is talking, listen to what he or she has to say.

Use a team approach to problem-solving. Collaborative management is more effective. Remember, two people working as a team can get a lot more done than two adversaries can.

For help with tough problems, contact Army mental health counselors, chaplains, social workers, or primary care providers.

Eliminate verbal weapons such as "I do not love you" or "You do not love me." Such tactics amount to emotional blackmail and can only foster resentment and anger. The military demands 24-hour availability, which makes it easier for Family members to feel as if the Soldier is more attached to the military than to the Family.

Never say "I told you so." Remember that a problem solved is a win-win situation.

Do not try to settle an important issue in one sitting. Take your time and try to resolve the conflict one step at a time.

Never argue in bed! Use a neutral room, and affirm your love often.

When angry, avoid comparing your spouse with someone else or bringing up past situations. Stick to the issues at hand and remember that you are dealing with only the person in front of you.

Do not hit below the belt. "Beltline" remarks often concern something in your spouse's appearance that he or she is sensitive about.

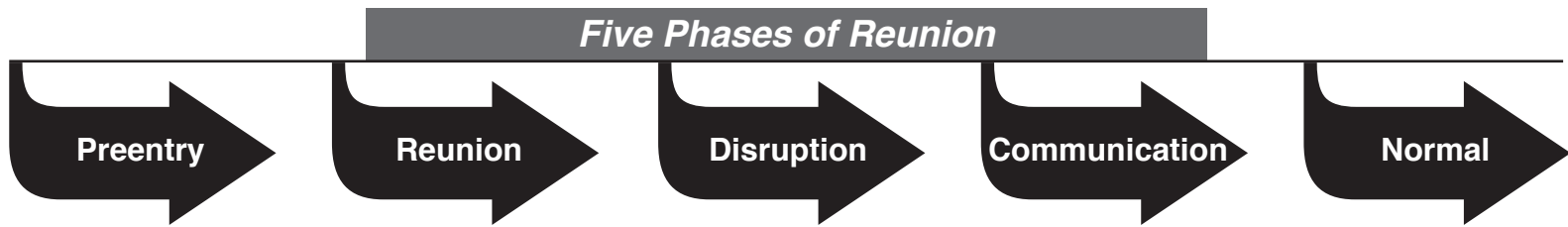
Learn to deal with jealousy. A conflict common in military marriages is caused by the recognition awarded to the military member for his or her dedication while the spouse goes unrecognized for his or her efforts and support.

Learn to be autonomous. Both you and your spouse will have to learn to do things by yourselves on occasion.

Realize that marriages and relationships do not always work out to be peaches and cream. Marriage takes two people working together to make a winning team!

Reunion

Reunion is a period of happiness, celebrating, togetherness, sharing, and courting—all the things it takes to get to know each other again and begin coming together as a family unit.



Preentry is the first few days before the reunion. Soldiers will be working long hours to ensure equipment is turned in and that work is caught up before arriving home. Things to expect in this phase are—

- Excitement Fantasies
- Work
- Planning
- Thoughts

Reunion is the immediate meeting and a few days after arrival. This is the time of courtship, relearning, intimacy, and a happy time or honeymoon. This is not the time to address problems. It is a time for understanding. Things to expect in this phase are—

- Courting again
- Giving time and space
- Immediate excitement
- Including children
- Intimacy and sex
- Physical changes
- Pride in each other
- Social events
- Tired, ready to relax

Disruption is the phase when problems can crop up. Things to expect in this phase are—

- Children (changes, growth)
- Control Issues
- Decision-making
- Different routine
- Finances
- Gifts
- Hard-times stories
- Independence
- Jealousy
- Thoughts
- Unresolved problems or issues
- Trust

Communication is the phase of renegotiating new routines, redefining Family roles, and accepting changes to control and decision-making rules. Things to expect in this phase are—

- Acceptance
- Renegotiating
- Explaining new rules
- Trust
- Reconnecting

Normal is the phase when the Family returns to the Family routine of sharing, growing, and experiencing the ups and downs (happiness and sadness) of Family life. Things to expect in this phase are—

- Establishing routines
- Accepting changes
- Personal growth

Post-Reintegration Feelings

Any combination of these FEELINGS could lead to any of the following types of BEHAVIORS

