Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist you in your preparation for deployment. It will provide you with information that will allow you to take full advantage of this opportunity in your military career. There are many challenges that you will face as you prepare, deploy and return to Canada. The intent of this guide is to promote positive well-being to enhance operational effectiveness.

The majority of Canadian Forces members generally find that they adapt well to the operational environment and related challenges. How do they do this? It requires resilience — the ability to thrive in the face of adversity. Resilience basically means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences and embracing challenge as an opportunity to learn. It is well known that resilience is ordinary not extraordinary. It is not a personality trait that people either have or don’t have; rather, it involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. This guide focuses on helping you develop and maintain a personal strategy for enhancing resilience.

Sections have been prepared to promote awareness of key areas of potential concern or challenge that have been highlighted from the experiences of those who have been deployed on operations. To help you gain quick access to this useful information, a Table of Contents is provided on the next page.

Positive well-being enhances operational effectiveness.

Reproduced with permission from 1st Psychology Unit, Australian Defence Force.
EMOTIONAL RESPONSES ACROSS THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLE
Stage 1: Anticipation of Loss 3
Stage 2: Detachment and Withdrawal 5
Stage 3: Emotional Disorganization 8
Stage 4: Recovery and Stabilization 13
Stage 5: Anticipation of Homecoming 15

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
For the Single Member 17
For the Single Parent 19
For the Deploying Member With Adult Dependents (Elderly Parent Care) 21
Preparing Children for the Deployment 23
For the Partner 28

ADAPTING TO THE NEW CULTURE 31
Culture Shock 31
Stages of Culture Shock 32
Enhancing Your Adaptation 33

ENHANCING PERFORMANCE THROUGH STRESS MANAGEMENT 35
Operational Stressors 36
Signs of Stress 37
Managing Stress on Deployment 38
Seeking Assistance 41
Helping Your Friends and Colleagues Deal With Stress 43
Relaxation Techniques 44

FATIGUE 47
Why Is Fatigue a Problem? 47
How Fatigue Affects Performance 48
Fatigue — Prevention and Management 48
Shift Work 51
Jet Lag 53

CONFLICT RESOLUTION 55
Living and Working Together 55
When Conflict Occurs 56
The Conflict Resolution Process 56
Dealing With Difficult People 57
Anger Management 58

MISSION LEAVE 61
Deciding What to Do for Mission Leave . . . 61
Common Issues 62
Useful Tips 63
Returning From Mission Leave 64
Across the deployment cycle, different stages have been identified that can result in a variety of responses in preparing for the deployment, being away from home, and returning home. Understanding the different responses that may arise across the deployment cycle can assist you, your family and friends to better understand behaviour changes and emotional reactions.

The model below illustrates the various stages that you, your family and friends may progress through across the deployment. As individuals, we all react and respond differently so this model should not be considered a definitive template. Rather, it is designed to provide a general understanding. Not everyone will progress systematically through the stages, and time frames are very individual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLE</th>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-deployment</td>
<td>1. Anticipation of loss through departure</td>
<td>1–6 weeks before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Detachment and withdrawal</td>
<td>Last week before departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During deployment</td>
<td>3. Emotional disorganization</td>
<td>First 6 weeks of deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Recovery and stabilization</td>
<td>Variable duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Between stages 3 and 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Anticipation of homecoming</td>
<td>Last 6 weeks of deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-deployment</td>
<td>6. Recognition of relationships</td>
<td>First 6 weeks home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Reintegration and stabilization</td>
<td>6–12 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the Emotional Cycle of Deployment by Logan (1987)
Stage 1: Anticipation of Loss

The “lead up” before you depart on deployment is both **exciting** and **challenging**. The prospect of putting your training into action and applying your knowledge to real operational demands is professionally rewarding and satisfying.

The pre-deployment stage begins with the warning order of deployment. Sometimes there is very little warning and departure is imminent. In other circumstances this period can extend from weeks to months. Both situations have advantages and disadvantages and can expose the deploying member and those remaining at home to a flood of emotions and reactions.

**Common Reactions:**
- Eagerness and anticipation to put training into practice
- Fluctuations in energy level and mood
- On the **upside** — feelings of excitement, urgency, challenge and enthusiasm. This can be due to the new experience of a deployment or, if you have already deployed in the past, the chance to experience it again.
- On the **downside** — feelings of sadness, anger, restlessness, anxiety, or depression due to leaving behind family, friends and the regular routine and lifestyle that you may miss, plus some uncertainty as to what the deployment involves.

**Strategies:**
- Allow yourself to feel and express a full range of emotional responses and work through any disputes that may arise.
- Encourage all family members/friends to share their feelings and talk matters through.
- Consider keeping a daily journal/diary to reflect feelings.
- Involve the family/friends in preparing for the separation and sort out any unresolved issues.
- Create opportunities for warm, lasting memories.
- See the deployment as a challenging opportunity for growth.
- Make plans “just in case”. Ensure that you have put into place an emergency contingency so that your family and friends are supported in your absence.
- “Square” away personal admin.
**Talk Matters Through**

Good communication between you and your family/friends is very important. Discussing roles and responsibilities across the period you are deployed provides clarification and assurance (both for yourself and those remaining at home). Discuss expectations of each other during deployment, freedom to make independent decisions, going out with friends, budgeting, etc.

**Sort Out Unresolved Issues**

Work towards resolving any problems or family conflicts before departure so that they don’t develop into bigger problems that are harder to solve while you’re away. Problems are seldom as bad as they appear once you have discussed them. Often the hardest part is sitting down and facing them. Seek professional advice (e.g. from a financial advisor, a teacher, or other professional) if you are worried, or are having difficulty in reaching an agreement about an area of concern.

**Face Emotions**

Discover how your partner and family really feel about you being away for the deployment period. Listen carefully to their opinions and concerns. Discuss feelings openly and in a mature reassuring manner. Express all of your fears for each other. It may be that social life during the separation period could be a major concern for one or both partners. Discuss your concerns and try to be completely honest with yourself and each other. Mutual understanding and reassurance can affirm trust and help dissolve such worries.

**“Square Away” Personal Admin**

Financial affairs and legal matters (for example, updating a will, or deciding if you need a Power of Attorney) need attention before your departure. Legal officers, orderly room and admin/support unit personnel can assist with information regarding such matters.

**Making Plans “Just in Case”**

Discuss what you would do “IF...” (some particular problem arises). Who would your partner or family turn to in the event of a crisis? It is very important to consider how you would both handle a crisis such as death, accidental injury or illness in the family during your absence. You need to make plans to cover such occurrences. For example, you might come to an agreement beforehand on information that you do not want to know while you are away (for example, minor illness in the children) because it may cause needless worry.
Stage 2: Detachment and Withdrawal

This stage will generally occur in the final days before departure. Detachment and withdrawal is a normal process where we begin to emotionally detach from loved ones prior to leaving. It can ease the act of separation and minimize associated complications. The feeling of withdrawal that accompanies detachment highlights that you are now shifting your focus to the job ahead.

It can be a challenging time but most people manage this transition with little difficulty. Be sure to maintain a good sleep routine and to organize your time effectively to alleviate fatigue and emotional strain. Make the most of the time you have before leaving.

Common Reactions:
- Excitement and anticipation as the departure date draws near
- Reduced emotional and sexual intimacy
- Feelings of impatience and some irritability
- Mixed emotions

Strategies:
- Accept your feelings as normal reactions to challenging circumstances.
- Communicate as openly and honestly as possible.
- Be patient with yourself, your family and friends.
- Face emotions.
- Encourage contact between family, your unit, the Deployment Support Group (DSG) and the local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC).
- Be honest about the conditions including awareness of OPSEC.

OPSEC should be considered and a clear direction of what you can tell your family and friends about where you are deploying to should be obtained. This will provide clarity to your loved ones and reduce potential anxiety about your safety.
**Why Do We Argue Before We Separate?**

Pre-deployment preparation may bring about arguments within the family. This can be upsetting; however, these arguments can provide a way of allowing emotional distancing to occur between those remaining and the member who is about to leave.

