

What to Expect When a Loved One is Deployed

While everyone's experience with deployment is unique, there are some common challenges and emotional responses that many people experience. **Here are some typical things to expect:**

- **Emotional Rollercoaster:** You may feel a wide range of emotions, from pride and patriotism to worry, anxiety, loneliness, and sadness. These emotions can fluctuate daily or even hourly.
- **Communication Challenges:** Communication may be limited or sporadic. Expect delays in responses due to time zone differences, mission priorities, and technological limitations.
- **Changes in Routine:** The absence of your loved one can disrupt daily routines and responsibilities. You may find yourself stepping into new roles or adjusting to a different family dynamic.
- **Worry and Stress:** It's natural to worry about your loved one's safety and well-being during deployment.
- **Pride and Resilience:** Despite the challenges, many families discover strength and resilience during deployments. You may uncover inner strengths and abilities you didn't realize you had.
- **Uncertainty:** Deployments often bring uncertainty about the future, including when your loved one will return and what life will look like afterward.
- **Practical Considerations:** Managing household responsibilities may fall entirely on your shoulders, adding to the stress of the situation.
- **Homecoming Preparation:** The anticipation of your loved one's return can bring mixed emotions.

Practical tips for navigating the challenges of having a loved one deployed:

- **Stay Connected:** Make the most of communication channels to maintain contact with your loved one.
- **Create Routines:** Establishing routines can offer stability and help maintain a sense of normalcy.
- **Seek Support:** Reach out to friends, family, and support groups. Connecting with others who are experiencing similar situations can be comforting and provide valuable insights.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** Prioritize your well-being by eating healthily, exercising regularly, and getting enough rest. Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, to manage stress.
- **Set Goals:** Setting goals can help maintain focus and provide motivation throughout the deployment.
- **Stay Informed:** Knowing what to expect can reduce anxiety and help you better prepare for any changes.
- **Prepare for Homecoming:** Start planning for your loved one's return well in advance to ease the transition..
- **Stay Positive:** Focus on the positives and celebrate milestones, both big and small, to keep morale high.

The EAP is here to support USPS military members, veterans, and your families in addressing challenges accompanying deployment. Reach out for assistance and resources.