

Reintegration | Homecoming Predictions

Every deployed person and their household members will experience a feeling of anticipation as the end of the deployment approaches. This may take the form of eagerness for reunion or a dread of a return to a problematic situation or a mixture of both.

Few get much sleep the night before homecoming. Children in the home may act out more than usual.

These feelings may result in you and your family members being key-up and exhausted when the family is finally reunited.

It may take a while for the military member to get adjusted to the local time zone, home cooking, lack of continual aircraft noise, etc. Some initial difficulty sleeping through the night is typical.

After the end of a deployment, it is not unusual to experience a "homecoming let down/post-deployment plummet." Reality is seldom equal to how we have fantasized life after reunion would be. It makes sense to keep expectations reasonable and to be flexible.

The military member may want to stay at home and rest while the spouse may be eager to go out socializing as a couple or get the accumulated "honey do" tasks done. Skillful compromise and reasonable give and take will be needed if arguments and hurt feelings are to be avoided.

It is wise for the military member to express appreciation for the spouse's efforts in running the household single-handedly. It is unwise to criticize the spouse's efforts or the decisions they had to make on their own during the deployment.

The gifts the deployed member brings home or the special welcome efforts the family and friends make for the deployed member may not result in the expected reaction. Again, it makes sense to keep expectations reasonable and to stay flexible.

Children's reactions at homecoming may not be what the parents expected or hoped for. Very young children may not remember the deployed person and may be shy. Older children may be resentful of the time the deployed person was away from the family. Children may need time to get reacquainted. Give it time.

If there were unresolved marital or family problems before the deployment, they will not have gotten better during the deployment. Realize it will take time and effort to resolve such problems. Be patient and keep expectations reasonable.

If promises were made, through letters or phone calls, during the deployment, the person to whom the promises were made will probably remember and expect the promises to be kept.

The deployed person may feel surprised or hurt the partner did so well on their own during the deployment. Or may feel a little jealous at how closely the children bonded with the "stay behind" parent. Such feelings are normal, but it is wisest to show the other person love and appreciation for all their efforts during the deployment.