These behaviours are part of preparing for the separation and they should be considered as natural coping strategies. During this time it is sometimes difficult to be loving, and things may be said that reveal anger or resentment about the separation.

Remember that arguments are common at this stage and do not necessarily indicate that something is drastically wrong with your relationship(s) but are a typical side effect of the additional stress that you or others around you may be encountering at this time.

**Be Honest About the Conditions**

Remember that your partner and family may also be thinking of the danger of you being on operations — the possibility of you being injured or even losing your life. Treat these fears with care and do not brush them aside as being ridiculous — they are very real concerns. It is only natural that the thought of death is a major concern to loved ones, particularly when considering that deployed members may face possibilities of unsafe deployment environments. Experience has shown that an honest appraisal of the threats to your life should usually be given to adult family members. Either exaggeration or understatement of the dangers of your deployment should be avoided — even in jest. Discussing these issues with older children provides an opportunity to recognize their fears. It is also important to acknowledge OPSEC requirements and to explain ‘up front’ to your family and friends that you may not be able to speak openly about everything you will experience during the deployment.
Intimacy

For couples this may be the most challenging aspect of the whole deployment. It may appear that the relationship is no longer under their control. Sexual relations, in particular, may change and cause a misunderstanding. Some partners find it difficult to cope with physical intimacy if emotional separation has already begun. It is important for the partner not to interpret a loss of interest in sex as a rejection, but rather understand it as a reaction to the present circumstances.

Encourage Contact Between Family and Your Unit

Because we move regularly, many families report a lack of social support or an extended family to turn to in times of need. Many Service families live great distances from other family members and, especially just after a posting, may not have a close friend living nearby to call upon in the event of a crisis. Family members may feel more isolated if you are the only member of the unit deployed. Members should ensure that Canadian Forces welfare and support agencies (for example, the local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC), the Base/Wing DSG — if there is one supporting your base/wing — and unit/base Chaplains, etc.) are aware of your absence and how best to approach your family with offers of assistance. If you are the only member of your unit deploying, discuss a welfare plan with your unit, DSG and MFRC should support be required.
Stage 3: Emotional Disorganization

It is natural that the first few days after departure can generate a variety of emotions. These can range from feeling free and relieved to feeling sad and lonely. It is important to keep everything in perspective and remain positive during this stage.

TIPS FOR THOSE AT HOME ARE AVAILABLE FURTHER ON IN THIS GUIDE.

**Common Reactions:**

- Having a sense of freedom
- Feeling relieved and ready to move forward to new challenges
- Change in focus from home life to operational life
- Culture shock
- Fatigue
- Stress
- Sleep and appetite changes
- A variety of emotional reactions/feelings (e.g. guilt, anger, numbness, depression, confusion, disorganization, indecision, loneliness, vulnerability, irritability, aimlessness)
Strategies:

• Remain positive and focus on the job you have been tasked with.
• As operational conditions allow, make regular contact with family and friends to reaffirm care and commitment. Communication offers reassurance of your safety and signals that your relationship is secure and worthwhile despite the strains of separation.
• Be realistic.
• Boost morale and write letters. Letters are emotional lifelines to home and loved ones.
• Prepare emotionally for significant dates and events such as Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries. Understand that you may be feeling isolated and discouraged, and therefore communication with your loved ones and your peers around you is particularly important during this time.
• Acknowledge cultural differences in the new location and remain flexible to help you transition to new cultural experiences. (Go to the ‘Adapting to the New Culture’ Section of this guide.)
• Maintain good sleep routines whenever possible. (Go to the ‘Fatigue Management’ Section of this guide.)
• Utilize stress management techniques. (Go to the ‘Stress Management’ Section of this guide.)
Stay Focussed

The first few days following departure may feel like a ‘honeymoon in reverse’. You may feel a sense of freedom and release from the emotions of the pre-departure phase. This may then be followed by the realization that you are now separated for the duration of your deployment, which can bring about emotional reactions such as sadness, anxiety, guilt and loneliness. It’s important to understand that these reactions are normal. Remaining positive and focussed on the job you have been assigned to do will assist you in adjusting to the new environment.

Making Contact With Home

PHONE CONTACT — Under pressure, telephone calls can be less than satisfying. If you are organized and conscious of the content of your phone call, arguments can be prevented. Making a list of what to talk about can often be useful.

Phone contact is often uni-directional and must be initiated by the deployed member. In these circumstances, it is not uncommon for the partner to feel ‘trapped at home’ in case they miss a call. Pre-arrange when calls will be made. If you can’t make a call during a pre-arranged time, let your partner know so that they don’t worry that something may be wrong.

EMAIL — When available, this is an effective method of communicating with your family and friends. Unlike letters, your correspondence can arrive at its destination in a matter of minutes, if not seconds, and, once sent, is not easily retrieved. For this reason, like phone contact, when sent under pressure they may not convey the intended message appropriately; therefore, careful review of the content may avoid any unnecessary confusion or anxiety.

LETTERS — When writing letters home, it’s a good idea to number them on the outer envelope. When a number of letters arrive at once, those receiving them know what order to read them in.

Eat Well: Sleep Well: Be Well

Be aware of changes to your appetite and ensure that you are maintaining satisfactory nutrition to sustain your energy levels. It is highly likely that operational demands, location, temperature and humidity will have an impact on your fatigue levels. Maintain awareness of sleep loss and quality of sleep as this can also affect your fatigue levels and ultimately your work performance. Good recovery through sleep means that you have greater alertness and ability to respond to task requirements and emergency situations without placing yourself and others at risk through fatigue-related accidents.
When You Arrive

As part of your handover, you will start to think about the task ahead and, perhaps, different ways to do the job based on your experience and training; each of us will be keen to ‘put our mark’ on the operation. An important tip from those who have previously deployed, however, is that, while it’s fine to talk about your ideas during the handover process, be mindful of and respect the achievements of the person you are replacing. Making changes in their presence may be viewed as a critique of their efforts and be a disappointing end to their deployment. It can also be a source of confusion for other members of the team who may experience divided loyalties towards you as the ‘newcomer’ and the person you are replacing. When considering changes, talk to members of the team and see what has worked before and what hasn’t — your ideas may have already been tried and were not successful. You want your team to embrace changes, not fight them (and you).
Stage 4: Recovery and Stabilization

You will notice that in time you will adapt to your new environment and the demands of the deployment. Settling into a routine is something that military members are accustomed to and you will notice a stabilization of emotions, but the challenges will remain both demanding and exhilarating.

Common Reactions:

- Feeling a sense of job satisfaction
- Meeting the challenge and demands of the deployment and completing operational taskings
- Experiencing the demands of working within small teams
- Stress
- Concern that your family is coping so well that you are no longer needed, increased feelings of isolation and separation
- Feelings of increased confidence, independence, competence, freedom, pride, isolation, anxiety, depression
- Worry about problems at home
- Confidence ‘I can do this’

Strategies:

- Enjoy new skills, freedom and independence.
- Establish peer networks.
- Be aware of small team dynamics — use the strengths within the team to guide task outcomes.
- Manage fatigue levels with good sleep routines. (Go to the ‘Fatigue Management’ Section of this guide.)
- Utilize stress management techniques. (Go to the ‘Enhancing Performance Through Stress Management’ Section of this guide.)
- Celebrate signs of positive growth in self, family and friends by letting others know of your achievements. Likewise, acknowledge the achievements of those at home when you talk to them on the phone or in letters/cards/emails.
- Offer empathy and emotional support to family and friends in need but recognize limitations to the support you can provide from the operational environment. This is where the support networks established during pre-deployment are important.
Stage 5:
Anticipation of Homecoming

Preparing for homecoming is filled with huge excitement and some apprehension. Both you and those at home will have hopes and expectations about the homecoming. These thoughts can at times be idealistic so the reality of the situation needs to be placed into perspective. Emotionally preparing for going home allows you to think about the challenges and discuss plans with loved ones and friends.

