MILITARY FAMILIES DEPLOYMENT and VA SERVICES

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DEPLOYMENTS

• Since 2001 approximately 2 million US Troops have deployed as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

  • Rand Study on NYS Veterans
Deployment

• Is a Family Phenomenon
• Stages of Deployment
  • Pre-deployment (varies)
  • Deployment (1st month)
  • Sustainment (months 2 through 18)
  • Re-deployment (last month)
  • Post-deployment (3–6 months after deployment)

LTC Simon H. Pincus,
US, MC, COL, Robert House, USAR, MC, LTC;
Joseph Christenson,
USA, MC, and CAPT Lawrence E. Alder, MC,
USNR; http://www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/emotionalcycle.htm
Stage 1: Pre-deployment

- Anticipation of loss vs. denial
- Train-up/long hours away
- Getting affairs in order
- Mental/physical distance
- Arguments
Stage Two: Deployment

• This stage is the period from the soldier’s departure from home through Stage 2 the first month of the deployment.
• deployment.
Stage Three: Sustainment

- The sustainment stage lasts from the first month through the 18th month of deployment.
Stage Four: Re-deployment

- Anticipation of homecoming
- Excitement
- Apprehension
- Burst of energy
- Difficulty making decisions
Stage Five: Post-deployment

- Honeymoon period
- Loss of independence
- Need for own space
- Renegotiating routines
- Reintegrating into family
- Time frame: Three to six months after deployment
FAMILIES UNDER STRESS

- $A$ (STRESSOR) x $B$ (RESOURCES) x $C$ (FAMILY PERCEPTION OF STRESSOR)

= $X$ (CRISIS)

ABC=X

- Reuben Hill professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota.
- Families in Crisis, 1949.
Findings- 135 family Subjects

- Missing The Husband As A Companion, Father, Handy Man, and Protector-112
- Money Troubles--29
- Child Discipline-69
- Prolonged Maladjustment of Children-21
- Living With In-Laws-26
- Housing Inadequacies-7
- Managing the Home-43
- Illness of a Mother-15
- Illness of a Child-7
- Having A Baby-12
- Wife Working-11 of 31
- Husband reported Missing-1
- Lack of A social Life-1
- No Hardships-11
Today the Military Family

- Nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of all military personnel are parents
- 2 million children have a military parent
- The Family is part of the Mission
  - Marek et al (2011)
Military Family

• About 7.8 percent of all military members are single parents –
  – 10.7 percent for the Army,
  – 7.6 percent for the Navy,
  – 5.8 percent for the Air Force,
  – and 4.7 percent for the Marine Corps.
– Additionally, there are about 84,000 military-married-to-military couples. About 36,000 of those couples have children.

• What About the Children?
• Military Family Care Plans
  By Rod Powers, About.com Guide
Some Findings

• Marek et al(2011) What We know about the reintegration of deployed service members into their families and communities

• Deployment stains family functioning, structure and cohesion. Lengthy and repeated.

• Some studies suggest relationship stress and family functioning may peak 4-9 mos after the service members return
This Time

• It is Different.
  – Multiple Deployments
  – Extensions
  – Many Older Marriages
  – Many Women
  – Many Single Parents

• And too be effective......
Conflict Signature Wounds

- In a recent Rand Study examining problems facing the broad OEF/OIF service members and veterans referred to as the Invisible Wounds study, using a health services perspective, 20% have symptoms of PTSD or depression, about half got services. Other than VA services other clinical and social service delivery systems are critical. The majority have other health insurance
Chandra 7 colleagues (2011) found the following challenges expressed by spouses

- Fitting the deployed spouse back into the home routine
- Rebalancing child responsibilities
- Getting to know the deployed spouse again
- Worrying about the next deployment.
- Dealing with the deployed spouses' changes
- Deciding who to turn to for advice
The Family

- Despite Military-Related Stress, Resilience is the Norm among Military Families.

- While children (and to some degree parents) in military families experience a decline in well-being, particularly during parental absence due to deployment, most families find ways to cope.

- National Guard and reserve Families Often Face Distinctive Issues: While deployments are stressful for all families, research suggests that the event can be even more stressful for families who are part of the approximately 1.1 million service members who are part of the National Guard or reserve Units. They often live far removed from the built-in resources and support systems that are provided to active component families who live on, or near, a military base. Their children may be the only ones in their school with deployed parents. Local services may be unfamiliar with military culture.