Any Combination of these FEELINGS	Could Lead to any of the following types of BEHAVIORS
Parents/Spouses: Anger at absence Both feel they had it worse Fear of infidelity Jealousy of children's preference for other parent Let down (fantasy of reunion does not live up to expectations)	Difficulty compromising, often wants other to take care of him or her Questioning, suspiciousness, incidence of spouse abuse Withdraw or trying to take power back through physical violence
Preschool Children: Anger causes desire to punish or retaliate against returning parent Joy, excitement May be afraid of returning parent Want reassurance	Attention-seeking behavior after things have settled Clingy Wants recognition and acknowledgement Oppositional or avoidant behavior
Elementary Children: Anxiety over changing family roles Competition for authoritative roles Joy, excitement Remaining anger	Attention-seeking behavior after things have settled May act out anger May attempt to initially split parents May have made something for returning parents, wants recognition
Adolescent Children: Anger Relief Resentment	Behavioral problems Defiance School problems

Coping With Stress

Although being part of a military Family develops pride in serving one's country and provides many rich and new experiences, pressure and frustration often result from—

- Career changes in retirement.
- Constant adjustment to varying duty schedules.
- Family finance difficulties.
- Frequent relocation.
- Lengthy deployments.
- Separation from family and friends.
- Single-parenting during the deployed spouse's absence.

Stress Symptoms

The following stress danger signals focus on the medical and physical symptoms common to stress. These guidelines will provide you with a general indication of your/your Airman's stress level. The more signs that are present, the stronger the likelihood that there is a serious problem. When these symptoms begin to interfere with personal happiness or well-being, or if they cause problems in personal relationships at home, work, or school, consider getting help and additional support.

Stress Symptoms

Accident proneness	Inability to concentrate
Alcohol or drug abuse	Inability to concentrate
Being afraid or anxious and not knowing why	Increased use of prescribed drugs
Diarrhea, indigestion, queasiness, vomiting	Irritability/anger problems
Emotional numbing (inability to feel)	Isolation
Excessive sweating	Loss of appetite or excessive appetite
Flashbacks (reliving of traumatic event)	Migraine headaches
Frequently feeling sad or tearful	Nightmares
Frequent recurrence of unwanted painful memories	Overpowering urge to cry or run
Grinding of teeth	Pain in the neck or lower back
Hyperactivity, increased tendency to move about	Pounding of heart, trembling, nervous twitches
Impulsive or high-risk behavior	Sleeping too much or too little, constantly tired

Stress Management Tips

- Accept that things may be different.
- Accept that your spouse may be different.
- Communicate with your spouse and your Family.
- Curb your desire to take control of spending money.
- Do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it.
- Forget your fantasies. Reality may be quite different.
- Go slowly. Do not try to make up for lost time.
- Intimate relationships may be awkward at first; take time to get reacquainted.
- Keep expectations realistic and concentrate on immediate and obtainable goals.
- Pay attention to diet, sleep, exercise, and general health.
- Reassure your children. Change often frightens them.
- Reassure your parents and extended Family.
- Rest quietly for 5 minutes or take a brief walk.
- Spend leisure time with enthusiastic, upbeat friends.
- Spend “quality time” with your children.
- Take time to readjust.
- Talk about your experiences.
- Use relaxation, meditation, music, religion, or nature to reenergize.
- Volunteer! Helping others can fill empty days and is good medicine for the soul and spirit.

SUICIDE PREVENTION & EDUCATION

The U.S. military is seeing a rise in suicide in the past two years, the highest documented since records started being kept in 1980. As part of our key priority to develop and care for Airmen and their families, we are dedicated to the well-being of our Airmen and their overall physical and psychological health. Several on and off-base resources are available to assist Airmen and their families.

Signs of Suicide Ideation—Warning Signs

Suicide prevention requires that we all practice strong Wingman principles and culture. Looking out for friends and loved ones is an important part of preventing suicide.

How to be Helpful to Someone Who is Threatening Suicide

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Be Aware of Feelings

Many people at some time in their lives think about suicide. Most decide to live because they eventually come to realize that the crisis is temporary and death is permanent. On the other hand, people having a crisis sometimes perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control. These are some of the feelings and thoughts they experience:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat or work
- Can't get out of depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see a future without pain
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't get someone's attention
- Can't seem to get control

If you experience these feelings, get help! If someone you know exhibits these symptoms, offer help!

Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional, Supervisor, First Sergeant or by calling the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK** if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following signs:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities - seemingly without thinking
- Feeling trapped - like there's no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life

Additional Educational and Preventive Resources:

Veterans Administration Suicide Prevention

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/

Veterans Crisis Line (800) 273-8255

VA is committed to addressing the issue of suicide among our Veterans and offers a network of support available to those who have served our country. VA provides a confidential 24/7 Veterans Crisis Line for Veterans in crisis and their families. Trained VA professionals are available at all times to assist Veterans and their family members. Veterans and their families do not have to be enrolled in VA to use the free, confidential Veterans Crisis Line.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, offers a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center to you.

- Call for yourself or someone you care about
- Free and confidential
- A network of more than 150 crisis centers nationwide
- Available 24/7

Additional Suicide Prevention Resources

Air Force Suicide Prevention: <http://www.af.mil/suicideprevention.asp>

Project Wingman

<http://wingmanproject.org>

TriCare's Behavioral Health Portal

Tricare has developed this online resource library to help support your emotional health, educate you and your family about deployment-related issues and help you access the care you need, through TRICARE or with the help of local and national support organizations.

For additional information go to: <http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary/BehavioralHealth/Default.aspx>

Military OneSource

Military OneSource also offers 24-hour confidential counseling and referral services for military members and their families. You can contact Military OneSource at (800) 343-9647 or by going to www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx.

This content was developed by the American Association of Suicidology.

SEXUAL-ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM

The Air Force does not tolerate sexual assault and has implemented a comprehensive policy that reinforces a culture of prevention, response and accountability that ensures the safety, dignity and well-being of all members of the Armed Forces. Our men and women serving throughout the world deserve nothing less, and their leaders-military and civilian-are committed to maintaining a workplace environment that rejects sexual assault and attitudes that promote such behaviors. The AF-SAPR web site provides guidance and other information for victims of sexual assault, unit commanders, first responders, and those who wish to prevent or respond to this crime. Sections address confidentiality, reporting procedures, volunteer victim advocates as well as education and training information, safety tips, resources, and links to related web sites.

For additional information, reporting and counseling referral services contact your installation Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator, or go to: <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/globalTab.do?channelPageId=s6925EC133D9D0FB5E044080020E329A9>

III. AIRMEN & FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Several on-base organizations are available to assist you and your family members with the reintegration process. Below are some of the services and agencies available to assist Active Duty and civilians:

Airman & Family Readiness Centers

What is the Airman and Family Readiness Center?

The Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) is a service organization for all Air Force members and families and is the focal point for family matters.

The A&FRC provides services in 4 main areas:

- Assistance for unit leadership in their efforts to support readiness and retention
- Coordination and consultation with other base and civilian agencies to strengthen base policies and programs, all in an effort to benefit Air Force families

- Information and referral, assessment counseling and follow-up
- Family Life education and skills programs

Who is Eligible to use the A&FRC?

- Active Duty Military Members
- Families of Active Duty Military
- Guard and Reserve and their Family Members
- Retired Military Personnel and their Families
- DoD Civilians and their Families

Family Life Education (FLE)

Family Life Education includes programs designed to help single and married Air Force members and their families adapt to current and future changes in their lives. These programs are presented at the A&FRC by staff members, other base agencies, or by agencies from the local community.

Personal and Family Readiness

The Air Force recognizes the significant impact on military members and families during mission required separations (deployments, extended TDY's and remote assignments). The Personal and Family Readiness Program was established to help educate, inform, and provide support to those military members and families experiencing separations. Successful separations don't just happen; they require proper planning and preparation. Personal and Family Readiness Training is mandatory for military members and highly encouraged for spouses.

Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP)

Meeting financial obligations and goals is a common objective of every individual. The Personal Financial Management Program offers information, education, and personal financial counseling. Information, news articles and other written materials are available to assist in personal financial management.

Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC)

- Work with families, individuals, couples and children to provide CONFIDENTIAL non-medical problem identification counseling
- Provides psych-education to help military service members and their families understand the impact of stress, deployments, family reunions following deployments and the stresses of the military lifestyle
- MFLC services augment existing military support services to complement provided services

Contact your installation Airman & Family Readiness Center to schedule an appointment with the MFLC. Child/Youth MFLC's are also offered at most installations across the Command.