Common Reactions:
- Increased energy and activity
- Sleep and appetite disturbances
- Feelings of joy, excitement, anxiety, apprehension, restlessness, impatience
- Distraction from operational role and tasks

Strategies:
- Maintain focus on your work to ensure that all taskings are completed in time before returning to Canada.
- Share your feelings of apprehension as well as excitement and joy.
- Share your expectations and desires for homecoming.
- Reassure your family of your love and commitment.
- Include your children in planning for the homecoming celebration.
- Plan to have some family time.
For the Single Member

Common Thoughts and Feelings

- Where am I going to store all of my stuff?
- Who is going to look after my car?
- I can’t wait to get over there.
- Do I need to disconnect my cell phone?
- Will my girlfriend/boyfriend be there when I get back?

Single members encounter unique challenges when preparing for deployment. It is not uncommon for single members to live a great distance from their immediate family and, as such, often have the additional burden of finding a reliable individual to handle their personal affairs while they are deployed. Plans may need to be made to store household goods and vehicles, finance and bills need to be organized and mail redirected; perhaps you need to organize someone to water your plants and care for any pets.

Relationships

If you are in a relationship, you and your boyfriend/girlfriend are likely to experience many of the reactions, concerns, etc. detailed earlier when discussing the emotional stages of the deployment cycle. Unlike a married couple, however, you may have concerns about whether your relationship has the commitment to survive the separation; you may be worried about who your partner socializes with while you’re away, what if they meet someone else, etc. Take the time before the deployment to discuss concerns openly and honestly.
Friends
The pressures and rush of the pre-deployment phase may mean few opportunities before departure to make contact with family, let alone friends. Make plans to contact or see friends before you go, as you would your family. If you would like a farewell party, for example, organize it together with your friends. You may be disappointed if you are anticipating a surprise party.

Take on the responsibility for initiating and maintaining contact. Try as best you can to simply ‘touch base’ by phone, email or letter with your friends. During the deployment you may find that some of your friends reduce their contact with you as they focus on their own lives. Try to understand that they may not appreciate what a military deployment involves or means to you. Keeping in contact with each other will make it easier to fit back into your social circles on your arrival home.

Parents
Do not be surprised if strong emotions arise during a family farewell. Parents, in particular, may display ‘out of character’ heightened emotion and open displays of affection. This may seem embarrassing but try to understand that they are still concerned and worried about your safety and welfare despite your age and independence.
For the Single Parent

Deployment is a stressful time for all families, but when single parents or both parents are deployed, there are some extra challenges and an increased level of uncertainty both for the parent and the children. Without a spouse or partner to stay behind, the single parent must make sure their children will be cared for while they are deployed. The issue of most concern will be the organization of full-time care arrangements for your child/children. Call on family members and trusted friends. Financial, legal matters and your family’s medical needs will all need to be discussed with the caregiver.

Talk with your children about the deployment and the care arrangements. Encourage your children to discuss any fears or anxieties about your absence and the care arrangements. For younger children, it is especially important to ensure that they understand that this is only a temporary arrangement, that you are coming back and that they have not done anything wrong. *(Young children may sometimes believe that they have done something wrong and that is why you are leaving.)*

Have your children spend time with the caregiver prior to your deployment. Talk about and practice new routines that will occur during the deployment. For example, your children may be walking home from school instead of you meeting them each day after school. Discuss discipline and roles/responsibilities children have in the home to help maintain a routine in your absence.
Even a close extended family member who may be caring for your children during your deployment will need detailed instructions/guidance. Some suggestions include:

- Daily schedule, location, and phone numbers of schools
- Before and after school care locations, sporting commitments etc. (include contact numbers)
- Description and location of a toy or blanket that may bring comfort to a child in times of stress
- Names of medications, dosages, and schedule
- Special needs or requirements
- Location of important documents — insurance, birth certificates, will, etc.
- Contact phone numbers for local doctor, pediatrician, etc.
- Contact numbers for your unit, base, wing or ship (Padre, Welfare Offr, Social worker, etc.), the DSG (if one is supporting your Base or Wing) and the local MFRC.

Make plans on how to communicate with the caregiver and your children while you’re away, and provide the caregiver with suggestions for talking with your children about you, your absence and your return.

Have a ‘backup’ plan should the caregiver’s circumstances change while you are deployed. Have someone who can ‘step in’ should the caregiver not be able to fulfil their responsibilities or need support. All these suggestions will provide some peace of mind for you while deployed and ease separation difficulties for both you and your child/children.
For the Deploying Member With Adult Dependents (Elderly Parent Care)

As parents grow older, adult children/caregivers are faced with changes and concerns that they may not know how to deal with. If your parents are elderly, ill or require full-time care, you may be extremely anxious about the deployment, “What if something happens while I’m away?”

You may need to consider arrangements for someone to check on or care for your aging loved ones. For occasional care-giving assistance, consider supportive services such as home delivered meals, chore maintenance or visitor/companion services. DSGs and MFRCs may be able to provide guidance on what services may be available in a particular area. If not, the town or city, as well as local community organizations, will be able to provide you with information on the services available in that community.

If your loved one needs direct care, contact home health care and/or employment agencies to inquire about professional in-home caregivers who may provide assistance. If your loved one is in a long-term care facility, inform them and the facility of your plans and make arrangement for friends, family members or professionals to check on them regularly. Keep your adult loved one informed of family and care giving changes, and reassure him or her that the situation is temporary.

Your parents may have their own particular anxieties about your deployment, in particular your safety. Elderly parents have experienced war (either indirectly or directly) having lived through or served during armed conflicts. Like you would with your children and partner, talk openly with your parents about your deployment, concerns and anxieties. Include your parents in your welfare arrangements (e.g. including them in unit activities, if in the local area, and providing them with ship, unit, wing, base, DSG and MFRC contact information and details).
Preparing Children for the Deployment

Children: What Can be Expected During Your Deployment

Whether expected or unexpected, short or long, deployment is particularly tough for children. There are, however, positive benefits to separation. Military children often take on additional responsibilities in a parent’s absence, opening up the opportunity to develop new skills and hidden interests and abilities. In this changing environment, children tend to learn the importance of flexibility in dealing with everyday life. Deployment prepares children for separation in their lives. Not only do children learn how to say goodbye, but also how to begin new friendships. Deployment can strengthen family bonds. Families need to make emotional adjustments during separation that often lead them to discover and utilize new sources of strength.

During the separation children need added support and attention. Perhaps the most important step to minimize adverse effects on children is to keep the absent parent part of the family’s emotional life. Don’t be afraid to talk about the separation or the missing parent with the kids — it can sometimes make the separation more keenly felt, but it tends to make the reunion stage go much more smoothly.

For the preschool-aged child, pre-deployment may be a confusing time. Sensing the tension between yourself and your partner, they understand that something is happening but may not fully appreciate what is going on. Additionally, your preoccupation with the deployment may result in some emotional and physical withdrawal from the children.

Adolescents may be more forthright in their reactions, with open expressions of anger and feelings of abandonment or sadness at one end of the spectrum, or the denial of any emotional reaction at the other extreme.

