



## The Deployment Cycle and Its Impact on Service Members and Their Families

Center for Deployment Psychology  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences



## Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



This presentation contains video clips and/or photographs that some people may find emotionally disturbing. Please feel free to leave during these portions of the presentation or to talk to staff after the presentation.



## Learning Objectives

1. Describe the demographic characteristics of Service members and their families.
2. List the three phases of the deployment cycle and the events common to each phase.
3. Identify stressors commonly confronted by Service members and their families before, during, and after deployment.
4. Discuss challenges that Service members face in achieving successful post-deployment reintegration.



## U.S. Veterans

2010 Veteran Population	
Total	22 million
WWII	2.1 million
Korean conflict	2.6 million
Vietnam era	7.7 million
Gulf War (8/90 – 8/01)	3.5 million
Gulf War (9/01 – present)	2.3 million
Wartime veterans*	17.1 million
Peacetime veterans*	5.8 million

\*Statistics from 2009, U.S. Census Bureau (2011)



## Types of Service/Locations

Types of Service and Deployments	Locations
Wartime	Fort/Post/Base in any state
Peacetime	Korea/Japan/South Pacific
Non-combat zone in combat era	Balkans
Natural Disasters (Hurricanes, Floods, etc.)	Alaska/Hawaii
Medical facility	Qatar
Fort/Post/Base/Camp	Spain/UK
Ship/Submarine	Germany/Italy
MOOTW (Military Operations Other Than War)	Middle East
Others?	Africa
	Others?



## Wear and Tear

OEF

OIF

OND

OFS



## Wear and Tear

### Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

**Afghanistan** [October 7, 2001- December 28, 2014]

### Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

**Iraq** [March 20, 2003- August 31, 2010]



9



## Wear and Tear

### Operation New Dawn (OND)

**Iraq** [September 1, 2010- December 18, 2011]

### Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS)

**Afghanistan** [January 1, 2015 - present]



10



## Demographics Handout

Department of Defense  
2013 Demographics  
Profile of the Military Community

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



11



## Active Component vs. Selected Reserve

Active Component	Selected Reserve
"Full-time" military	"Part-time" military
On call 24/7/365	1 weekend month/2 weeks per year
— Army	National Guard
— Air Force	— Army NG
— Navy	— Air NG
— Marine Corps	Reserves
— Coast Guard	— Army — Air Force
Approximately 1.4 Million	— Navy — Marine Corps
	— Coast Guard
	Approximately 1.1 Million

2013 Demographics Profile of the Military Community (2014)



12



## Branch Strength

2013 Military Personnel by DoD Component and Coast Guard		
Total	2.25 million	100%
Army Active Duty	528,000	23.4%
Army National Guard	358,000	15.9%
Army Reserve	198,000	8.8%
Navy Active Duty	320,000	14.2%
Navy Reserve	62,000	2.7%
Marine Corps Active Duty	196,000	8.7%
Marine Corps Reserve	40,000	1.8%
Air Force Active Duty	327,000	14.5%
Air National Guard	106,000	4.7%
Air Force Reserve	71,000	3.1%
Coast Guard Active Duty	40,000	1.8%
Coast Guard Reserve	8,000	0.4%

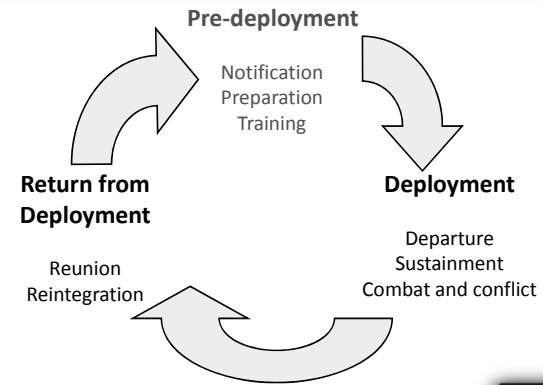
2013 Demographics Profile of the Military Community (2014)



