Re-Engineering Our Family

Time Needed: 2 hours  
Skill Level: Basic  
Number of Families: 6  
Deployment Segment: Reintegration: Youth & Family  
Internet Required: Yes

Life Skill Objectives:
- **Communication:** Develop Family scheduling skills to facilitate communication as everyone reintegrates with the returning Service Member
- **Self-responsibility:** Help plan reintegrations with all members of your Family by updating your schedule and notifying Family members if things change
- **Decision Making:** Make choices about your privacy and what is important to share with your Family versus your community

Resilience Skill Objectives:
- **Social:** Develop and maintain trusted, valued relationships and friendships
- **Family:** Explore how open communication assists in making you feel part of the Family

Science and Technology Objective:
- **Use Google Calendar to facilitate communication and re-link Family members in preparation for reintegration and during reintegration**

Activity Overview:
Families will re-engineer how they communicate with their Service Member to help ease the transitions around reintegration, by providing the Service Member with thoughtful, specific details about their daily lives.

**Shout Out to Youth!**
*Are you experiencing a scheduling nightmare? Not anymore! With Google Calendar, everyone in your Family can access a common calendar and learn to keep things straight!*

Prerequisites: None

Breakdown of Activities:
- Icebreaker: Truth Be Told? (30 Minutes)
- Activity 1: Family Mapping (30 Minutes)
- Activity 2: Google Calendar (30 Minutes)
- Talk It Over (25 Minutes)
- Closing & Cleanup (5 Minutes)

**Budget Range for Activity:** $3/participant
Space Needed:
You will need a room large enough for participants, a flat place to use to project an image, tables and chairs. Wireless Internet access is required to do the activity.
OMK TECH DISCOVERY: Reintegration Youth & Family

Before the Event

Get Ready:

Tasks for Lead Volunteer
- Do Volunteer Training with the additional OMK Tech Discovery training (found at: http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/p.aspx?tabid=187)
- Review the activity, all materials and handouts

Do Ahead:
In coordination with the Military Point of Contact:
1. Schedule use of the OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit. (If you anticipate a large group, schedule additional OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kits. 1 Kit=6 Families.)
2. Schedule use of Mobile Technology Lab.
3. Ensure wireless Internet access.
4. Schedule Uniformed Service Member and at least 1 volunteer per 6 youth to participate in the activity.
5. Schedule a Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC).
6. Borrow or buy supplies.
7. Contact volunteers and go through online training (to learn more before you show up about OMK and OMK Tech Discovery).
8. Sign up for a free Google account and work with the calendaring function to make sure you understand all steps in Activity 2.
9. Recruit a Tech volunteer (for device, laptop and Internet support).

Copy:
- Sign-in sheet (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)
- “Setting up a Google Account and Google Calendar” handout (found at the end of the activity plan; copy all 11 pages, ideally in color, and staple together to create 1 packet per Family for a total of 6 packets)
- Family letter (1 per Family = 6 copies)

Get from OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit:
- Laminated Life/Resilience Skill signs to post around the room (Communication, Self-responsibility, Decision Making, Social and Family objectives)
- 4 iPad 2 devices
- Sign-in sheet
- Writing utensils
- Nametags

Get from Mobile Technology Lab:
- 10 laptops
- Wireless router with Internet connection
- LCD Projector
Buy or Borrow Supplies

**Icebreaker: Truth Be Told?**
- Bag of suckers
- Nametags for all youth, Family members, volunteers and anyone else who will be present (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)
- Table for sign-in sheet
- Sign-in sheet (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)
- Writing utensils (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)

**Activity 1: Family Mapping**
- 1 flip chart for each Family unit (additional if there will be groups that are youth-only)
- 1 set of colored markers for each Family unit (additional if there will be groups that are youth-only)

**Activity 2: Google Calendar**
- 4 iPad 2 devices (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)
- 10 laptops (Mobile Technology Lab)
- Wireless router with Internet connection (Mobile Technology Lab)
- LCD Projector (Mobile Technology Lab)
- “Setting up a Google Account and Google Calendar” handouts (found at the end of the activity plan and copied as instructed)
- Writing utensils (OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit)
Day of the Event

Roles for Uniformed Service Member:
- Help youth identify and form a positive connection with another Service Member
- Encourage youth to ask questions about the Deployment Cycle
- Talk about how you or others used technology to reconnect during reintegration and how scheduling is important to reintegration
- Share your personal stories about reintegration, communication and technology

