

talk, listen, connect™

Deployments, Homecomings, Changes



These pages deal exclusively with the videos on the “Changes” DVD. To view them, select “For Grown-Ups.”

For Grown-Ups Only

In each video on the **Talk, Listen, Connect: Deployments, Homecomings, Changes** DVD, you’ll see a variety of real-life families from across the country talking candidly about their everyday challenges.

You’ll find moms, dads, grandparents, and children of different ages sharing their experiences. Viewing these videos is a great way for military spouses and other caregivers to know they are not alone and to gain wisdom from others in similar situations.

You can view the videos in groups or individually. This 5-page guide will help you begin discussions about what you’ve seen in the videos. Because of the sensitive nature of the material, it is recommended that you view the videos only with adults.

In these pages, you’ll find:

- » **Key Messages:** Take-home messages from the video
- » **Instructions:** How to find each video segment on the DVD
- » **Questions for Discussion:** Starting points for you to use in conversations within your groups or with individuals

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Deployments: Staying Connected

With your group, explore practical ways to connect as a family and with a variety of support systems. This can help families overcome some of the most difficult experiences during deployments.



Key Message

- » Stay connected to the deployed family member, friends, family, and community.



How to Use the DVD for Conversation

- » **Show** “Talking to Military Families” (by selecting “Deployments,” then “For Grown-Ups”).
- » Encourage participants to **think** about their own families and children as they view the video.
- » The questions at right are organized according to the topics and themes included in the video. You might **pause** the video between segments to discuss what you’ve just seen.



Questions for Discussion

Connect with the parent who is away.

- » What were some of the ways these families kept in touch with one another?
- » How does connecting help you and your children cope with the challenges of having a parent deployed?
- » What are other ways that you keep in touch?

Spend special moments together during deployment.

- » How did the families in the video stay connected within the home?
- » What do you do in your home to stay connected as a family?
- » What are some of the challenges you or your children are experiencing while mom or dad is away, and how have you tried to overcome these challenges?

Comfort each other.

- » One of the mothers in the video mentioned that running her own child-care program helps her cope with her feelings of loneliness. What are some ways you cope?
- » The same mom also found strength from her children. How do you get strength from your children?
- » How do your children get strength from you?



Think About It

1. Photocopy the “Reaching Out” reproducible on page 3 and distribute (one per person).
2. Tell the group they are going to create an important “survival sheet” that they can use anytime to get the help and support they need. Look together at the types of resources listed on the page.
3. Invite participants to fill in the information on the page. They can share their information with others to give recommendations or suggestions. Invite them to keep it on their refrigerators or in their datebooks.

Reaching Out: Fill in this sheet so that you have at-a-glance ways to connect with your support system, reach out, stay connected with your family, ask for help, and take care of yourself.



**talk,
listen,
connect™**



CHILD CARE PROVIDERS:



NEIGHBORS:



OVERSEAS CONTACT INFORMATION:



RESOURCES ON THE WEB:



MY HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS:



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR OTHER GROUP MEMBERS:



**WHEN I NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE GROWN-UP TIME,
I CAN CALL:**



WHEN I NEED A PEACEFUL PLACE TO BE ALONE, I CAN GO TO:



REGULAR FAMILY ACTIVITIES:



NEW FAMILY TRADITIONS:

Homecomings: Dealing With Multiple Deployments

Help the group express and discuss feelings associated with multiple deployments.

Plus, help participants search for the support they need to address the emotional impact of multiple deployments on families.



Key Messages

- » Spend time together; routines help.
- » Talk about how you're feeling.
- » Accept the support of the people around you.



How to Use the DVD for Conversation

- » **Show** "Homecomings: Dealing with Multiple Deployments" (by selecting "Homecomings," then "For Grown-Ups").
- » Encourage participants to **think** about their own families and children as they view the video.
- » The questions at right are organized according to the topics and themes included in the video. You might **pause** the video between segments to discuss what you've just seen.



Questions for Discussion

It's their job.

- » How did parents in the video explain to their children why mom or dad had to leave?
- » How have you explained this to your children?
- » A mom talked about how difficult it is to explain the concept of time to children (or how long their mom or dad will be away). What has helped you explain time?

Communicate, no matter how far apart you are.

- » How do parents in the video stay connected to each other?
- » What kind of information do they share?
- » How does connecting help you and your spouse cope with the challenges of being apart?

Talk about how you are feeling.

- » In the video, to whom did children turn to talk about their feelings?
- » What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of having children tell the deployed parent how they feel?
- » What are the advantages or disadvantages of having children talk to you or other caring adults?

Spend time together. Routines help.

- » In the video, how did some families readjust when mom or dad came back?
- » How have you adjusted (do you have any new activities or routines)?
- » What makes it hard to spend time together, and how do you work around it?

Accept the support of your community.

- » One dad said, "When people offer support, let them help." How have you gathered support from your community?
- » Has anything stopped you from seeking outside help?
- » What helped you overcome this obstacle?

Changes: Adjusting to a New Reality

Talk about the unique experiences associated with having a family member return home due to an injury. Discuss the process of reaching a “new normal” and having a positive outlook about the new reality.



Key Messages

- » Breaking the news is hard; involve children in age-appropriate ways. Don't underestimate their resilience!
- » The recovery process – both physical and emotional – is slow. The whole family needs time to adjust to the change.
- » Reclaim family routines in new ways, working together to create a “new normal.”

? Questions for Discussion

Breaking the news is hard. Be reassuring and involve your children from the beginning.

- » One boy in the video thought he was in trouble when he was summoned to be told about his father's injury. How did you break the news to your children?
- » One mom talked about the amount of information she gave her children, based on their ages and personalities. How did you know how much information to give to your children, and how did it vary by age?

Recovery is a slow process. Your children may also need time.

- » One dad in the video said that he didn't want his children to see him in intensive care. When was the first time that your children saw you or your spouse with the injury?
- » How did your children react to seeing you or your spouse changed?
- » How have you helped your children adjust to these changes?

Change can be emotional, as well as physical.

- » What have been some of your family's emotional high and low points during the recovery process?
- » How have the changes in your spouse affected you personally?
- » How do you take care of yourself in the face of such big changes?

Reclaim familiar routines in new ways.

- » What was your family's favorite way of spending time together before the injury?
- » How have you adjusted your family's routines to account for the changes?

Work together and your family will create a “new normal.”

- » One girl in the video said that her father's injury gave her the knowledge of the value of life. What have you and your children learned during this process?
- » One boy in the video said that the way he loves his dad will never change. What are some things that will never change in your family?



How to Use the DVD for Conversation

- » **Show** “Changes: Dealing with a New Reality” (by selecting “Changes,” then “For Grown-Ups”).
- » Encourage participants to **think** about their own families and children as they view the video.
- » The questions at right are organized according to the topics and themes included in the video. You might **pause** the video between segments to discuss what you've just seen.