

Trauma Across the Deployment Cycle: Support and Interventions for the Whole Family

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A common stressor for military families is the experience of separation due to deployments. The deployment cycle presents unique challenges and stressors at different points for all family members, especially for parents and young children. For very young children, the stress of separation can be potentially traumatic if the child perceives the parent to be in danger, as permanently absent, or if an at-home parent is unable to care for the child on his or her own. Additionally, intergenerational trauma can emerge if a deployed parent returns home with significant mental health problems, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In this workshop, participants will learn about working with military families experiencing stress or trauma related to deployment experiences. Presenters will walk participants through the deployment cycle with examples of common reactions and stressful experiences at each stage. Presenters will discuss the impact on each family member, focusing on young children and the development of intergenerational trauma. Participants will learn best practices for preventing and treating adverse outcomes in families, especially young children. Culturally appropriate treatment adaptations for military families will be provided. Presenters advocate for a relational, family systems, and culturally responsive approach to the treatment of trauma and PTSD.