School Liaison Officers

School Liaison Officers (SLO) connect schools, families and the community together in meeting the educational needs of the military child, and serves as a point of contact for all who desire assistance with school-related matters. SLOs are a valuable resource for Air Force families adjusting to reintegration changes.

School Liaison Officers are located in the Airman & Family Readiness Centers.

Key Spouses

Key Spouse is an official communication network designed to enhance readiness and establish a sense of community among unit leaders.

The Key Spouse program is an excellent way to bridge communication gaps and maintain contact with families to inform, support or refer them as needed.

A Key Spouse volunteer may be the spouse of an officer, an senior enlisted Airman, a Department of Defense civilian or other qualified person connected to the unit. Unit leaders formally select and appoint each Key Spouse. Senior officer or enlisted spouses are encouraged to serve as mentors or advisers. Staff members from the installation Airmen and Family Readiness Center provide initial and ongoing training and serve as a referral resource for Key Spouses.

The program's structure is designed so the unit commander, Key Spouse, first sergeant, and Key Spouse mentor work as a team to ensure follow-up with families experiencing separation due to deployments or extended TDYs and provide assistance and support to all unit members and families.

In addition to ongoing contact with separated families, Key Spouse activities may include publishing monthly newsletters for waiting family members, involvement in official and unofficial meetings or squadron events and distribution of deployment "survival" information.

Whether addressing issues at the lowest possible level or simply being an ear for questions or concerns an Airman's family may have, the Key Spouse program is a great force multiplier. It allows to be more responsive to our "total force" community. This valuable tool supports families during separations, reintegration and other emergency situations, while enhancing communication between leadership, spouses and other family members.

For more information about the Key Spouse program, contact the staff at your installation Airman and Family Readiness Center, or your squadron First Sergeant.

Family Advocacy Program

The mission of Family Advocacy is to build healthy families and communities by preventing the occurrence, reoccurrence, and severity of family maltreatment to the maximum extent possible. The prevention of maltreatment includes the prevention of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. Preventive intervention is aimed at organizing and supporting the development of responses among families, and key players that interface with the problem of family maltreatment. The Family Advocacy prevention team supports the Air Force mission through the use of trained professionals, therapeutic treatment and maltreatment education based on community needs and high-risk indicators. Programs/classes often include parenting, couples communication, family violence prevention briefings, anger management, and the New Parent Support Program.

Chaplain Corps

Homecoming and Reunion

Chaplains offer comprehensive programs to meet your needs as you prepare for your reintegration to the homefront. Additionally, chaplains are available to provide supportive counseling and pastoral care, and may assist in the process of referral for additional help and care.

Chaplain Services

As an integral part of the military operational structure, chaplains protect the first amendment rights to the free exercise of religion (DoD Directive 1300.17) for all service members and their families, while remaining faithful to their ecclesiastical endorsement (DoD Directive 1304.19). Chaplains are responsible for worship, liturgies, rites, pastoral care, religious education, and advice to leadership in areas of religion, religious accommodation, and moral/ethical decision-making. They provide a

spiritual dimension to family support, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), medical, and quality of life programs. Chaplains often provide individual, marital, and family counseling services offering absolute privileged (confidential) communication.

All Airmen and civilians redeploying—whether by unit or as individuals—are provided a means for personal, family, and community reunion and reintegration to reestablish personal relationships as well as readiness. Chaplains work with the other agencies (Airman & Family Readiness Center, Mental Health, Family Advocacy and the school system, to name a few) to help you get to your new “normal.”

There is no doubt that on your return you will discover that things have changed for both you and your Family. What needs to be emphasized is that change is constant; and with effort on everyone’s part, change can be positive and beneficial. Make time to share your story with your loved ones. Equally important is that you give them your attention when they share their story with you. Deployment is always a team effort, and it causes life to get more complicated for everyone involved. We, the Air Force family, are prepared to assist you in your transition from forward deployment to home station.

Remember, it is not always easy to adjust to being back at the home station. If it seems that you are not able to move in a positive direction to what your new “normal” ought to be, talk to your local chaplain or other helping agency. Do not hesitate to share your concerns. Getting back together after a prolonged absence takes time and patience. We are here to support you in any way that we can. Do not think that your problems are unique. You may be surprised to find out that you are not alone.

