



HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



GUARDING OUR FAMILIES

CHALLENGE your Service members and yourself to use at least one of the recommended resources to strengthen family bonds.

FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- Nearly half of all National Guard members have a spouse, children, or other dependents.
 - 30% are married with children¹
 - 11% are married with no children¹
 - 9% are single with children¹
- These family members also serve the military mission in the sacrifices they make in support of their Soldier or Airman.

FAMILIES FACE DEPLOYMENT STRESS

Being always ready, always there can take a toll on families. Understanding the phases of the Emotional Deployment Cycle² can help you help your partner feel more connected, empowered, and supported during times of separation.

Pre-Deployment:

- Angry about being left alone
- Feeling detached from their partner

Sustainment:

- Anxiety about missing communication with spouse
- Sense of accomplishment for adjusting

Deployment:

- Loneliness or sadness
- Increased sense of independence

Post-Deployment:

- Honeymoon period
- Loss of independence



In today's operational environment, we ask a lot of our Guard members and their families. In every formation, behind every uniform, the strength of our force is inseparable from the strength of our families.

Whether you are preparing for deployment or supporting your community during a crisis, your readiness begins at home. When our loved ones feel supported, informed, and connected we show up stronger. Emotional resilience, mental focus, and physical preparedness are directly linked to the connectedness of our families. Our greatest strength is not just in our ranks, but in the people who believe in us.

Stronger Together. Stronger Tomorrow.

Steven S. Nordhaus John T. Raines III

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| Steven S. Nordhaus General, USAF Chief, NGB | John T. Raines, III SEA, USA NGB |
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SUPPORT FOR SPOUSES



Spouses serve too. Use these resources to get valuable information, access to programs, and build social networks to ease stress and anxiety throughout the deployment cycle.²

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) promotes the well-being of Service members and their families by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

State/Territory Support Program Staff provide local assistance to connect families to NG-sponsored programs.

Installation Military and Family Support Centers (MFSCs) deliver a wide range of services to enhance readiness and well-being.

Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) trained counselors offer free, confidential counseling to Service members and their families.

CONTACT US

For more information on healthy family relationships or other topics email: nq.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil

FOSTERING FAMILY RESILIENCE

What does it mean?

- Trademarks of a resilient family are connection, communication, and trust.

Why does it matter?

- Resilient families help reduce distractions and increase focus during deployment, which enhances Service member readiness.

What can you do?

- Build a family deployment plan. Use customizable check lists in the “Resources to Recommend” section to prepare you and your family before, during, and after deployment.
- Start a group chat to connect with other military families who understand your feelings of worry and stress over deployment.
- When deployed, schedule virtual date nights with your spouse to stay emotionally connected. Watch a movie, play an online game, or eat dinner together.
- Keep conversations with your partner positive. Be supportive, empathetic, and celebrate family milestones and achievements.
- Let your children know how you will keep in touch with them. Reassure them that even though there may be times you can't be in contact you will send a letter, an email, or call them as often as you can.
- Create and reinforce a unit command climate that recognizes the importance of family engagement to mission readiness



CARE FOR KIDS

A parent's deployment can negatively impact a child's mental and emotional well-being due to uncertainty and routine changes. Follow these tips to help your child cope with your absence.³

• Before:

- Stay positive and use age appropriate words to explain your deployment
- Spend one-on-one time together and let them ask questions

• During:

- Stay in contact as much as possible
- Maintain household rules and routines

• After:

- Ease back into routines and refrain from making big changes
- Allow your child some alone time to readjust, if needed



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Participate in the 2025 DEOCS

Act now! **The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) fielding window closes on November 30.** All National Guard members are strongly encouraged to participate!



RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Find a Family Assistance Center in your State for NG Family Programs' support:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/tools/national-guard-family-program-lookup/>

Military and Family Life Counselors can help adults and children navigate issues related to deployment, stress, relationships, and more.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/tools/mflc-locator/>



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) provides local events for NG members and their families to get information on healthcare, education, employment, and financial and legal benefits.

<https://www.yellowribbon.mil/>



Military One Source provides customizable checklists to help you organize and prepare you and family for your upcoming deployment cycle. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/tools/military-deployment-checklists/>

Listen to the Military OneSource podcast on how to keep relationships strong during deployment.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/podcasts/military-onesource/relationships-during-deployment/>

Military OneSource's “Sesame Street for Military Families” offers videos and resources to help children navigate military life and combat feelings of loneliness when a parent is deployed.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/sesame-street-resources/>



SPOTLIGHT: NATIONAL GUARD CONNECTEDNESS AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION SYSTEM (NG CARES)

- NG CARES is an integrated and comprehensive prevention and leadership development system which builds unit cohesion and promotes well-being in support of Service Members and their families throughout their careers.
- Multiple courses, workshops, and processes are designed to strengthen interpersonal relationships, build resilience, and increase connectedness to prepare Service members and their families throughout the deployment life cycle.
- For more information, email NG_CARES@army.mil

REFERENCES:

1. Profile of the Military Community. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2023-demographics-report.pdf>
2. NG Family and Friends. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/national-guard-reserves/joining-national-guard-reserves/national-guard-families-and-friends/>
3. Supporting Your Children Through the Deployment Cycle. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/new-parents/supporting-your-military-children-through-the-deployment-cycle/>