



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

PREPARING FOR A REUNION AS A COUPLE

As you get ready to reconnect after an absence, whether a deployment, Imposed Restriction, or training, there are steps you can take to help prepare for and ease the transition. Based on experiences from military couples, here are some tips to support you whether you are the one who was away, or the partner that stayed at home:

PREPARE TO RECONNECT:

Reunions are exciting but can also bring stress. They can be particularly challenging for children. Throughout the absence, discuss the reunion together and consider what both of you can do to make it a smoother transition. While you should be excited about the reunion, try not to get too attached to a specific date as plans may need to shift.

THINGS MAY HAVE CHANGED:

Take some time to acknowledge the roles that you both had during the absence. Understand that roles at home may have shifted, and that is okay. You may want your roles to return to how they were, or be open to changing them. Be open to renegotiating household roles and responsibilities. For the CAF Member, be mindful that the partner who stayed behind may have experienced caregiver burnout.

IT MAY BE AWKWARD AT FIRST:

There may be some difficulty re-establishing intimacy, try to be patient with one another and not put too much pressure on yourselves. You may both be happy to reconnect, yet also feel a loss of freedom and independence.

LOOK FORWARD TO THE REUNION:

Discuss the reunion together and try to plan for a post-absence treat. It could be a weekend getaway as a family, an evening out as a couple, or even a special meal at home. This can be something to look forward to and talk about with family.

DEBRIEF TOGETHER:

Share your individual experiences without comparing who had it worse. Acknowledge the efforts on both ends for communicating during the absence. Talk about the successes and difficulties of the separation, so that you can reflect on any lessons learned for next time and share those lessons with other families.

