

## JUST THE FACTS:

### Talking about Deployment

**It's a good idea to talk about difficult things when:**

- You feel ready to share. Don't be pressured into talking about events that make you too uncomfortable.
- You're well-rested.
- You're with someone you know and trust.
- You know you'll have enough time to share your thoughts and feelings and get feedback.
- You're not already feeling upset.
- You have some privacy.

**Here are some tips for starting a conversation with someone close to you.**

#### **1. Set up a structure:**

- Pick people who understand and support you.
- Talk with people you've turned to in the past.
- Plan the conversation in advance so that the person you will talk with can give you their full attention.
- Choose a time and place where you will have privacy and few distractions.
- Get a babysitter for your kids. This will free you up so you can say what you need to, without your children hearing something that might confuse or scare them.
- Tell others what you need and how they can help.
  - For example, you may want to ask them to listen, and not interrupt or judge you.
- Some people worry that their "personal business" will get passed around. Let the person you're confiding in know up front that you don't want the conversation to be shared with others.

#### **2. Take your time:**

- Are you comfortable and trusting of the person you're talking to?
- Remember that *trust* is built over time.
- Test the waters. Say a little and see how they do with it. This also gives the other person time to think about what you said and how to respond.
- Pace yourself. You don't have to talk about your entire deployment in one sitting.
- Go slow. Make sure that you are being understood.
- Begin by talking about how you prepared for the deployment and move on through time.
- Share the funny, good, and interesting events you had along with the difficult times.
- If the response you get is upsetting, be sure to mention this and try to better understand the response that you're getting.
- It can be helpful to get more than one opinion about what you're going through.

# after deployment

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## 3. Follow up:

When you are finished sharing, you can:

- Thank them for listening and for being there for you.
- Schedule a cool-down time after talking.
- Make a weekly or monthly plan to continue the conversation. .

Seek Out Support:

- Schedule time to meet with a professional such as a psychologist, or a counselor, or a member of the clergy, or your doctor or nurse.
- Join a support group in your area in which you can relate to people who have had similar experiences.
- ***If you are thinking about harming yourself or harming someone else, it's important that you seek help immediately by calling 911 or visiting the closest emergency room.***
- If you are active duty, you can call MilitaryOneSource. MilitaryOneSource is an organization that provides services including brief counseling to active duty military personnel, including Reservists and the National Guard (1-800-342-9647; [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)). Services are also available through the VA at [www.seamlesstransition.va.gov](http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov), or through a Vet Center at [www.va.gov/rcs/index.htm](http://www.va.gov/rcs/index.htm).