Roles for Volunteers:
- Help youth with all activities and form a positive connection with the youth
- Provide positive support for youth throughout the activities
- Assist youth in setting positive goals
- Model problem-solving strategies
- Facilitate problem solving and use teamwork when youth become frustrated or have questions
- Assist with setup and cleanup

Before the Youth Arrive…
1. Orient your group of volunteers to the activity (make sure they all have nametags and introduce themselves to each other before you get started).
2. Have Tech volunteer make sure Internet wireless access is working in the room and set up the LCD projector to work with the lead volunteer’s computer.
3. Activity Orientation for All Volunteers:
   - Review each activity
   - Cue volunteers where to look for the Life/Resilience Skill objectives in the directions and remind them of the importance of discussing them during the activity; remind them how these will help youth manage deployment issues and adjustments
   - Have volunteers help set up for the event

Set up Your Space:
Space: You will need a room large enough for participants, a flat place to use to project an image, tables and chairs. Wireless Internet access is required to do the activity.
   1. Post Life/Resilience Skill signs around the room.
   2. Set up a greeting table with a sign-in sheet.

WHAT TO DO

As the Youth/Families Arrive…
1. Have youth and accompanying adult(s) fill out the sign-in sheet and have participant(s) put on a nametag.
2. Don’t forget to introduce yourself and your team of volunteers, the Uniformed Service Member and others that might be in the room, along with their roles.
Icebreaker: Truth Be Told? (30 Minutes)
“Sometimes when you meet someone new, you want to say things about yourself but it can seem uncomfortable. And you never know if someone else is telling a ‘truth’ or a ‘lie.’ We don’t always mean to lie. When we’re nervous, sometimes we can exaggerate or say something that’s not quite true.

“We’re going to play a game where you get to tell the group two truths and a lie. Try to make the lie sound like a truth and see if the group can guess which one is a lie. Here’s an example: ‘I hate peas, I like potato chips and my favorite band is Cold Play.’ Which do you think is the lie?”

1. “Now we’ll take turns and go around the circle to play our first round.”
2. Encourage the youth and adults to be silly, yet reveal something fun about themselves.
3. “Now I want you to pair up with another person in the room that you don’t know or who isn’t in your Family. It’s time to do the activity again, EXCEPT now you should tell your partner 3 truths or lies about the reintegration experience. What you say can be all truths, all lies or any combination in between. The only important thing is that you’re able to tell the other person what is the truth and what is a lie. Here’s an example: ‘I like when Dad is deployed, I feel happy when Mom’s finally home, I’m not worried about Dad’s safety.’”
4. Give the pairs time to exchange their truths/lies.
5. Hand out the suckers.

Debriefing Questions:
Note to Lead Volunteer: The point of this debriefing is to have the youth understand that it’s never a good idea to lie to anyone. Help them discuss appropriate ways to say things to people without having to hurt their feelings or tell un-truths so that they look cool. This activity should help youth and their Families to also understand how others are handling reintegration.

“Let’s talk a little more about this activity.”
- What surprised you about doing this activity?
- Was it easier to tell the whole group about truths and lies that were more general?
- How did it feel when you had to tell your truths and lies to your partner when it was about deployment?
- Did you have similar truths and lies with your partner when you did the activity about deployment?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about others?
- Was the activity harder when you didn’t know how many truths or lies might be in the set of statements? Why?
- Would you ever lie to a Family member?
- Why would lying to a Family member be different than lying to another person you just met?
- How can you tell if people are lying?
- Is lying ever a good idea?
Activity 1: Family Mapping (30 Minutes)

“People change. While your Service Member has been deployed, you may have taken on new responsibilities or signed up for new activities.

“Let’s take a look at what you and your Family do during a typical week. We’re going to chart a week in your life. Using flip chart paper and different colored markers for each person, make a list of the things you and your Family will do in the next week.

“Try to be specific. Day, time, frequency, how much time is needed, who you do the activity with, where the activity is located, etc. Think about routine activities as well as special events. Make sure you capture what all of your Family members do during the week.”