13



## Pre-Deployment



14



## Pre-Deployment

“Physically present  
and  
psychologically absent”

Faber et al (2008)



15



## Pre-Deployment Stress in Military Families



16



## Pre-Deployment Preparation for Military Families

- Preparedness
  - Practical preparation
    - Power of attorney/will/financial plan
    - Location of important papers
    - Emergency contact procedures
    - Child care arrangements

*...but deployment pay can offset negative aspects of deployments*



## Pre-Deployment Preparation for Military Families

- Emotional preparation
  - Prepare to cope with unexpected problems
  - Trust service member will be protected
  - Prepare for absence of partner/parent
  - Support mission



## Pre-Deployment Stressors for Military Families

- Lack of preparation time
  - Unit preparation vs. family preparation
  - Last-minute tasks
- Shifting expectations
  - Length of upcoming deployment
    - Open-ended deployments
  - Deployment date



## Pre-Deployment Stressors

### Military Families

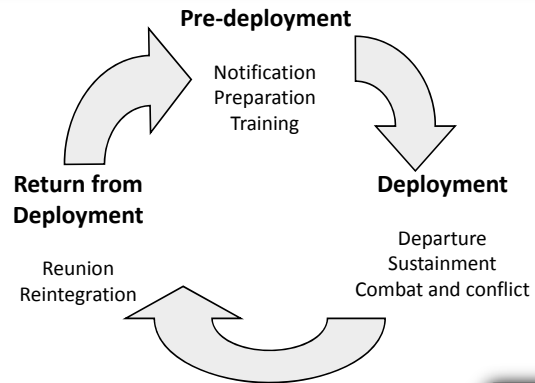
- Clarifying changes in family dynamics
- Anticipation of threats to service member
- Perception of mission purpose
- Lack of information
- Potential rumors
- Striving for intimacy
- Service members often value deployments

### Military Children

- Preparing for extended separations from a primary caretaker
- Altered family roles and responsibility
- Increased stress on non-military parent/caretakers
- Community level stress/loss



## Deployment



## Deployment

“Psychologically present  
and  
physically absent”



## Deployment Stress in Military Families



## Deployment Phases for Military Families

In first month ...

- Adjusting to new responsibilities
- Roller coaster of mixed emotions
- Disrupted routines
- “Hole” where Service member used to be



## Deployment Phases for Military Families

After first month through penultimate month ...

- Resiliency develops
- Increased confidence
- New routines established
- New sources of support
- Newfound independence

Logan (1987)



25



## Deployment Phases for Military Families

1 month before return ...

- Intense anticipation
- Rush to complete “to do” lists
- Surge of conflicting emotions
- “What will I have to give up?”
- High expectations

Logan (1987)



26



## Factors Associated with Greater Youth or Caregiver Difficulties

1. Poor caregiver emotional well-being
2. More cumulative months of deployment
3. National Guard or Reserve status
4. Youth-caregiver communication problems



Chandra et al. (2011)



27



## Communication

- Technology is easier and quicker
  - Phone, email, IM, FAX, VTC, DVD, Facebook, Skype
- Email and IM most frequently used
- Telephone preferred but less available



U.S. Army photo by SSG Whitney Hughes

Miller et al (2011)



28



## Communication

### Value of frequent communication:

- Alleviates negative stress and challenges of separation
- Service members' motivation during missions is correlated with the well-being of their families

### Challenges of frequent communication:

- Exacerbates homesickness
- Distracts from mission, particularly when news from home is negative or unpleasant
- Frustration that spouse's complaints seem trivial compared to problems encountered during deployment

Miller et al. (2011); Chandra et al. (2011)



29



## As Goes the Parent, So Goes the Child

- Child adjustment problems linked to parental distress
  - Depression and PTSD in parents were predictive of child depression/child internalizing and externalizing behaviors
- Longer parental deployments associated w/ increased risk for child depression/externalizing symptoms
- Children can have a high level of anxiety even after the deployed parent has returned