The best way to prepare your children for your departure is open, honest communication:

- Let your children know when you are leaving, for how long and when you will return.
- Your children should be encouraged to ask questions and their feelings should be discussed and accepted.
- Begin by telling the children honestly, and in a language they can understand, that they may be sad when you leave and miss you while you are away.
- Hiding things or lying will only confuse them and lead them to conclude the worst.
- Spend quality time individually with each child prior to deployment — time that is special and just for them.
- Have photos displayed to give your child a feeling of being connected during the separation.
- Pictures sent home from the deployment are great to frame as well.
Children will often take emotional cues from adults around them, especially parents. It is important for you to remain calm and respond to your children’s concerns in a controlled and rational manner. Explaining to the teacher that one of the child’s parents is deploying is a useful tip. It can provide a context for behavioural changes and allow the teacher to respond more effectively.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS THAT AFFECT THE CHILD’S ADJUSTMENT TO PARENT ABSENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any combination of these feelings</th>
<th>Could lead to any of these behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preschool Children During Deployment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sadness</td>
<td>• Change in appetite or sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feelings of abandonment</td>
<td>• Behaviour problems such as attention seeking, withdrawal or “acting out”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confusion about change in routine</td>
<td>• Bed-wetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feelings of guilt for parent’s sadness</td>
<td>• Clingy behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Age Children During Deployment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel pressured because of perceived responsibility</td>
<td>• School problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loneliness</td>
<td>• Increased aggressive behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling of abandonment</td>
<td>• Manipulative behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear that separation will be permanent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescents During Deployment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sadness</td>
<td>• School problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independence</td>
<td>• Behaviour problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anger</td>
<td>• Discipline problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aloofness “The don’t care attitude”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Friends take on increased value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the Parent at Home

Children’s reactions will vary according to their personalities, ages and coping skills. Remember, you are the expert on your child. As a parent, you will know what is normal behaviour for your child and will be the best one to notice when things are not right. During the separation, children may need additional support and attention. To reassure and assist children with the deployment:

- Provide security by maintaining normal rules and routines as much as possible.
- Remind children of day-to-day events that will not change: school will continue, the house will not change, etc.
- Be consistent with their discipline.
- Don’t “demonize” your partner by threatening your children with what is going to happen when they return home.
- Don’t be afraid to talk about the separation or missing the deployed parent with the children.
It is also important for the parent remaining at home to balance the demands of caring for the children with their own needs. A strong support network is essential in providing assistance and from ‘time to time’ giving the parent a break.

Maintaining contact with the deployed member and incorporating the deployment into your daily routine will assist children in coping with the separation, and enhance the reunion process.

- For older children, suggest they create journals or write about school, sports or other hobbies and communicate via email or regular mail.
- With assistance, consider allowing your children to create a videotape. They could read a book, perform a play, sing songs or just tape regular daily routines.
- Use maps, calendars, paper chains or jellybeans in a jar to help younger children visualize the location and length of the deployment.
- Consider hanging a map on the wall with a corkboard for pictures. When your partner deploys, use a marker to follow the route of the car/plane/ship. Use this corkboard to hang pictures, letters and souvenirs.
Children and the Media

Families should monitor the amount of information on a conflict or major disaster, particularly that associated with their parent’s deployment — on television, radio, and the internet, and in newspapers. Continued exposure can be detrimental to the child’s well-being, particularly if they are not able to differentiate what their parent is doing or where their parent is from what is being shown in the media. For very young children, someone in uniform will be seen as ‘mum’ or ‘dad’ regardless of who that individual is.

It is important to know what is going on, but it is also okay to turn off the television for a break from the constant exposure. Put a limit on the amount of media coverage watched or read by children and talk with your children about the media coverage and how it effects them.

Children Who Cope Well With Separation Often Have:

- a good relationship with their parent(s)
- a strong sense of self-worth or self-confidence
- an understanding of the parent’s job and why it is important for them to go on deployment
- dependable communication between deployed parent and family
- an adult who will listen and talk to them

The local DSG and MFRC can assist if you are concerned with how your children are responding to the deployment.
For the Partner

Deployment may be the first time that you find yourself solely responsible for raising the children, managing the family budget and the general running of the household. A partner’s deployment can bring out a range of strong emotions, and some of them may seem in direct conflict with each other. You may miss your partner terribly, yet at the same time resent their freedom from family responsibilities.

You may be thinking and feeling the following:

- Is my partner really going to leave me with all this?
- My partner’s happy to go but I’m angry about it.
- My partner won’t talk properly to me about the separation.
- Where is my partner going exactly? How safe will it be?
- How am I going to cope?
These are normal things to be thinking and feeling at this time. Feelings of restlessness, anger, depression and resentment are common reactions that people experience when they are starting to prepare for their partner’s departure. It’s important to communicate and be open about how you’re feeling. Your partner will also be experiencing various emotions and it may be a relief if you face these feelings and thoughts together. Even the most independent spouse is likely to experience a feeling of uncertainty.

Earlier in this Guide, pre-deployment planning is discussed. The intent here is not to replicate but to reinforce what you can do in preparation for your partner’s deployment:

- Establish a list of repairpersons in your local area. This doesn’t mean that the partner remaining at home is incapable of finding a repairman if needed; it does mean, however, that if something goes wrong at home, you just have to pick up the list and call rather than spend countless hours (amongst everything else) trying to establish who is reliable and available.
- Get to know your neighbours for security reasons (and for emergency support if required).
- Discuss how you’ll keep in touch during the deployment.
- Establish unit contact details, determine and communicate how much welfare support you require from your spouse/partner’s unit.
- If your spouse/partner normally takes responsibility for financial matters, ensure you know what bills to expect and payment arrangements.
- Develop support networks and contacts (both within and external to the military).
- Know who to contact in emergencies.

Take time to consider and discuss reallocating tasks while your partner is deployed:

- What jobs can safely be left for the duration of the deployment?
- What tasks can be allocated elsewhere (e.g. arranging for a contractor to mow the lawn or clear the gutters)?
- What tasks will you, staying at home, need to take on?
Culture Shock

Culture shock is a term commonly used to describe the anxiety and uncertainty experienced when someone moves to a new environment. Mostly it is associated with the culture of a foreign country, but we can also experience similar reactions when exposed to different organizational cultures. On deployments, the cultural experience is quite unique — the deployed member is exposed to the different culture of the host nation, the many cultures of coalition forces, and even the different ‘culture’ of Navy, Army and Air Force, or other Canadian government and non-government organizations. With this mix, it is not uncommon to experience some lack of direction, a feeling of not knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate, and uncertainty about how to do things in the new environment.
Stages of Culture Shock

The experience of ‘culture shock’ is considered to involve a number of stages that occur from initial exposure to the new culture through to return to the country of origin. How (and whether) each person progresses through each of these stages is individually determined, attributed to a number of factors such as state of mental health, previous experience, familiarity with the culture, support systems, etc (1).

a HONEYMOON: everything is exciting and new
b TRANSITION: difficulties may be encountered with language; there are feelings of discontent, impatience, anger and a sense of loss
c UNDERSTANDING: becoming more familiar with and gaining an understanding of the new environment
d INTEGRATION: recognition of the ‘good and bad’ of the new environment; a sense of belonging is experienced
e RE-ENTRY: almost a ‘reverse culture shock’ as the individual returns to their country of origin — recognition that things have changed at home.

Signs of Culture Shock

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Changes in mood, feeling vulnerable/powerless or depressed
- Anger, resentment, social withdrawal
- Longing for family
- Identifying with/idealizing your home country
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture

Enhancing Your Adaptation

Some Tips for Dealing With Culture Shock

- Appreciate cultural differences — *what a boring world it would be if the whole world was like Canada!*
- Be patient — *recognize that it takes time to adapt to a new culture.*
- Talk to the locals — *you may find more in common than you expect.*
- Gain an understanding of the history of the country.
- Be constructive in your attitude to your new environment — *learn to recognize and accept what you can’t change.*
- Maintain contact with your own culture through establishing relationships, or maintaining contact with other Canadians in the area if you are deployed independently.
- Recognize what you ‘miss’ about home and acknowledge your feelings but focus on your transition to the new culture.
- Use your spare time to learn as much as you can about the new country/culture — *otherwise you may return home without really getting to know the country and its people.*
- Maintain a sense of humour and flexibility.
- View your deployment as a challenge and an opportunity rather than as a threat or a chore.
- Above all, try to be positive, patient and understanding.
ENHANCING PERFORMANCE THROUGH STRESS MANAGEMENT

In day-to-day discussion, the term ‘stress’ encompasses both causal factors (i.e. stressors) and the outcomes (i.e. stress response).

‘Without stress, there would be no life’. We all experience stress in our life, in our work, at home, when we play sports, etc. It is not necessarily a bad thing; we all need a certain amount of stress in our lives to motivate and increase performance.

