
Youth Reunion



There are many emotions and expectations associated with a deployment. Think about the emotions you feel when you hear about the possibility of your parent deploying. If your parent has already deployed, you can probably think about how those emotions and expectations changed or increased as the deployment progressed.

The **deployment cycle** consists of:

Pre-deployment, Deployment, Re-deployment, and Post-deployment/Reunion.

Pre-deployment is time when your parent finds out about an upcoming deployment to the actual day they leave.

The deployment is the time your parent is gone.

Redeployment is the time your parent and you are preparing for their return home.

Post-deployment and Reunion is the time after your parent returns

Reunion Norms

When preparing for a reunion, it is normal to feel a lot of different feelings like:

- Burst of energy and more activity.
- Not wanting to eat or eating a lot.
- Can't sleep or sleep too much.
- Can't think straight or thinking of too many things at once.
- Scared that you are not going to remember or recognize your mom or dad either physically or mentally or both.
- Not wanting mom or dad in your new "everyday life."
- Scared that your new routines and responsibilities are going to change again.
- Going back to the "way things were."
- Nervous about mom or dad not seeing how you have grown both physically and mentally.
- Reunion Expectations
- Having expectations allows you to have control over the unknown, which can be very scary. Being flexible and open to chance or change is important.

Here are some ways to be flexible:

- Do not expect everything to be perfect at reunion.
- Do not expect the absent parent to “jump” right back into things.
- Allow adjustment time for you and your parent(s) to reestablish the “ground rules.”
- Be open, honest, and always COMMUNICATE with each other.
- Communication will allow for problems and conflicts to get resolved.
- Be patient! Your parent is trying to fit back in to your life.
- How you can prepare for the reunion

Some helpful suggestions for handling reunion issues are:

- Get involved in planning the reunion.
- Give yourself space and time to adjust.
- Ask for individual time with the returning parent.
- Explain to your parent what you went through to include challenges and accomplishments.
- Establish open and honest communication between you and your parent.
- Take time to settle into the new routine of your family.
- Accept that you will have problems and set-backs.
- Get help when you need it.
- COMMUNICATE. COMMUNICATE. COMMUNICATE.

Peer Talk

Talking with peers who are also going through a reunion can be helpful. It’s comforting to know you are not the only one dealing with the anxiety and changes a deployment and its reunion brings. Peers can help you start thinking about how you are going to handle the reunion with your parent.



Listed are some Questions to ask to start a conversation with your peers, trusted adult or your returning parent about your experiences during the deployment.

- What was/is your biggest challenge at home?
- What was/is your biggest challenge at school?
- What was/is your biggest accomplishment?
- What kinds of significant changes have you gone through because of the deployment and/or reunion?