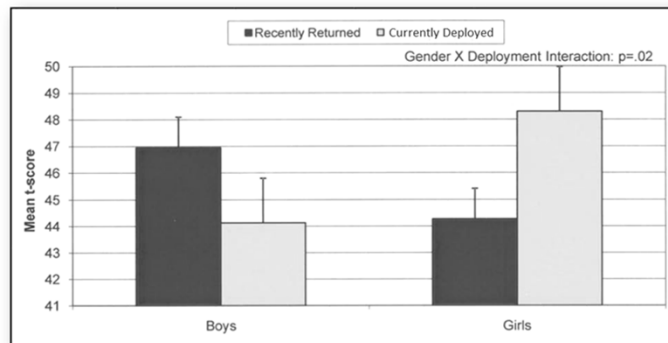
Lester et al (2010)



30



## Externalizing Symptoms by Gender and Parent Deployment Status



Lester et al (2010)



31



## Impact of Deployment

Risk Factor	Most at Risk
Age	Older teens
Gender	Girls
Total time deployed	More cumulative months of deployment
Caregiver emotional well-being	Poorer emotional well-being

Chandra et al. (2011); Cohoon (2010)



32





## Challenges During Deployment

As cited by both caregivers and youth:

- Maintaining the household
- Confronting life without the deployed Service member
- Lack of community understanding of what life was like for them during the deployment



Chandra et al. (2011)



33



## Deployment Stress in Service Members



34



## Tough Realities About Combat

- Fear in combat is common
- Unit members will be injured and killed
- There will be communication/info breakdowns
- Leadership failures will be perceived
- Combat impacts every soldier mentally and emotionally
- Combat has lasting mental health (MH) effects
- Soldiers are afraid to admit that they have a MH problem
- Deployments place a tremendous strain upon families
- Combat environment is harsh and demanding
- Combat poses moral/ethical challenges

WRAR Land Combat Study Team (2006)



35



## Challenges for OIF and OEF

- No clearly defined “front line” or rear areas
- Highly ambiguous environment
- Complex and changing missions
- Long deployments
- Repeated deployments
- Environment is very harsh

WRAR Land Combat Study Team (2006); Hosek et al (2006)



36



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social
- Spiritual

Figley et al (2007)



37



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members

### Physical

- Heat and cold
- Dehydration and wetness
- Lack of comforts
- Sleep deprivation
- Dirt and mud
- Noise and blasts
- Fumes and smells
- Long work hours
- Illness or injury



Figley et al (2007); photo courtesy of Christopher Hines, MD



38



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members



### Cognitive

- Boredom/monotony
- Unclear/changing role or mission
- Unclear/changing ROEs
- Experiences that defy beliefs
- Too little or too much information
- Loyalty conflicts

Figley et al (2007); photo courtesy of Christopher Hines, MD



39



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members

### Emotional

- Fear of failure/loss
- Shame and guilt
- Helplessness
- Horror
- Anxiety
- Killing
- Feeling devalued
- Excitement, thrills
- Satisfaction



Figley et al (2007); photo courtesy of LTC Jeffrey Yarvis, PhD, MSW, MEd



40



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members

### Social

- Separation from loved ones
- Lack of privacy
- Public opinion and media
- Turning to their peers for support



U.S. Navy

Figley et al (2007)



41



## Deployment Challenges for Service Members

### Spiritual

- Change in faith
- Inability to forgive
- Loss of trust



U.S. Marine Corps

Figley et al (2007)



42



## Women's Roles in OIF/OEF

### • Roles

- Combat vs. non-combat
- Medics/Mental Health
- Convoy transportation
- Pilots
- Mechanics
- Administrative
- Intelligence
- Security Forces/Military Police