Rand Corporation Commentary
Military Families: What we Know and What We Don’t Know
By Sarah O. Meadows
The Children

- The Rand Corporation study shows that children of currently deployed parents have higher rates of anxiety symptoms than a comparable national sample of same-aged children (by roughly 4%). Other studies have reported similar results for behavior problems (e.g., aggressiveness) and internalizing symptoms (e.g., sadness). An important predictor of how well a child will cope with a parent’s deployment is the health and well-being of the child’s nondeployed parent.
Children

- Children’s reactions to deployment-related parental absences vary by age. Young children are likely to exhibit externalizing behavior such as anger & attention difficulties. School age children demonstrate more internalizing behaviors such as increased levels of fear & anxiety, sensitivity to media coverage and reduced school performance. Adolescents often take household responsibilities and become more independent, they are also more likely to experience declining academic performance, depression and behavioral problems.

- Department of Defense October 2010
Deployment mitigating factors

- Frequency of contact during deployment
- Overall adjustment to deployment
- Use of military support programs
- Age of children
- Negative communication with the service member, negative beliefs in the value of the mission and spouse’s exposure to combat, significant predictors of wives stress during post deployment.
Pincus et al 2011

- **Suggested Adaptations serving as protective factors**
  - Being able to have role flexibility with the ability to perform multiple roles
  - Using active coping skills
  - Having all family members maintain realistic expectations during the reintegration process
  - Developing a shared family narrative and collaborative meaning making
  - open
VA SERVICES

- Primary Care and Brief Mental Health Treatment in Primary Care.
- Brief Inpatient Treatment
- Pain Management
- Veterans Justice Outreach services
- General Mental Health Services, Evidence Based Treatments
- Case Management
- Addictions Services, Outpatient & Residential.
- PTSD Treatment, Outpatient & Residential
VA Services

• *Family Caregiver Assistance- EXPANSION Of Mission*
• *Family Therapy- EXPANSION of Mission*
• Homeless Services & Case Management
• Vocational Services
• Domiciliary Referral
• Compensation & Pension Benefits
• Women’s Primary Health Care Program
• Prosthetics
VA Services

• Community Mental Health Intensive Case Management Services
• Suicide Prevention.
• Home Based Primary Care
• Linkage With Veteran Support Organizations
• Opportunities for Civilian Exposure to Military Culture and collaboration in Health care.
• And More, More, More.
Will You/ Have You

• Worked with Post deployment Issues?
• They can last A Life Time
Scars of loss

• My Son My Son
• **Summary Statistics**
  
  Unaccounted for from Past Conflicts
  
  • WWII- 73,681
  • Korean War- 7,946
  • Cold War - 126
  • Vietnam War- 1,655
  • Iraq & Other Conflicts- 6
  • Total MIA 83,414
Above All

• Honor the Sacrifice
• Freedom isn't Free
Family Re-unification

• What we see
• Most will be Fine.
Legacy of Lincoln

• With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.
His Legacy Continues

- Legislation for the creation of the National Asylum of Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was introduced to Congress on February 28, 1865. Both Houses of Congress quickly passed the legislation, and President Lincoln signed the bill in March 1865, just a month before his assassination. In 1873, the name was changed from National Asylum of Disabled Volunteer Soldiers to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, to remove any stigma attached to the term "asylum."

- As described by the Board of Managers, the Home is neither an [sic] hospital nor alms-house, but a home, where subsistence, quarters, clothing, religious instruction, employment when possible, and amusements are provided by the Government of the United States. The provision is not a charity, but is a reward to the brave and deserving. The Board of Managers envisioned a system of branches located across the country. The Federal Government built three branches within the first year, and the system grew to 11 National Home branches by 1929.

  - History of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers NPS.GOV WEB SITE
Call to Action
Designer Technologies

• Expand the Community.
• To All Providers
• Educational Institutions AND
• Include the Family.
"What after all has maintained the human race on this old globe despite all the calamities of nature and all the tragic failings of mankind, if not faith in new possibilities and courage to advocate them."

Jane Addams
References


- Returning home: What we know about the reintegration of deployed service members into their families and communities. By Lydia I. Marek LMFT, et. Al.

- Family and Community Research Laboratory, Virginia Tech, National Council of Family relations Web Site. www. NCFR.org


- Families Under Stress, Reuben Hill, Greenwood Press, 1949