1. Have participants gather in Family teams.
2. Hand out a flip chart and markers to each team.
3. Allow each team to decide how to best chart their Family’s activities during a typical week.
4. Recommend to the group that they use a different color marker for each member.
5. Challenge each team to be as thorough as possible: to include events (concerts, games, etc.), special occasions (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.) as well as the more routine activities (practice, day care, appointments, meetings, etc.).

Activity 2: Google Calendar (30 Minutes)

“Now let’s take it to the next level. Your Service Member will be home soon, or may already be home. It’s an exciting time, but could also be a little stressful. You and your Family have adjusted to a new schedule and in some cases new responsibilities during deployment. Your Service Member might have an idea of what life at home is like, but does he or she really understand or know? One way we can help them understand is to invite them into our daily lives. If we share the details of what we do each day, they’ll have a window into our lives and an opportunity to understand. You can use an iPad 2 or a laptop to do this activity. All the information you are entering is password protected and kept up on the web. It can be accessed from your home or anywhere else with the right password.”

1. “Let’s get started.”
2. Provide each Family team with a copy of the handout “Setting up a Google Account and Calendar.”
3. Demonstrate how to create a Google Calendar on the LCD projector.
4. Have them choose which electronic devices(s) they would like to use. A Family may choose to have 1 laptop they work on together, or work individually.
5. Distribute the iPad 2 devices and review the [iPad 2 Rules and Regulations](#) (read the following out loud and then ask youth for examples of what NOT to do):
   - Handle with care
   - Use 2 hands at all times
   - Keep it clean
   - If you break it, you buy it ($500.00)
6. Suggest to the group that they plan to include information about their Family activities 1 month prior to the Reunion date and 1 month after the Reunion date.
7. Suggest 3 categories of dates: Events; Activities and Special Occasions.
8. During the activity, walk from group to group providing the following suggestions and prompts:
   - Prompt Family teams to brainstorm and list everything they do in a week, the more mundane the better; suggestions might include: chores, music/sports practice, concerts, meets, religious meetings/activities, school schedule, play dates, meetings, etc.; if a Family comes up with a unique item to put into a calendar, bring this item to the attention of all the Families
   - Prompt teams to include all members of the household
9. At least 10 minutes before the activity needs to end, ask for everyone’s attention and demonstrate how to share a calendar with another person.

**Talk It Over:**

1. To help you focus the discussion, briefly look at Life Skill, Resilience Skill and Science and Technology Objectives on page 1.
2. Lead the entire group through the Talk It Over discussion.
3. Remember to include the Uniformed Service Member in the discussion.
4. Have a volunteer take comments/notes about group dynamics and specific youth comments.

**Share/Reflect**

- What kinds of activities did you include in your Family calendar?
- What did you not put in that you know needs to be added?
- What calendar items surprised you?
- Which items seem to take up most of your time? What about other members of your Family? Your Service Member?
- How can sharing schedules reduce stress and conflict?

**Process**

- What is 1 thing about your Family calendar that you think is unique?
- How does your Family make decisions about what is included in your weekly calendar?
- How are adjustments made to your Family calendar when individual entries conflict or when re-scheduling is necessary?
- How do you think this Family calendar is different from before your Service Member deployed?
- What does this project show you about your responsibilities?
- What choices did you make about privacy?
- Did you make a plan to finish this project at home?

**Generalize**

- How do you think your calendar will change when your Service Member returns?
- How does each Family member communicate their needs and wants?
- Why do you think it might be important to understand how this calendar will change when your Service Member returns?
Why do you think it might be important for your Service Member to understand your daily routine before he or she returns?

How do the activities/events and important dates change over the 3 months? How are they the same?

**Apply**

- How else can you help your Service Member understand your new responsibilities?
- What other tools can you use to communicate with your Service Member?
- What other parts of your life might your Service Member not understand or need an update on?
- How can re-engineering your Family time help you be more resilient?

**Debrief Youth on Life/Resilience Skills:**

Point to the Life/Resilience Skill signs that are posted around the room: Communication, Self-responsibility, Decision Making, Social and Family.

As you point to each sign, ask:

- How have our activities today helped you develop your __________ (skills)?
- Why do you think these skills are important?

**Closing & Cleanup:** *(5 Minutes)*

"Thank you for spending some time together with us today. We hope you learned a new way to communicate with your Service Member, so they can see the new responsibilities you’ve grown into during this deployment. Please help us pack up the equipment and clean up our space. Before you go, please take a family letter that explains a little more about what we did today. Thanks again for spending time with us!"