43



## Female Deployment Stressors

- Genitourinary health issues
- Body armor fit issues
- Feelings of both isolation (few females) and yet always being around someone (Battle Buddy system)
- Separation from family/children
- Sexual assault/harassment



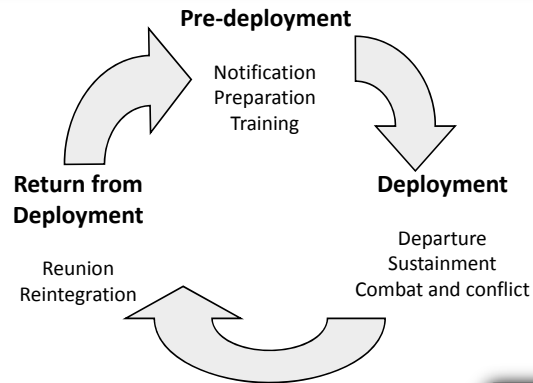
Street et al (2009); Zoroya (2012); Vogt et al (2005); Joint Economics Committee (2007)



44



## Stressors in the Deployment Cycle Service Members



## Return from Deployment

“Physically present  
and  
psychologically absent”



## Family Reintegration



## Typical Course of Reintegration

### Family has...

- New routines
- New responsibilities
- More independence and confidence
- Made many sacrifices
- Worried, felt lonely
- Gone through milestones that were missed

### Service member's return can...

- Interrupt routine
- Disrupt space
- Throw off decision-making
- Cause family to walk on tiptoes
- Not make everything perfect
- Not replace the sacrifices and missed milestones



## Typical Course of Reintegration

Child...

- Is used to depending on other parent or caretaker
- May have made new friends
- May have developed new interests
- May have achieved milestones or rites of passage



National Guard



49



## Post-Deployment Stressors

- Unmet or unrealistic expectations
- Post-homecoming let-down
- Changed roles/responsibilities
- New independence of spouse
- Tug on loyalties
- Extended family
- Unresolved marital issues haven't vanished



50



## Challenges During Reintegration

- Readjusting to the deployed parent's presence
- Fitting the deployed parent into the home routine
- Difficulties rebalancing childcare responsibilities while ensuring the deployed parent had time to adjust to home life (caregiver)
- Understanding the deployed parent again, particularly if the parent experienced mood changes (youth)

Chandra et al. (2011)



51



## Service Member Reintegration



52



## Reintegration Challenges for Female Veterans

- Readjustment to family primary caregiver role
- Post-deployment healthcare services
- “Veteran woman” identity



U.S. Navy Photo by MAC2 Jason Bahrke

Street et al. (2009); Vogt et al. (2005)



53



## BATTLEMIND Skills

### WHILE DEPLOYED

Buddies (cohesion)  
 Accountability  
 Targeted Aggression  
 Tactical Awareness  
 Lethally Armed  
 Emotional Control  
 Mission OPSEC  
 Individual Responsibility  
 Non-Defensive Driving  
 Discipline and Ordering

vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.  
 vs.

### HOME

Withdrawal  
 Controlling  
 Inappropriate Aggression  
 Hypervigilance  
 “Locked and Loaded” at Home  
 Anger/Detachment  
 Secretiveness  
 Guilt  
 Aggressive Driving  
 Conflict



54



## Post-Deployment Challenges for Reserve Component

Return to civilian life

Job may no longer be available

Can have reduction in income

Transition of health care/ loss of health coverage

Loss of unit/military support system for the family

Lack of follow-up/observation by unit commanders to assess needs



55



## Reintegration

5 critical challenges service members need to master

- Overcome alienation
- Move from simplicity to complexity
- Replace war with another form of high
- Move beyond war and find meaning in life
- Come to peace with self, God, and others

Adapted from CH (LTC) John Morris, Minnesota National Guard. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program



56



## Reintegration

### Overcome alienation

- From family, friends
- From coworkers
- From community



57



## Reintegration

### Move from simplicity to complexity



- From self to others
- From survival to thriving
- From others thinking for you to responsibility
- From no choices to overwhelming choices



58



## Reintegration

### Replace war with another high

- War is an adventure
- Nothing in civilian life matches the intensity
- Speed kills: So do drugs, alcohol, etc...
- How do SMs learn to accept life as it is?



