

# Leave Well



**IS IT POSSIBLE AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK  
LIKE?**



# Communication



## Who do we talk to?

- We have to talk to our spouses!
- If you have children, you should speak to them at an age-appropriate level.
  - For a baby: make recordings on your phone or a computer so the baby recognizes the deployed parent's face and voice.
  - For an elementary-aged child: be honest, speak in terms they will understand. (Mommy/Daddy will be home after Christmas, or your Birthday, or 45 Fridays)
  - For teenager: open and honest communication since they have the ability to reason and understand; review responsibilities in deployed parent's (you know your kids, make sure they know the things they need to know)
- Our parents, and our in-laws. These are the people that have invested into your relationship and your personal life.
  - Remember what you share can be different
  - The idea is to keep them engaged as a support for your family.
- Grandparents
  - In every relationship, you want to leave nothing unsaid. This relationship particularly.

# Communication



## - What do we talk about?

- We have to talk before we leave about what we will be doing while we're apart. This is a two-way street.
  - The service member's plans while abroad.
  - The spouse's plans while staying home.
- If you have (and you should) goals for this time period, you should share and set goals with your spouse. (Health, Financial, School, etc.,...)
- If you have unresolved conflict, resolve it. If you need help see the Chaplain, MFLAC or FRO as soon as possible.
- Children events
  - Is your kid having a birthday, graduating, are they going to camp?
    - Talk about and be creative about how you can be engaged from afar.
- Boundaries
  - For your children, for your relationship, for your in-laws, financial

# Communication- What do we talk about?



- Talk about communication while you are gone; set the expectation.
  - We have to talk about the frequency of how often we will communicate.
    - If you are expecting daily communication and for two days don't receive any we can cause unnecessary worry.
  - Talk about what you want to communicate about while your gone
    - Personal Goals, the budget, the kids, events, family, spiritual goals...
  - Talk about what the plan is for family emergencies if...
    - Something happens to the kids (where do you go? who do you inform?),
    - something happens to your spouse (who knows what to do? A parent a trusted friend?)
    - A financial Issue (Does your spouse know they can use the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society?)
    - How to send a Red Cross message to the service member

# Communication- What do we talk about?



- What constitutes an emergency that needs to involve the command?
  - Does your family know under what occasions you will be allowed to return home from this deployment?
  - Immediate family members (who are they?).
- Talk about what you should not talk about while you are gone.
  - Emergencies that the service member cannot do anything about (Do not call your spouse if you get second degree burns on your arms, don't call your spouse while you are stranded on the side of the road with a flat tire, etc.,...)
  - Old issues that cannot be resolved during your time apart.

# Frequency of Communication



- **When do we talk?**
  - Each couple is different and we are in different seasons of life.
  - Talk until you both feel comfortable knowing what is going on.
  - Talk to your kids as is appropriate for their age group. (This usually means giving them an opportunity to talk as they need to. This can be difficult, so be patient. It's important you hear them.)
- **How often do we talk about this stuff?**
  - As often as necessary, there is a tendency to ignore it and pretend it's not coming up next month.
  - Not too much! Do not dwell so much on the deployment that you don't make memories today.

# Random Info to Discuss



- Your pets
  - Do you have a pet sitter or a boarding house?
- Writing notes and leaving them around the house
- Does your spouse have the number to the MFLAC, Chaplain, FRO? And do they know what services each person can help with?
- Do you know when VIP's Birthdays, and anniversaries are? Do you have them written out?
  - You can schedule flowers to be delivered before you leave.
- You can put your cell phone plan on-hold with your deployment orders.
- Check your lease date (Can you renew your lease early to make it easier on your spouse? Do you want to move out of your lease before/during deployment?)
- Do you know where to take the car if it breaks? Who can you call if you have a flat tire?
- Do you have an updated Will?
- Do you have a Power of Attorney?
- We will be deployed to some awesome places, and there can be envy and jealousy. Talk about it!
  - “You get to go on a nine moth vacation while I’m stuck with the kids!”
  - “You get to stay with the kids while I have to go where the Marine Corps tells me!”