

# Post Deployment Stress Reactions and High Risk Behavior

**Airmen returning from deployment may experience post deployment stress reactions. Such as:**

- Irritability and anger.
- Difficulty sleeping and/or nightmares.
- Unwanted and intrusive images or thoughts.
- Anxiety and depression.
- Emotional numbing.
- Loss of interest in activities or people.
- Problems with gambling, alcohol and other substances, reckless driving and suicidal thoughts or actions
- Remaining on "high alert" status , even though your home.

**High Risk Behaviors include:**

- Gambling: this can affect the Airman and/or their spouse. It can cause financial and relationship issues
- Alcohol and Other substances: Guards men are statistically more likely to turn to alcohol to cope than an active duty member. Alcohol abuse can cause financial and relationship issues.
- Reckless Driving: can lead to a fatality and/or be career ending
- Suicidal thoughts or actions: are often related to financial and relationship issues.

**Post deployment responses to increase healthy coping include:**

- Spend time with others.
- Eat well, exercise and get plenty of sleep.
- Take time to do things you find pleasurable.
- Refocus on routines such as workout schedules, family dinners, etc.
- Talk to others about your feelings.
- Maintain your sense of purpose in life.

**Seeking Professional help may help with:**

- Relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises.
- Improve sleep patterns and sleep hygiene.
- Communication skills.
- Problem solving

## Resources

- Airman & Family Readiness Office: 716-236-3411
- Chaplains Office: 716-236-2395
- Veterans' Crisis Line, 24/7 800-273-TALK (8255), option 1
- Wing Director of Psychological Health Mobile: 716-534-4209
- Military & Family Life Consultants
- VA/Vet Center 716-862-7350
- [www.MilitaryOneSource.com](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com) 800-342-9647 (24/7)
- [www.WingmanProject.org](http://www.WingmanProject.org)

## References

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- Veterans Administration National Center for PTSD (2010). *Returning from the War Zone: A guide for families of military members*. Retrieved July 12, 2012, from <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/reintegration/guide-pdf/FamilyGuide.pdf>.

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