59



## Reintegration

### Move beyond war

- Find meaning and purpose outside of combat
- We were someone before war and will be someone after war
- Will we be stuck in Iraq/Afghanistan, etc., forever?



60



## Reintegration

### Make peace with self, God, and others

- SMs may have done, or not done things that violated their moral code
- SMs may have participated in the killing of other humans
- SMs may ask, “Is there absolutism or do I live with guilt, (real, false, survivors) forever?”



## CDP Website: Deploymentpsych.org

### Features include:

- Descriptions and schedules of upcoming training events
- Blog updated daily with a range of relevant content
- Articles by subject matter experts related to deployment psychology, including PTSD, mTBI, depression, and insomnia
- Other resources and information for behavioral health providers
- Links to CDP’s Facebook page and Twitter feed



## Online Learning

The following online courses are located on the CDP website at:

<http://www.deploymentpsych.org/content/online-courses>

**NOTE: All of these courses can be take for free or for CE Credits for a fee**

- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD in Veterans and Military Personnel (1.25 CE Credits)
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD in Veterans and Military Personnel (1.25 CE Credits)
- Epidemiology of PTSD in Veterans: Working with Service Members and Veterans with PTSD (1.5 CE Credits)
- Provider Resiliency and Self-Care: An Ethical Issue (1 CE Credit)
- Military Cultural Competence (1.25 CE Credits)
- The Impact of Deployment and Combat Stress on Families and Children, Part 1 (2.25 CE Credits)
- The Impact of Deployment and Combat Stress on Families and Children, Part 2 (1.75 CE Credits)
- The Fundamentals of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) (1.5 CE Credits)
- Identification, Prevention, & Treatment of Suicidal Behavior in Service Members & Veterans (2.25 CE Credits)
- Depression in Service Members and Veterans (1.25 CE Credits)

*All of these courses and several others are contained in the Serving Our Veterans Behavioral Health Certificate program, which also includes 20+ hours of Continuing Education Credits for \$350.*



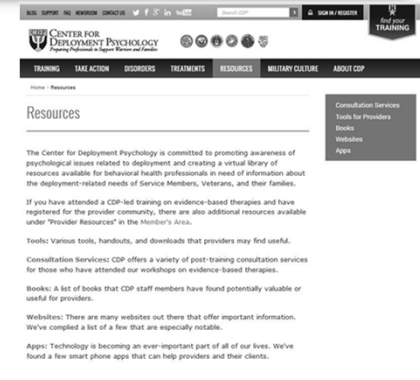
## Provider Support

CDP’s “Provider Portal” is exclusively for individuals trained by the CDP in evidence-based psychotherapies (e.g., CPT, PE, and CBT-I)

### Features include:

- Consultation message boards
- Hosted consultation calls
- Printable fact sheets, manuals, handouts, and other materials
- FAQs and one-on-one interaction with answers from SMEs
- Videos, webinars, and other multimedia training aids

Participants in CDP’s evidence-based training will automatically receive an email instructing them how to activate their user name and access the “Provider Portal” section at Deploymentpsych.org.







## How to Contact Us

### Center for Deployment Psychology

Department of Medical & Clinical Psychology  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences  
4301 Jones Bridge Road, Executive Office: Bldg. 11300-602  
Bethesda, MD 20813-4768

**Email:** [General@DeploymentPsych.org](mailto:General@DeploymentPsych.org)

**Website:** [DeploymentPsych.org](http://DeploymentPsych.org)

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/DeploymentPsych>

**Twitter:** @DeploymentPsych

hjf



65