**Extend the Activity:**

- Take pictures or a video tour of your daily activities and share them via Vimeo or YouTube with your deployed Service Member
- Create a message for your deployed Service Member using coins, crayons or other household items; take pictures with your iPod or iPad and then “animate” them using Animoto; the message should explain the Google Calendar project and invite them to check it out

**Post Event**

**Lead Volunteer:**

- Check to make sure that the space is clean and returned to the arrangement it was in prior to your arrival
- Inventory and put all equipment and supplies back into their respective kits and pack them up to return as directed; make sure all iPad 2 devices, connector kits, cords and power chargers are returned to the OMK Tech Discovery Tool Kit
Fill out report:
- Names of all volunteers
- Number and names of youth (attach sign-in sheet)
- Quotes from youth about activities
- Other important notes on activities, volunteers and youth
- Critical follow-ups (parents about behavior/worries about a particular youth, inappropriate language from a volunteer, etc.)
- Indicate if there are videos, photos or other content that needs to be forwarded to youth/Family; make it clear which items go to each youth/Family

Activity Developed for OMK Tech Discovery by:
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Re-Engineering Our Family

Dear Family,

Today we learned about Google Calendar and how it can be used by a Family to keep track of a changing Family’s schedule during mobilization and after your Service Member returns. We talked about how knowing the schedule can help reduce stress and conflict as well as be an avenue to explore how open communication assists in making everyone, especially the returning Service Member, feel part of the Family.

We also discussed how it is everyone’s responsibility to update the calendar and the importance of sharing information that is critical for the positive reintegration of the Service Member. The technology skill of calendaring is not just useful and important to the reintegration of your Service Member, but will also play a role in your future at work and school. Encourage your youth to keep up with calendaring, whether your Family continues to use Google Calendar or some other tool. Knowing what you’re supposed to do, when, where you have to be, and what you need to get done, is a structure that is important for everyone!

Thank you for your support and for helping your youth participate in this OMK Tech Discovery experience!

Best regards,

Conversation Starters:
- Do you think having a calendar is useful? Why? Why Not?
- Would you rather make a calendar using a computer or have a hard copy on the refrigerator? Why?
- What does the phrase “running out of time” mean to you?
- How can you make “more time?”
- Who in our family is best at “making more time?”
Re-Engineering Our Family

Setting up a Google Account and Google Calendar

Contents:
Section 1 – Setting Up a Gmail Account
Section 2 – Using an Existing Email Address to Create a Google Calendar
Section 3 – Creating Entries on Google Calendar
Section 4 – Sharing Your Google Calendar With Your Service Member

Section 1 - Setting Up a Gmail Account
If you already have an email address, setting up a Google Calendar is a matter of several steps – go to the next section (Using an existing email address to create a Google Calendar). If you don’t have an email address, you can get one very easily and for free. There are several providers, one being Google.

1. Go to www.google.com and choose Create an account.
2. Input the requested information and choose *I accept. Create my account.*
3. Choose *Show me my account.*

4. Choose *Calendar.*
5. Verify your name, location and time zone. Choose *Continue*.

![Google Calendar Welcome Screen](image1.png)

6. Welcome to Google Calendar!

![Google Calendar Dashboard](image2.png)
Section 2 – Using an Existing Email Address to Create a Google Calendar

1. Go to www.google.com and choose more and Calendar.

2. Choose Create an account.
3. Input the requested information and choose *I accept. Create my account.*
4. Verify your account by logging into your email and clicking the link in the email sent to you by Google.

5. Choose Click here to continue.
Section 3 – Creating Entries on Google Calendar

1. Click the date for your Reunion and type in a short reminder for the event.
2. Choose *Edit event details* for more options.

3. Provide details such as where the event takes place (i.e. school, church, home); provide a description and color code the event and the Family member if you like.

4. Now add all of the events you know will occur the 30 days before and after the reunion date. Include events like graduations, concerts and sports events, but also activities like practice, play dates, meetings and special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries.
Section 4 – Sharing your Google Calendar With Your Service Member

1. Choose **Settings**.

2. Choose **Share this Calendar**.
3. Input your Service Member’s email address (AKO is okay) and select *See all event details* under Permission Settings.

![Google Calendar share options](image)

4. Input other members of the household who also have email addresses so they can add and share on this calendar.