

The Impact of Separation and Deployment on Children and Young People

Speaking up for Naval Service families

Today's session

- How much separation?
- Patterns of separation
- Ages, stages and the cycle of deployment
- Strengths
- Mitigating factors
- Putting it into practice



How much separation?

Service	Extant Individual Harmony	Extant Individual Harmony with common base figure	Individual Harmony %
Naval Service	660 days/36 months	660 days/36 months	50 %
Army	415 days/30 months	498 days/36 months	45 %
RAF	280 days/24 months	420 days /36 months	32 %

Patterns of separation & deployment

- Operational deployments - 9 months
- Watch rotations – fishery protection, minehunters, survey ships
- Submarines
- Short notice operations – the ‘pier head jump’
- Weekending
- Training courses



Babies and young children

- Key stage of development for attachment
- Need for consistency of care giving
- Little concept of time
- Developing ability to comfort self but this is variable
- Generalised feeling of unease without being able to make the link
- Looking for 'lost' person and sense of confusion
- May not remember the absent parent clearly
- Like routine - changes may be upsetting
- Short attention span
- Fears of noises – thunder, trains, flushing toilets



Primary school age children

- Dip in & out of strong feelings
- Have a sense of the past & future
- Younger children – magical thinking, wishing
- Fears – darkness, being hurt, parent not being there
- Ego-centric
- May have ideas about cause & effect – did the person leave because they did something?
- Developing better understanding of what is happening
- Memories of the absent parent are more permanent – can understand they are elsewhere

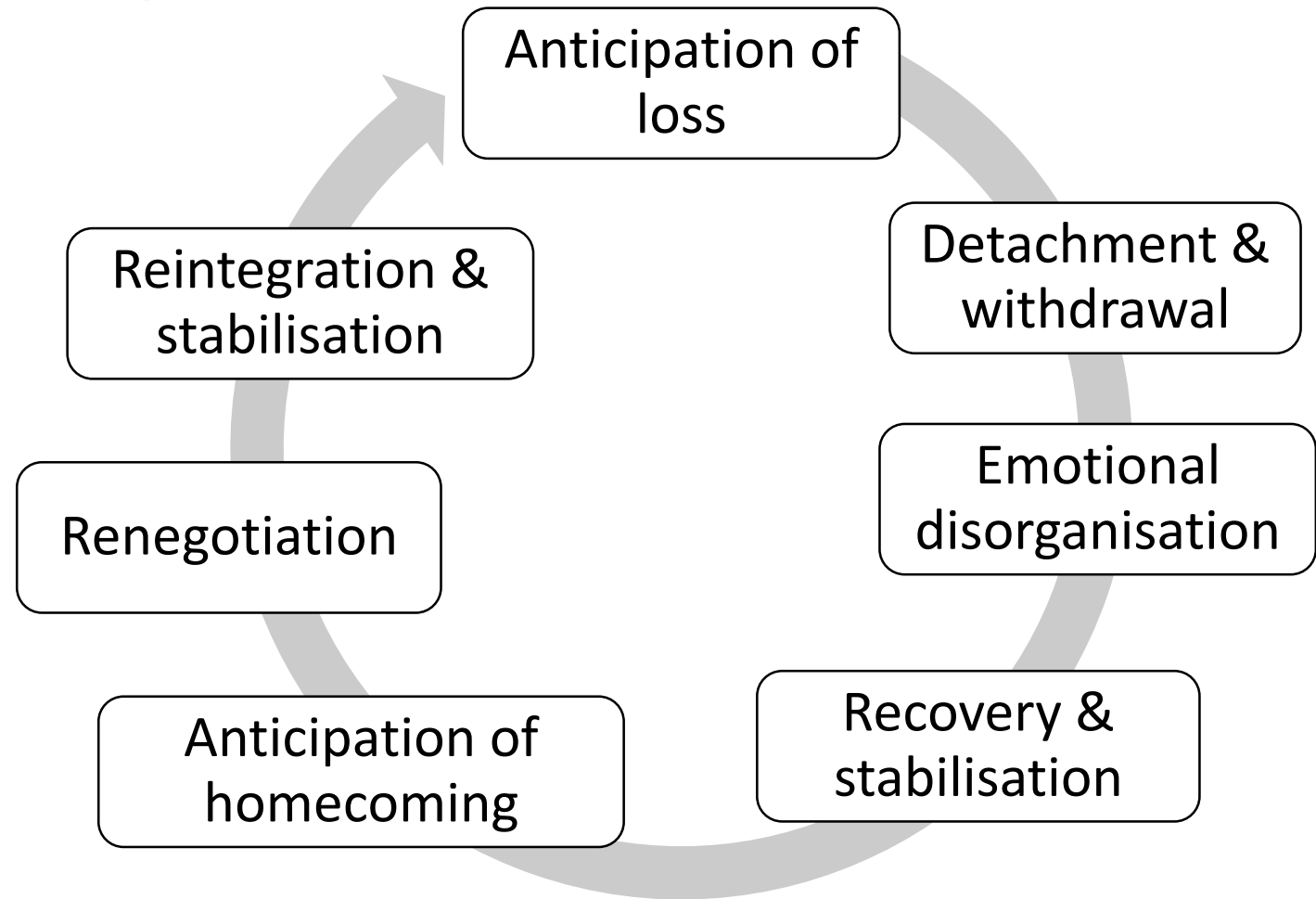


Adolescents

- Exploring and asserting personal identity
- Peer relationships take precedence
- Testing boundaries & increased independence
- Developing empathy but still inclined to be ego-centric
- Developing political views and own values
- Developing and exploring sexual identity
- Highly connected via the internet and social media



Emotional cycle of deployment (Vestal Logan, 1987)



Experiences & perceptions change with development

- Children experience separation and deployment differently as they develop and their understanding changes
- Separation and deployment do not get easier for every child
- Some children learn to adapt and take it in their stride
- Families do not 'know what they are getting into'
- The impact of deployment and separation can be cumulative
- Young people acquire new responsibilities with age
- Deployments differ, and so do other patterns of separation



Strengths arising from separation

- Fostering maturity
- Emotional growth & insight
- Encouraging independence
- Encouraging flexibility & adapting to change
- Building skills for adjusting to separations & losses faced later in life
- Strengthening family bonds
- Awareness & understanding of civic duty



Mitigating factors

A consistent finding in the reviewed research is that children's response to the absence of the deployed parent is mediated by the relationship and capability of the at-home parent/carer in both younger and older children.



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Putting it into practice

- How does your setting currently address supporting children and young people with deployment and separation?
- What do you do particularly well?
- Is there anything you think you could do differently or better?
- Is there one small thing you could do right away?



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