The trick is to determine and maintain an optimal level of stress that will allow you to perform at your best. Both too little stress (e.g. boredom) and too much stress (e.g. burnout) will result in deterioration of performance, well-being and effectiveness.

It is important to be able to identify when stress is becoming problematic in order for you to take action. Stress management is essentially ‘performance enhancement’ — it is imperative for maintenance of operational capability.
Operational Stressors

The term ‘Operational Stressors’ recognizes the unique demands of being deployed. Such stressors may be acute and/or cumulative as detailed below:

**Acute Stressors**
An acute stressor may be described as a single or cluster of events that have the potential to cause immediate distress. In an operational environment, combat or a critical incident are two examples. Characteristically such events are or are perceived as life threatening, or as a threat of serious injury to oneself or others.

**Cumulative Stressors**
What we may perceive as minor everyday frustration can be quite different during deployment. More so in an operational environment, cumulative stressors can be detrimental to individual well-being and impact on factors such as cohesion, morale and capability. Some of the more commonly reported cumulative stressors include (note that these are not in priority order):

- Working with foreign organizations/defence forces
- Concern about exposure to contaminants and/or disease
- Exposure to poverty, human misery
- Environmental stressors (e.g. heat, cold, dust, noise, etc.)
- Poor communication and lack of information
- Poor leadership, morale and lack of cohesion
- Poor cultural adaptation
- Communal living
- Problems with administration
- Separation from family and friends
- Domestic issues (e.g. health and welfare of family/friends)
- Boredom
- Concern about vehicle accidents
- Concern about having a Negligent Discharge (ND)
- Hostile, anti-war sentiment expressed by local or Canadian population
Signs of Stress

Recognizing the signs of stress is ‘half the battle won’. These are the body’s ‘warning system’ that stress is becoming problematic. Recognizing and responding to these early on will ensure continuing effective performance. If ignored, these ‘signs of stress’ will intensify impacting increasingly on performance and well-being. The longer they are ignored, potentially the more difficult they are to manage and the greater the impact they will have on all facets of your life. Not only does your stress have the potential to be a problem for you, but it can also impact on colleagues, friends and loved ones.

People’s reactions to stress, like their perceptions of stress, vary from person to person. There are, however, a number of signs that are relatively common.

**Physical**
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbance
- Excessive sweating
- Muscle tension

**Emotional**
- Fear
- Rapid mood changes
- Low motivation
- Irritability and shorter temper
- Anger

**Behavioral**
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- Problems dealing with others
- Increased smoking/drinking
- Overreacting
- Increased risk taking

**Thinking**
- Poor judgment
- Lowered self-esteem
- Poor concentration
- Easily distracted
- Decreased decision-making ability

There are a number of strategies that can be used to manage the stress response or to mitigate the impact of stressors. Be prepared to try a number of different strategies to find out which one suits you best. The following framework is designed to assist in managing operational stressors with the intent of maximizing performance.
Managing Stress on Deployment

ALLOW ADJUSTMENT TIME. Give yourself time to adjust to the new environment. Take the time to observe and familiarize yourself with the routine and understand your role and responsibilities. Be willing to ask for assistance in settling in, or to have routines and responsibilities explained to you if they are not clear.

Eat Well: Sleep Well: Be Well

- Maintain proper nutrition through a sensible diet
- Ensure sufficient and proper rest/sleep, and
- Exercise regularly

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS. Sometimes the way we choose to perceive a situation determines how frustrating or stressful it is. By changing our assumptions we can often decrease our stress levels. In particular try to:

- Maintain realistic expectations — don’t insist that things operate as they do back home, or as they did on previous deployments;
- Maintain a positive attitude to your work, your peers and the environment; and
- Aim to learn about the environment you are deploying to and the different cultures you’ll be working with — understanding helps promote acceptance.
**Time Management**

- Prioritize tasks.
- Establish a routine in your work.
- As much as the deployment allows, establish effective work/rest patterns.
- Use your leisure time for rest and relaxation, not work.

**ACCEPT REALITY.** Understand that there are some things you can influence and change — expend your efforts on these, NOT on those situations that you have no control over. Learn to be open-minded and flexible.

**MENTALLY REHEARSE STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.** Think through likely situations that are of concern to you. Think about your possible reactions and the options you have in dealing with the possibilities. Ask yourself: “What could be the worst possible thing that could happen?” Quite often the answer is not as bad as you initially believe. This ‘rehearsal’ helps you to successfully deal with the situation when it arises.

**EXERCISE** — Exercise is one of the best physical stress-reduction techniques available. Exercise causes the release of chemicals called endorphins into your bloodstream, which can positively affect your overall sense of well-being. It improves blood flow to your brain, bringing additional sugars and oxygen that may be needed when you are thinking intensely, and can help with muscle tension and sleep difficulties.
**TALK IT OUT** — This is one of the best ways to get something off your chest. When you are particularly upset — maybe you have received some bad news or are exceptionally frustrated about something — it is usually pretty obvious to those around you. Use colleagues and friends as a sounding board — sometimes you may just need to vent, other times it may help you to develop a solution. They are often just waiting for you to approach them to have a chat. While it is somewhat cliché, ‘*a problem shared is a problem halved,*’ has merit.

**WRITE LETTERS/JOURNAL** — If you cannot or do not wish to “talk it out”, consider writing down your feelings (letters, maintaining a journal, etc). Some people may write things down as a starting point for discussion, to clarify their thoughts, etc. Writing a letter doesn’t mean you have to send it; in fact, be cautious about sending anything you write in these circumstances — you may regret it later on. Simply writing the words on paper will often allow you to get it ‘off your chest’ — you may choose to keep or destroy the letter (that’s up to you).

If you are going to keep a journal, remain cognizant of OPSEC — the intent of the journal is to detail thoughts and feelings not operational information.
RELAXATION TECHNIQUES — There are a variety of physical and mental relaxation techniques that can be used to manage the stress response. Some examples include the use of imagery, deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation exercises, meditation and self-hypnosis. Finding a technique that works for you is very much an individual preference — be prepared to give them a go and recognize how widely such techniques are used, particularly by elite sportsmen/women to enhance their performance.

LIMIT ALCOHOL/CAFÉINE/TOBACCO INTAKE — The use of substances such as alcohol, caffeine and tobacco is an unhealthy practise that is more likely to exacerbate, rather than reduce stress. Although they may seem to offer temporary relief, these substances only mask or disguise problems and can become habit forming through long term use.

HUMOUR — Laughter can reduce the tension, but be sensitive in its use — it can backfire.

ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS — It is okay to feel angry or upset. Feelings are natural reactions to stressful circumstances. It is healthy to admit to and work through your emotions.

Seeking Assistance

There are times when we can’t do it alone when it comes to stress and stress management. Seeking assistance is not a sign of weakness but rather a recognition that the situation is beyond our normal resources to cope. Effectively, we have two choices: ignore or deny it, with guaranteed detriment to well-being and effectiveness (and potentially operational capability) OR seek professional support (through a mental health professional — MO, chaplain, psychologist, etc.).

The following list is not exhaustive but is indicative of circumstances suggesting that you may need to seek assistance with stress management:

- you are experiencing chronic signs of stress
- ongoing disturbed sleep and/or nightmares
- if you have no one with whom you can talk
- your relationships (work and social) seem to be suffering/deteriorating
- you are having frequent accidents, difficulty concentrating
- you have noticed changes in your emotions or behaviours that are worrying you
- if you have any self harm or suicidal thoughts
Helping Your Friends and Colleagues Deal With Stress

In an operational environment, it will often be your friends or colleagues who will be the first to notice when you’re stressed. Actively seek help from your friends when you find it difficult to cope and likewise be there to listen when they need help.

REALIZE THAT STRESS REACTIONS DO OCCUR — Stress reactions occur for both you and others. It is important to be aware that everyone reacts differently to stress and that different stressors cause different stress reactions.

ACCEPT STRESS RESPONSES IN OTHERS — Reassure them that it is okay, that such responses are normal.

BE AVAILABLE AND APPROACHABLE. Showing an interest and providing support enables your friends to feel reassured.

