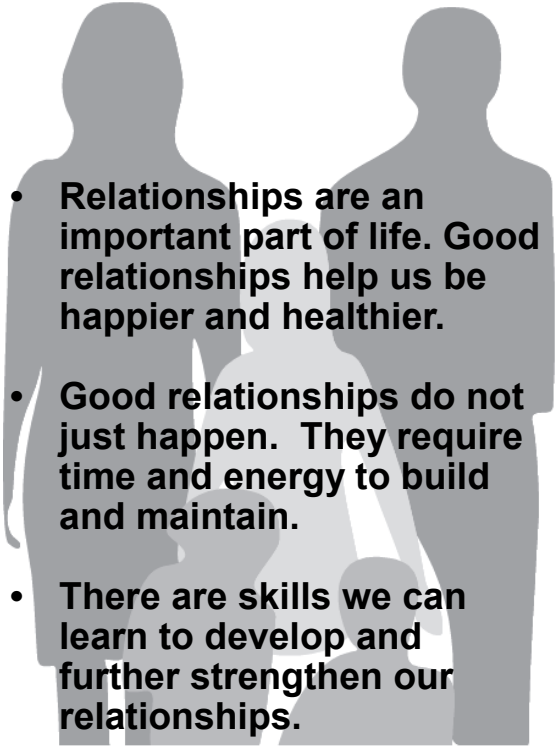


**Quick Guide - Patient/Family  
Readjustment**

Military personnel are deeply affected by their war experiences. Adjustment difficulties are common. These are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. This series of brochures deal with issues that are common following deployment. Remember - identifying your problem areas and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It means you are actively coping with your challenges.

# Building Relationships



- **Relationships are an important part of life. Good relationships help us be happier and healthier.**
- **Good relationships do not just happen. They require time and energy to build and maintain.**
- **There are skills we can learn to develop and further strengthen our relationships.**

## What Makes A Healthy Relationship?

- According to research, one of the most important things in a relationship is friendship
- People need to be able to have fun in a relationship
- A willingness to talk about things, to share openly with each other, to have a safe way to share positive and negative feelings with each other
- You and your partner do not need to agree on everything - What is important is that the good times together outweigh the bad times
- Showing interest in your partner's feelings, concerns, and their dreams for the future
- Taking responsibility for your own actions and feelings and encouraging your partner to do the same
- Understanding each other's expectations - Where do each of you want the relationship to go?
- Knowing and understanding yourself and what you can bring to the relationship - What can I offer? What does your partner bring to the relationship?
- Knowing that you are not responsible for your partner's happiness - You are only responsible for your own happiness!

# Communication

**Useful communication is:**

- Supportive
- Resourceful
- Interested
- Loving
- Enthusiastic
- Confident

**Useless communication is:**

- Impatient
- Disrespectful
- Bored
- Negative
- Sarcastic
- Rude

## Listening Skills

Real listening is an active process that has three basic steps:

### 1 Hearing

Hearing just means listening well enough to catch what the speaker is saying. For example, say you were listening to a report on zebras, and the speaker mentioned that no two are alike. If you can repeat the fact, then you have heard what has been said.

### 2 Understanding

The next part of listening happens when you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way. Let's go back to that report on zebras. When you hear that no two are alike, you might think, "Maybe this means that the pattern of stripes is different for each zebra."

### 3 Judging

After you are sure you understand what the speaker has said, think about whether it makes sense. Do you believe what you have heard? You might think, "How could the stripes be different for every zebra? But then again, the fingerprints are different for every person. I think this seems believable."

# Family Relationships

Take time to communicate and reconnect with your family and friends. Plan family time to help bring everyone back together. Make time for just you and your partner.

- **Expect an adjustment period -**  
There will be challenges, no matter how happy you are to be home and how happy your family is to have you back.
- **Expect to have some doubts & worries -**  
This is a normal part of getting back together.
- **Expect some things to be different -**  
Recognize that you, your spouse, and your children have all changed to some degree. Everything from tastes and interests to the way the household is run may have changed. Make small, gradual adjustments and ease back into your role in the family. This process can take several weeks or months, depending on how long you and your family were apart and each family member's ability to cope with change and stress.
- **Be realistic in what you expect -**  
Forget your fantasies. Let things happen naturally.
- **Be prepared for the reappearance of old problems -**  
Separation does not erase problems, and problems do not solve themselves. Taking a break from the issue and stepping back may have helped you and your spouse to gain a new perspective, but the issue itself may still exist. There may also be new issues to address.
- **Be prepared for challenges as you reestablish physical intimacy -**  
Take your time getting reacquainted. Do not try to rush sex to make up for lost time!
- **Share your feelings & accept others' feelings -**  
Feelings are never right or wrong; they just are. Expect that the deployment has been difficult for everyone, and be prepared for all sorts of feelings - relief, hope, anxiety, and even resentment.

Plan some special time for you and each of your children to get reacquainted.  
Focus on successes and limit criticism.

- **Be patient -**  
Expect it to take some time for your child, especially if young, to get used to having another parent at home. Let your child be the first to renew the bond. Resume old rules and routines slowly.
- **Be available -**  
Be there for your child both physically and emotionally. Encourage your child to tell you everything that happened while you were gone, but in their own time.