IV. DEPLOYMENT REUNIONS AND CHILDREN

Deployment reunions and reintegration are a process, not an event. The process requires time and effort. Stress levels may remain high up to 7 months after the person returns from deployment. Because school is a setting that remains the same for the child of a deployed parent, it is an important part of the child’s life. Families and schools working together can help children adjust to the changes inherent in deployment reunions and reintegration.

Tips for Parents

Talk with your children before the deployed parent comes home as much as you did when the parent was preparing to leave.

Tell your child’s teacher about the return of the deployed parent.

Use the services of the Family assistance center and Army Community Service (ACS) to help address the special challenges of wartime deployment reunions and reintegration.

Know that children’s behavior will greatly depend on how their parents renegotiate, compromise, and communicate.

Take care to avoid abruptly shifting love and attention from the children to the returning spouse. Help children understand that they have changed while the parent was away, and that the parent has changed too. Assure them that even though the parent may look or act differently than they remember, the returning parent is their same father or mother who left and that he or she loves them.

Understand that children may experience a variety of feelings:

- Happy that they will be seeing the parent again.
- Afraid that the parent will not like the way they have changed or that the parent will leave again.
- Excited about being able to share some of their favorite activities again.
- Proud that their parent is doing an important job for our country.
- Jealous of the time and attention taken from them and given to the returning parent.
- Worried that not all these feelings are normal.

Know that children may not respond to discipline from the returning parent because of loyalty to the parent who remained behind. Children may test the limits of the Family rules to find out how things may have changed with the return of the deployed parent.

Go slowly and let the children set the pace in accepting the parent back. Plan some special time for just the child and the returning parent to get reacquainted.

Remember that all children are different and will adjust in different ways.

Take care of yourselves and your relationship so that you are available for your children.

Children and Reunions

- Be sensitive to children's need for time.
- Expect some negative feelings and reactions.
- Avoid discipline extremes.
- Involve children in reunion celebrations.
- Find ways to express your love.

Communicating With Children

- Take personal time with each child, such as arranging a "date" with each child.
- Keep the child's age and communication abilities in mind.
- Start with a clean slate; past wrongs do not count.
- Praise the child for what he or she has accomplished while you were away.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings; allow the child to talk about feelings.
- Do not criticize.
- Talk! Talk! Talk! Listen!

How to Know When to Seek Support or Attend Parenting Classes

- You as the parent are feeling and showing more anger or frustration than usual and lack empathy toward the child.
- You find yourself warning the child more than once about the same behavior.
- You are spending more time acknowledging negative behavior than positive behavior.
- You continue to provide choices after the child has become resistant.
- Behavioral problems become difficult for you to handle.
- Your usual methods of managing are not working.
- Your child becomes a danger to him- or herself or others.

Tips for Children

- Make a special card or sign to welcome your parent home.
- Write a letter to your returning parent and tell of the ways you have changed. Ask how he or she has changed.
- Share your parent's time with other Family members.
- Be patient if things seem uneasy at first. Everyone will need to adjust.

ADDITIONAL DEPLOYMENT REINTEGRATION & MILITARY LIFE INFORMATION

Military OneSource

<http://militaryonesource.com> • 800-342-9647

Military Homefront

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

Air Force Chaplain Corps

<http://www.usafhc.af.mil/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

[http:// www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) • 800-273-TALK (8255)

Project Wingman

<http://wingmanproject.org>

Zero to Three

<http://zerotothree.org/>

AFSPC Installation Deployment Connection Websites

Buckley AFB

<http://www.buckley.af.mil/library/deploymentstation/index.asp>

Los Angeles AFB

<http://www.losangeles.af.mil/deploymentinfo.asp>

Patrick AFB

<http://www.patrick.af.mil//units/deployedconnection/index.asp>

Peterson AFB

<http://www.peterson.af.mil/units/deployedconnection.asp>

Schriever AFB

<http://newpreview.afnews.af.mil/schriever/library/deployedconnections/deployedconnections2/index.asp>

Vandenberg AFB

<http://www.vandenberg.af.mil/deployedconnection.asp>