LISTEN. This is not always easy to do as it takes time and patience. Listening is one of the best ways to assist a friend.

BE CAREFUL WITH ADVICE AND DO NOT JUDGE. Do not say, “it could have been worse”, or “you shouldn’t have let them do that” — these comments do not help. Try to be optimistic but avoid making promises that may not come true, e.g. “everything will be alright”.

BE SENSITIVE TO CHANGES IN PEOPLE — These changes can be a warning sign of someone having difficulty coping. A person may become unusually quiet or talkative, they may start to drink heavily, they may become more irritable or aggressive and so on. These are all warning signs that should not be ignored.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS — Tackling stress in others can be stressful in itself. Do not let your own well-being suffer by taking on too many emotional problems from others. There may be a time when those you are helping need professional assistance from someone like a psychiatrist, psychologist, doctor, social worker, chaplain, etc. Be aware that you could help them to go see such people if necessary.
Relaxation Techniques

Practicing relaxation techniques on a regular basis can be very beneficial in helping you cope with the stress of day-to-day life.

Relaxation techniques are not mysterious and you do not need specialist qualifications to carry them out. Anyone can practice relaxation, just about anywhere and at any time.

The key to practicing relaxation techniques is that they can be self-administered and, with a little practice, most people find them easy to master.

The benefits of relaxation include:

- Preventing stress from becoming cumulative. Stress can build up over time and if left alone can be very harmful. Relaxing on a regular basis helps to ‘break the stress cycle’.
- Increasing energy levels and vitality
- Improving concentration and memory
- Helping to alleviate insomnia and fatigue
There are various relaxation techniques that you can use. A few of the most commonly used ones have been outlined below to give you an introduction to the subject.

**Abdominal Breathing**

The level of tension carried in your body is reflected in the way that you breathe. If you are tense, your breathing tends to be shallow, rapid and occurring high in the chest. If you are relaxed, your breathing tends to be fuller, deeper and from your abdomen. It is difficult to be tense and to breathe from your abdomen at the same time.

**Exercise**

i. Take a moment to note how tense you are feeling, then place one hand on your abdomen just beneath your rib cage.

ii. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into the ‘bottom’ of your lungs — send the air as low down as you can. If you are breathing from your abdomen, your hand should rise. Your chest should move only slightly.

iii. When you’ve taken a full breath, pause for a moment and then exhale slowly through your nose or mouth. Make sure you exhale fully. As you exhale try to fully relax your body.

iv. Now do ten slow, full abdominal breaths. Keep your breathing slow and smooth. It may help to slowly count to four on the inhale (1-2-3-4) and then again on the exhale. Remember to pause briefly at the end of each inhalation.

If you begin to feel light-headed during the exercise, stop for 15–20 seconds and then start again. With practice, you may be able to do a number of sets of ten full abdominal breaths. Five minutes of abdominal breathing can have a very beneficial relaxing effect.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (with tension) works on the theory that a muscle can be relaxed by first tensing it for a few seconds and then releasing it. Tensing and releasing various muscle groups throughout the body can produce a deep state of relaxation.

The idea is to tense each muscle group hard (not straining however) for about 10 seconds and then to let it go suddenly. You then give yourself 15–20 seconds to relax, noticing the difference in the muscle relaxed as opposed to when you tensed it, before going onto the next muscle group.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation can also be practised without tensing and releasing the muscles.** The idea is basically the same. You work your way progressively through the different muscle groups in your body, consciously relaxing each one as you go. The only difference is that you do not tense and release each muscle group as you go.

It may help to say to yourself something like “I am relaxing,” or “Letting go” during each relaxation phase between muscle groups. Maintain a focus on your muscles during the exercise.

The following general guidelines apply:

- Make sure you are in a quiet, comfortable setting.
- When you tense a muscle group, do so for 7–10 seconds vigorously, without straining, then release suddenly.
- Allow all other muscles in the body to relax; focus on one group at a time.
- If a muscle group feels particularly tense, you can tense and release it 2–3 times if necessary. Just make sure you rest for 20 seconds between each cycle.
- The entire relaxation sequence should take you about 30 minutes to complete the first time. As you become more adept at it, you may find that you work through it much more quickly.

Concentrate on what is happening. Feel the build-up of tension in each particular muscle group. It may help you to visualize the muscle group as being tense.
Operational requirements may involve long work hours, rotation between day and night shifts, high stress or exposure to extreme weather conditions. In this environment, sleep deprivation is inevitable and fatigue may be problematic. During deployment, where pressures for reduced sleep time are often beyond individual control, development and maintenance of healthy sleeping practices and fatigue management is essential.

Healthy young Service members who eat and drink properly can experience a 25% loss in mental performance for each successive 24-hour period without sleep.

In an operational environment, fatigue is generally the product of one or more of the following:

- Intense emotional strain and mental workload;
- Strenuous and/or prolonged physical exertion;
- Inadequate food and water intake and/or food lacking nutrition;
- Adverse environmental conditions, including low light levels;
- Periods of monotonous, boring activities; and
- Disrupted and lost sleep.

Why Is Fatigue a Problem?

Physical and mental fatigue will impact across many areas important to operational functioning. Unit and individual military effectiveness is dependent upon initiative, motivation, physical strength, endurance, and the ability to think clearly, precisely, and rapidly. The longer an individual goes without sleep, the more his/her thinking slows and becomes confused. Lapses in attention occur resulting in a detriment to performance — speed is sacrificed to maintain accuracy.

If not correctly managed, fatigue may cause problems with memory, reaction time and concentration, deteriorating the quality of your work performance.

Leaders often regard themselves as being the least vulnerable to fatigue. This is not the case — commanders at all levels are generally more prone to fatigue than their troops (increased responsibility, decision-making, complex mental processes undertaken, etc.). Commanders must cope with the effects of fatigue and sleep loss on their own performance as well as monitor these effects in subordinates.
How Fatigue Affects Performance

- Reduced attention
- Communication difficulties — increasingly difficult to decide what needs to be said, how to say it or what someone else said
- Mood changes — almost always includes increased irritability and can entail depression and apathy
- Inability to concentrate
- Increasing omissions and carelessness
- Decreased vigilance
- Slowed comprehension and learning
- Encoding/decoding difficulties — becomes more difficult to transform data (e.g. map coordinates) or process information
- Hallucinations
- Muddled thinking — reasoning becomes slow and confused
- Faulty short-term memory — information quickly forgotten or recalled incorrectly
- Slowness in perception — slow to understand things heard or seen
- Slow and uneven responsiveness

Fatigue — Prevention and Management

Managing fatigue is imperative to operational effectiveness. Decision-making and efficient/safe task completion requires alertness. Being ready for unexpected events and emergencies requires an instant reaction, which can be affected if a member is fatigued. It is therefore imperative that fatigue countermeasures be explained.

Fatigue countermeasures can be divided into two broad categories: those used before work and during rest periods (Preventative Strategies), and those used at work to manage the symptoms of fatigue (Improving Wakefulness).
Preventative Strategies

- **MAINTAIN HEALTHY SLEEP PRACTICES.** Develop before-sleep rituals to help trigger sleep. Relaxation, reading or listening to music can help you prepare for sleep.
- **AVOID STIMULANTS** like caffeine and nicotine prior to sleep. Caffeine includes tea, coffee, coke, diet coke, etc.
- **DON’T EAT OR DRINK TOO MUCH** close to bedtime.
- **MINIMIZE ALCOHOL USE.** While it may assist in falling asleep, it disturbs the sleep cycle, can cause early wakening and can exacerbate fatigue’s impairment on mental processes.
- **EXERCISE.** Late afternoon exercise is the perfect way to help you fall asleep at night. Aim to finish your exercise at least three hours before bedtime.
- If possible, **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT CONducIVE TO SLEEP** — quiet without interruptions (use ear plugs); dimness (eye mask); not overly warm or cool.
- **ASSOCIATE YOUR BED WITH SLEEP ONLY.** Avoid tossing and turning in bed and clock watching. If you have something on your mind, it is best to get up out of bed and write down a ‘to do’ list which allows your mind to rest or, alternatively, read a book or watch DVDs in a place away from your sleeping area.
- **TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO NAP.** Taking naps is not a sign of low fighting spirit or weakness; it is a sign of foresight. Short naps (even 10–30 minutes), although not ideal, are better than nothing.
Improving Wakefulness

- **SOCIAL SUPPORT.** Increase social support by pairing up or using teams to provide companionship, support and checks/double checks for one-another.

- **STAND UP AND WALK AROUND OCCASIONALLY.** If possible, change posture and move around to help stay alert.

- **TAKE FULL USE OF BREAKS** to alleviate strain, boredom and complacency.

- **CHANGE ROUTINES AND ROTATE TASKS** if possible.

- **INTRODUCE NOVEL BACKGROUND NOISE** (e.g. a radio) where possible for personnel completing mundane or repetitive tasks.

Adequate daily sleep is a biological necessity just like food and water — there is no substitute. Eight solid hours of sleep is the amount required by the average person to stay alert. You may not get eight hours of sleep due to operational demands and therefore your alertness and response to situations may be affected. Communicate with your chain of command if you find that fatigue is affecting your work or safety.
Shift Work

Your body is designed to be awake and alert in the day and to rest at night. All body and brain functioning is based on this internal timekeeper or ‘body clock’. This biological clock relies equally on the external world using cues such as light and dark and timing of meals to keep it on track. When you change the time you sleep and wake, you work against your biological clock, confusing the timing of biological processes.

Attempting to sleep when your body is used to staying awake will:

- Shorten the amount of your sleep you get
- Change the quality of sleep (e.g. less deep sleep)
- Make you take longer to fall asleep

Understanding the importance of the body clock in your daily functioning and knowing how it responds to disruption will help you find ways to function effectively under less than ideal conditions. Previous research has demonstrated that after a 12-hour shift, fatigue impairs reaction time, logical reasoning, hand-eye co-ordination, and decision-making.

On deployment, shift work, altered and changing work schedules, crossing time zones, long hours of continuous wakefulness, and sleep loss can disrupt the biological clock which programs our bodies to sleep at night and to stay awake during the day. The conflict between working during the night and your biological clock results in greater fatigue while working, and difficulty sleeping when off duty.
Helpful Hints for Shift Workers

Maintain a regular sleep schedule.

- If working on continuous operations (i.e. recurring, round-the-clock schedules that last for extended periods, typically involving intense work levels and use shifts and rotations), **AIM FOR A MINIMUM OF FOUR HOURS SLEEP**, but try to stay in bed for as long as possible. Rest without sleep is still beneficial for the body.
- **TRY DIFFERENT SLEEP TIMES** in the daytime to find which suits you best — straight after work, before the next night shift, or part of both.
- **DEVELOP WAYS OF RELAXING** after afternoon or night shift — read or watch DVDs if you have access to this whilst on deployment, write letters, phone home, email, etc.
- **TAKE A SHOWER** — if you get the chance to shower before sleeping it can assist relaxing prior to sleep.
- **GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RITUALS OF GOING TO BED**, as you would before a normal night sleep.
- **DON'T GET UPSET IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP STRAIGHT AWAY**. Read, write letters. If studying, this could be a good chance to do assignments. Remember, rest in itself is valuable.
- **LET OTHERS KNOW ABOUT YOUR WORK SCHEDULE AND SLEEP TIMES** so they won’t disturb you unnecessarily. Those sharing sleeping accommodation with day workers and vice versa should communicate about sleep requirements.
- **DON'T DIM THE LIGHTS** as this can cause drowsiness and a tendency to fall asleep during circadian dips (the 24-hour cycle in the physiological process of people that is controlled by our biological clock), particularly around 0300.
- **CONTACT OTHERS** on the same shift regularly. Interesting conversation and other social interaction will help increase alertness.
Jet Lag

When travelling to a new time zone, our body clock is slow to adjust and remains on its original schedule for several days. This results in our body telling us it is time to sleep when it’s actually the middle of the afternoon, or it makes us want to stay awake when it is late at night. This experience is known as jet lag.

You can do a number of things to prepare in the days leading up to ‘take-off’, including:

- **SLEEP WELL:** Get plenty of sleep in the nights leading up to your departure. If you are well rested, you will suffer less from fatigue associated with jet lag.
- **SET YOUR WATCH TO THE NEW TIME ZONE:** As you board the plane (or even earlier if practical), set your watch to the new time zone.
- **AVOID STRESS:** Try to arrive at the airport relaxed.
- **ABSTAIN FROM ALCOHOL THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FLIGHT:** A hangover not only feels similar to jet lag, it can exaggerate its effects.

You should take measures to avoid the stress and strain that accompanies long distance flying.

- **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER**
- **EXERCISE AND STRETCH:** To avoid muscle cramping and swelling, stretch in your seat and walk around the cabin from time to time.
- **AVOID ALCOHOL:** Alcohol causes dehydration and may exacerbate the effects of jet lag.

On arrival, attempt to sleep and eat according to the new time zone, not the old one.

- **HEAD OUTSIDE:** Daylight assists your body clock in adjusting to the new time zone.
- **GETTING EXERCISE:** Research indicates that exercise allows the body’s circadian rhythm to adjust more rapidly.
- **SLEEP AIDS AT BEDTIME:** If you find you have trouble getting to sleep at the new destination, try using some of the techniques noted previously — for example, stretching, meditating, taking a quick shower, or engaging in any other activity that relaxes you or is available to you on deployment.

**Important Points to Remember**

- Know your sleep needs and limitations.
- Pay attention to your body clock.
- Make sleep a priority.
- Start your work as fresh as you can. Aim for 8 hours sleep if possible.
- Watch for signs of fatigue.
- Use management strategies at work.
- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Operations require us to live communally and work in small teams, often in unfamiliar and hostile environments. The requirement to live and work with the same people 24/7 for an extended time, and the ensuing lack of privacy, can cause difficulties (even if the other person is your best friend!).

Communal living and dealing with difficult people has been demonstrated across operations to be a major stressor for deployed personnel. The intent of this section of the Deployment Guide is to provide guidance and advice to allow the deployed member to identify and address issues as they arise.

Living and Working Together

Living with others in harmony is all about getting along. But as we all know, getting along is often quite a challenge. It involves practice, effort and skill. Fortunately these skills can be learned. Basic ‘people skills’, understanding how to listen, managing and resolving conflicts, gaining awareness of differences between people as well as self awareness, are all critical to living comfortably with others.

- **Communication Skills**
  
  To negotiate and identify areas of conflict, you need to listen to others without interrupting, focusing on understanding how they feel.
  
  — **BE HONEST.** Being straightforward and direct can help resolve and prevent problems.
  
  — **DO NOT LET THINGS BUILD UP.** Address issues as they arise.
  
  — **DON'T GET TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.** Be assertive if you believe others are making unreasonable demands.

- **The Ability to Respect and Value Differences**
  
  Be flexible about other peoples’ lifestyle choices. As long as no harm is done to themselves or others, do not try to impose your will on others.
  
  — If you are irritated with a particular behaviour, talk about it and get the other person’s point view.
  
  — If you do request someone to rectify his/her behaviour, give them a chance to change. Recognize attempts to change.
  
  — Look at your own behaviour — are you infringing on the rights of others? Be considerate of others’ privacy, values and belongings.
When Conflict Occurs

• Conflict occurs when a person’s values, beliefs, goals, relationships or material well-being have been threatened.
• Although at times it is inevitable, conflict can be minimized, diverted and/or resolved.

The Conflict Resolution Process

• Create an Effective Atmosphere
  — Approach issues honestly and openly.
  — Try to start out on a good note.

• Clarify Perceptions
  — Get to the heart of the matter and avoid side issues.
  — Avoid stereotyping.
  — Recognize others’ needs and values.
  — Empathize — ask why they feel the way they do.

• Focus on Individual and Shared Needs
  — Be concerned about meeting others’ needs as well as your own.

• Look to the Future, Learn From the Past
  — Don’t dwell on negative past conflicts.
  — Try to understand what happened in the past and avoid repeating the same mistakes again.

• Generate Options
  — Look for common threads.
  — Make sure options are workable for all parties involved.
  — Focus on options that seem most workable.

• Aim Towards ‘Win-Win’ Situations
  — These give you lasting solutions to specific conflicts.
  — Pay attention to the needs of the other person in addition to your own interests.
  — Recognize the ‘givens’ — basic things that cannot be altered or compromised.
  — Clarify exactly what is expected of you in the agreement.
Dealing With Difficult People

You may come across people who are unwilling to participate in the conflict resolution process. People can be very difficult to live with — some are selfish, some self-absorbed, some undependable, some inconsistent, critical or aggressive. Some blame others for ‘everything’ and accept little or no responsibility for ‘anything’. Difficult people can make us doubt our ability to treat others with patience and understanding. The following are some tips to help you maintain composure when confronted with a difficult person.

- Remain focused and be firm.
- Listen to them, maintain direct eye contact and speak in a clear firm voice.
- Try not to personalize the problem (e.g. don’t get defensive and try to be objective).
- Don’t escalate small offences — let the ‘little ones’ go.
- Engaging in argument with these people is usually a ‘no-win’ situation. Often the only way for you to cope is to elect not to ‘play’.
Anger Management

Anger is a completely normal, healthy emotion; however, when it runs out of control and becomes destructive, it can have a damaging effect on your relationships and general quality of life. There are skills, which can aid in managing and controlling anger, summarized as ‘expressing’, ‘suppressing’ and ‘calming’.

- **Expressing** your angry feelings in an assertive, not aggressive, manner is the healthiest way to manage anger.
- Anger can be **suppressed**, and changed into a positive. You can achieve this by holding in your anger, stopping yourself from thinking about it, and then focusing on something positive.
- You can calm down by controlling both your outward behaviour and your internal responses. Take conscious steps to lower your heart rate, **calm** yourself down, and let the feelings subside.
How to Control Your Anger

• **Relaxation**
  
  Simple relaxation tools such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery can help clam down angry feelings.
  
  — Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm.
  
  — Slowly repeat a calm word or phrase such as “relax”, “take it easy”.
  
  — Use imagery; visualize a relaxing experience.

• **Changing the Way You Think**
  
  When you’re angry, your thinking can get very exaggerated and overly dramatic.
  
  — Be aware of this and try replacing these thoughts with more rational ones. For example, instead of “This! *%$# machine never works!” think “This is frustrating but it’s not the end of the world”.
  
  — Remind yourself that getting angry is not going to fix anything.

• **Problem Solving**
  
  Sometimes anger is a result of real and inescapable problems in our lives.
  
  — Focus on how you handle and face the problem.
  
  — Make a plan, and check your progress along the way.

• **Better Communication**
  
  — Slow down and think before you speak.
  
  — Don’t say the first thing that comes into your head.
  
  — Listen carefully to what the other person is saying and take your time answering.

• **Humour**
  
  — Humour can be used to help ease tense situations.
  
  — However, don’t “laugh off” your problems; rather, use humour to help you face them more constructively.
  
  — Don’t give in to harsh, sarcastic humour.

• **Changing Your Environment**
  
  — Sometimes it is our immediate surroundings that cause irritation and fury.
  
  Seek to change your immediate surroundings within the constraints of the operational environment.
  
  — Give yourself a break.
For most deployed personnel, Mission Leave is a positive experience which affords them the opportunity to relax and catch up with family and friends. Yet, for some members, Mission Leave can be a real challenge, which may leave them feeling disappointed and concerned if it fails to live up to their expectations.

This section of the Deployment Guide aims to highlight some of the common issues associated with Mission Leave, along with some simple tips to help you get the most out of your leave.

**Deciding What to Do for Mission Leave . . .**

While most deployed personnel will choose to return home to family and friends for Mission Leave, there is no prescribed solution or recommendation as to how you should best utilise your leave.

For any number of reasons (e.g. concern about disrupting family or simply wishing to take the opportunity to travel) some personnel might choose not to return home. They may alternately decide to use their Mission Leave to travel either alone or with friends, or to even have their partner join them on an overseas holiday.

It is recommended that any decision about how to best utilize Mission Leave should be well considered and discussed with friends and family, as appropriate, rather than made in isolation. Most importantly, regardless of how you choose to spend it, Mission Leave should provide you with an opportunity to rest and unwind.
Common Issues

- Reunion can often be more stressful and emotional than separation.
- You may have very different expectations from your family and friends about the best way to spend your time on leave (e.g. you want to rest, they want to party).
- Routines may be disrupted and/or changed.
- There may be an increase in disagreements over things that have (or have not) been done while you were been away.
- You may feel emotionally distant or have difficulty enjoying certain activities.
- Sexual intimacy with your partner may be initially awkward, as you might both have quite different hopes and expectations — talk openly and respectfully about this issue.
- You may have developed habits that might not be appropriate back at home (e.g. use of bad language or increased levels of smoking).
- You may find that your tolerance for alcohol might be considerably lower than it was prior to your deployment. Also, be aware of the effects that alcohol might have on your body when consumed in conjunction with prescription medications that you may have to take (e.g. antibiotics, anti-malarial medications, etc.).
Useful Tips

- It is completely natural to feel nervous or apprehensive about returning home to see family and friends, and it is quite likely that they will be experiencing similar feelings prior to your arrival. If you initially feel like this do not be alarmed. Allow yourself time to readjust to life back in Canada, just as you would have done when you arrived in country to commence your deployment.
- Make plans prior to commencing Mission Leave with regard to how you would like to spend your time. If you communicate openly beforehand, there will be fewer opportunities for disagreements and misunderstandings later on.
- Having to constantly catch up with a number of family and friends throughout your leave can be draining. If possible, try to organize one large gathering to reduce the number of engagements that you may feel obliged to keep. Also use this opportunity to ask people what they have been doing while you’ve been away. This should help you to feel more in touch with what has happened at home in your absence and therefore less alienated.
- Try to plan a break or at least some other novel activities during your Mission Leave. Members who have reported the most positive experiences after Mission Leave have usually engaged in unique and exciting activities that have helped them to completely unwind and forget about work for a time. Also, if you are returning home, be careful not to just fall back into old routines; this may leave you feeling like you never had a rest by the end of your leave.
- If circumstances permit, consider taking a ‘family holiday’ when you return home for Mission Leave. This provides an opportunity for everyone to take a break and spend some quality time together. It can lessen disruption to the family routine, and can minimize the impact on the family when you return to the operation.
- Have some flexibility in your plans should your trip be disrupted due to weather conditions, availability of transport and operational requirements.
- If travelling on Mission Leave, be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have. Enjoy yourself but don’t try to do everything during the short time you have on leave. Remember, the aim of Mission Leave is for you to rest and relax.
Returning From Mission Leave

It may be difficult to say goodbye for a second time, so ensure that you plan ahead and allow yourself and your family adequate time for farewells. If you have children, be mindful of their reactions and feelings, especially in relation to you going away again. Also, depending upon your location, be aware of the way jet lag may effect you, especially in relation to sleep patterns.

It is not uncommon for members to experience some difficulty settling back into their roles immediately after returning from Mission Leave. This experience is often referred to as the “post Mission Leave blues”, and the best way to overcome such feelings is to remain focused and get back into your work.

Consider setting new goals for the remainder of your deployment. Focus on the positive aspects of your deployment thus far; on what you have already achieved; and on what you still wish to achieve prior to the conclusion of your time overseas.

Don’t forget to talk to your friends and colleagues. If you do experience any difficulty readjusting after returning from Mission Leave there is a good chance that your colleagues may have experienced similar concerns either on this current deployment or in the past. Your peers can be an invaluable source of practical ideas and information, but simply taking the time to talk to them about any uncertainties you may have might also help you to better understand and deal with your own concerns.